Take in the good.

Have you ever been held captive by negativity, becoming anxious and irritable? Research shows that our brains have a negativity bias, such that they are Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones. However, we can intentionally shift towards the good.

Rick Hanson Ph.D., neuropsychologist, has created 4 steps for taking in the good to deliberately internalize positive experiences into implicit memory, thus hardwiring our brains for calm, contentment, resilience, and happiness.

TRY THIS ...

Have a positive experience. Look for good facts or positive aspects of your world or yourself – even if they are relatively ordinary or minor - either currently existing or in the past, and let yourself feel good about it.

Enrich it. Take 5-10 seconds longer to stay with the experience. Experience it in your mind's eye with all five senses, really feeling the emotions and sensations in your body and letting it fill your mind. Enjoy it and gently encourage the experience to be more intense.

Absorb it. Intend and sense the good experience totally sinking into you. It may feel like a warm glow in your chest, or you could visualize it easing you like a soothing balm, or sifting through you like a sparkly glitter, or imagine placing a gem in the treasure chest of your heart.

Link positive and negative material (optional). While basking in the positive, you may be aware of something negative in the background ... this is about allowing both to be in your awareness. If the negative material hijacks your attention, let it go and refocus on the positive. When you're grounded in the positive, you can let the negative also be present in your awareness, if you like.

"Using the HEAL acronym, you are activating a positive mental state (H), and installing it in your brain in the E, A and L steps. " - Rick Hanson

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
• Take in the good.
• Neurons that fire together wire together.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
For more on this topic, read *Hardwiring Happiness* by Rick Hanson, or Chapter 2 in *Just One Thing* by Rick Hanson.

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