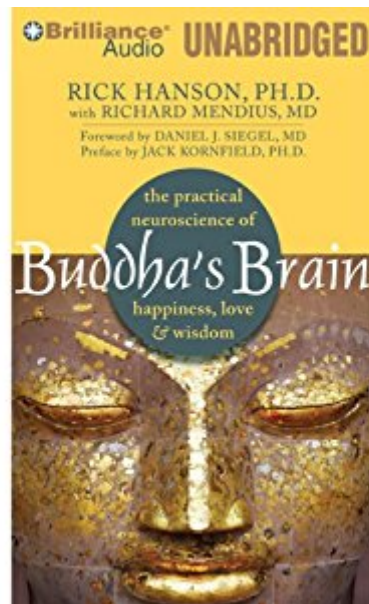


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# Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience Of Happiness, Love & Wisdom



## Synopsis

The Buddha and other great teachers were born with brains built essentially like anyone else's - and then they changed their brains in ways that changed the world. Science is now revealing how the flow of thoughts actually sculpts the brain. By combining breakthroughs in neuroscience with insights from thousands of years of contemplative practice, you, too, can use your mind to shape your brain for greater happiness, love, and wisdom. Buddha's Brain draws on the latest research to show how to stimulate and strengthen your brain for more fulfilling relationships, a deeper spiritual life, and a greater sense of inner confidence and worth. You'll learn how to activate the brain states of calm, joy, and compassion instead of worry, sorrow, and anger. This clear, down-to-earth book is filled with practical tools and skills that you can use in daily life to tap the unused potential of your brain and rewire it over time for greater well-being and peace of mind.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

We have often been told that by altering our thoughts, deeds and words, we can create a happier, more fulfilled life. This book, at the intersection between psychology, neuroscience, and Buddhism, offers effective methods to show us how to live such a life by being fully present in the moment. Hanson and Mendius, a neuropsychologist and a neurologist and both practicing Buddhists, show us just how the brain programs us to experience the world a certain way by combining information from the external world with information held in neural pathways within the brain. These pathways operate in the background of our awareness, influencing our conscious

mental activity. Unless we consciously interrupt this process, we are destined to develop deeper neural networks and even stronger programming. The argument that the brain has the ability to simulate the world is not new. What is interesting is how Hanson and Mendius link Buddhist teachings on the causes of suffering (painful situations cannot be avoided but our emotional responses to them can) to the deep programming in our brains caused by ancestral survival strategies. They suggest that this hardwiring helped us survive constant life-threatening situations but is based on erroneous beliefs that we are separate, that it is possible to stabilize an ever changing world, that we can avoid situations that create pain and pursue only those that give us pleasure. None of these beliefs are true or can be attained. Their inherent contradictions cause us to live with an underlying feeling of anxiety taking us away from our true ground of being and causing much physical and psychological ill-health. The main part of the book is a practical guide and is packed with useful exercises and guided meditations to help us develop a more loving, happier, and wiser state of being. The methods Hanson and Mendius suggest are informed by their experiences as therapists and management consultants, and are rooted in Buddhist teachings on mindfulness, virtue, and wisdom. I particularly liked the way they use neuroscience to underpin the tools they offer, only choosing "methods that have a plausible scientific explanation for how they light up neural networks of contentment, kindness and peace." Now I know why taking five deep inhalations and exhalations calms me. Many of their methods show how to activate desired brain states by consciously changing the association between an event and its painful or pleasurable feelings. This can take a long time. Understanding the neuroscience behind the process can help us be compassionate with ourselves when "swimming against ancient currents within our nervous system." This book is very informative, with helpful summaries at the end of each chapter. The authors' writing, even when explaining the intricacies of neuroscience, is infused with humor and fun to read. This is a good working manual to help us to become who we already are, and an important contribution to the growing body of knowledge on the relationship between mind, brain, and consciousness. Highly Recommended. Review by Marta Freundlich

"If I know one thing for sure, it's that you can do small things inside your mind that will lead to big changes in your brain and your experience of living. I've seen this happen again and again with people I've known as a psychologist and meditation teacher . . ." - Rick Hanson Buddha's Brain will not only explain 'why' you should take in the good but 'how' you can achieve a more positive outlook with some basic awareness skills. The authors, Neuropsychologist, Rick Hanson and neurologist, Richard Mendius are the Click and Clack (Car Talk) of the brain. These two brainiacs/meditation

teachers will show you how to create positive feelings that have many emotional and health benefits such as a stronger immune system and a cardiovascular system that is less reactive to stress. You'll learn how to create a positive cycle of good feelings that you can then spread to others. Enough with all the negativity out there! Haven't we all had enough? As a Type-A New Yorker, one of my favorite exercises in the book is 'Hush the Verbal Centers.' Here you use the power of prefrontal intention to politely (or impolitely) suggest that the verbal activity (voices in your head) shut the hell up. Tell them if they are quiet and well-behaved you will invite them to come yammer away later on after the job interview/tax return/golf putt/midterm exam. For us control freaks this is especially wonderful because now we can control our brains, as well as everything else. Who knew life could be so swell!?! Last, Hanson's wife, acupuncturist Jan Hanson writes an appendix on nutritional neurochemistry recommending nutrients, supplements and dietary basics to support brain function. "I've repeatedly seen that small, thoughtful, sensible changes in what you put in your mouth each day can gradually produce significant benefits," writes Hanson. The authors have simplified the latest neuroscientific research and presented it in a wise and compassionate style that comforts and educates at the same time. Read this book and then pass it on to the cranky person in your life! For more about Buddha's Brain or articles, talks and other educational resources, [...]

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