

Holding the Good Stuff: Two Simple Steps

If you'd like to do some additional work on holding the positive (a tool to help with decreasing the brain's negativity bias), take some time to focus on the positive things in your life. Each time you do this—reflect on positive experiences—you make a difference in your thinking, and those differences add up to the reshaping of your brain.

Step 1: Take opportunities throughout the day to stop and notice small, positive things around you.

Notice things like the taste of good coffee, the breeze in the air, the sun shining brightly, your favorite song playing, a smile from a stranger, and so on. When you notice something positive, allow yourself to feel good about it. Keep opening up to these thoughts. Stop and take notice of these positive things throughout the day. In the space provided, write down a few positive things from your day.

Step 2: Stop and actually savor a positive experience from your day.

When you have a good experience during your day, try to sustain or stay with that experience for twenty to thirty seconds. Many times people get distracted by something else. Try to stop and actually feel the positive experience in your body and through your emotions. Then at the close of each day, intentionally reflect on one positive experience from your day. The experience could be something like someone giving you a compliment, an achievement of a staff member, taking a walk outside after work, your own child doing something to make you smile, and so on. Think about this positive experience again for twenty to thirty seconds. The longer that you hold something in your awareness, the more neurons that fire and wire together to create a stronger network in your memory. Take a few minutes and write down a few sentences about your one positive experience from the last twenty-four hours.

Source: Adapted from Hanson, R. (2014) Taking in the good vs. the negativity bias. Accessed at www.sfsu.edu/~holistic/documents/Spring_2014/GoodvsNeg_Bias.pdf on June 19, 2021.