

Thrive 101 | Taking in the Good

In recent years, the study of positive psychology has shifted the focus in how we approach mental and emotional health. Positive psychology is based on the notion that removing negative aspects from life does not automatically produce positives. Gaining a more positive outlook on life is an intentional activity that requires a whole new skill set and approach.

Negativity Bias

The human brain utilizes underlying processes that are designed to keep us safe. The central process is something known as the negativity bias. Simply put, this means that in the brain, negative is stronger than positive. The brain gives more weight to negative or potentially threatening experiences and wires them into our memory quickly and efficiently so we can avoid threats in the future.

Positive experiences, on the other hand tend to wash right over us, not leaving much of a lasting impact. We can change this by taking an intentional step to ingrain positive experiences in our minds.

Neuroplasticity

Another fairly recent discovery in neuroscience is a concept known as neuroplasticity. This concept refers to the idea that the brain is always learning, and as a result, creating new connections and pathways. The brain is not in a static state but is forever growing and changing based on experiences and thought patterns. So, whether we intend to or not, the way we think and feel becomes more deeply wired into our brains on a daily basis. Simply put, what fires together, wires together. As time passes, the ways in which we think and feel become well-worn pathways in our brains.

Intentional Neuroplasticity

With intentional neuroplasticity we can shape our experiences and create lasting structural changes in our brains.

Step 1 | Have a Positive Experience

- Bring a positive experience into awareness.

Step 2 | Enrich It

- Stay with the experience for at least 5 seconds.
- Open up to the body sensations, feeling tone, and associated thoughts.
- Think about what is helpful, nourishing, new, or exciting about the experience.

Step 3 | Absorb It

- Allow the experience to really sink in.
- Set the intention to make it feel part of you.

