For some decades inner healing has focused on finding the root to various problems and ministering to the root to take away the fruit. This is important and a massive amount has been learnt about how to do this. In this extract from the writings of Jim Wilder a completely different perspective is presented: resetting “normal” in the brain. It is at the heart the skills and practices involved in the Immanuel Approach to Emotional Healing and to Life.

This extract is from ***Joyful Journey: Listening to Immanuel*** (2015, pg 64). Wilder is responding to a question on Interactive Gratitude: Can I use “interactive gratitude” to create a new sense of normal?

*Do you wake up feeling anxious? Do pleasant experiences drift away quickly? If so, it might be because your brain considers that to be “normal.”*

**Before we turn two years old, we develop a sense of “normal.” All sorts of factors can contribute to this development. For instance:**

* If our family is depressed, depression becomes a part of our normal.
* If our parents are anxious, anxiety becomes a part of our normal.
* If those who raise us tend to get angry, anger becomes a part of our normal.

Before we can hardly talk, our brain has set these environmental feelings as the “normal” for our lives. Later in life we may struggle against an angry, worried, depressed or unloved sense of normal. Despite our efforts, our brain quickly finds its way back. We wake up miserable each morning, or return to our misery even after something positive happens.  
Without retraining our brain to a new normal that is exactly what will happen!

## Three Steps to a New Normal

The first step to a new normal is learning to feel appreciation in my body.

Appreciation, gratitude and thankfulness all work, provided I notice what they feel like in my body. Noticing the body feeling insures that the right parts of my brain are working together (prefrontal cortex, anterior cingulate and insula). When my brain discovers that I can feel appreciation at will a new range of possibilities opens for me.

The second step toward a new normal is learning to sustain the feeling of appreciation until I can feel appreciation for five straight minutes.

To do this, I begin to collect a series of appreciation experiences and memories by giving them names like: island sunrise, morning coffee, Fido at lake, Julie’s birthday. Now I can keep my appreciation going longer by remembering one appreciation experience after another. When I can do this for five minutes, my brain realizes that I can feel this as long as I like.

### The third step to a new normal comes by practicing five minutes of appreciation three times a day for a month.

Starting and ending my day with appreciation and throwing in a dose in the middle helps my brain realize, “I can do this all day.”

The marvel is that our brain is a learning machine. Once it knows how to feel good, keep that good feeling going and have a good feeling any time of day it decides, “I’ll make this my new normal!”

The above was originally written as a blog by Jim Wilder (December 4th 2014). It now appears in ***Joyful Journey: Listening to Immanuel*** (2015, pg 64)

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