

The Wise Brain Bulletin

News and Tools for Happiness, Love, and Wisdom
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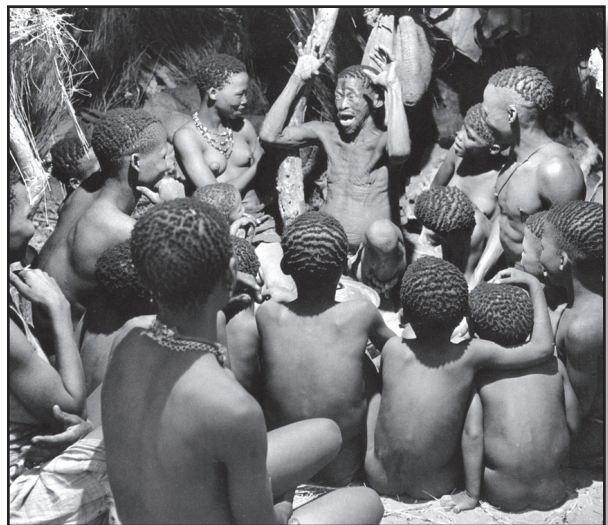
Featured Article:

Narrative, Memory, and the Brain

© By Sue Doherty, 2008

Telling stories is a universal phenomenon of ancient origins—it is the heart of our humanity. Every culture continues to weave narratives and enhance the spoken word with ritual, drama, dance, song, and music. The most memorable stories touch our emotions. They allow us to vicariously experience a character's moods and motives, and connect with recognizable social interactions. Narratives engage our robust capacity for imagination and empathy. They can persuade or motivate us to act. The more we identify with the character(s) and are familiar with the setting or events, the more we absorb the meaning and remember the message or moral. This is why learning is facilitated more through storytelling than listing facts.

The mind is more than an information processor storing and recalling information—as psychologist Jerome Bruner suggests: the mind is a “creator



of meaning”. Beyond categorizing and predicting information, it relies heavily on narrative form to sequentially order information with action and detail. Bruner and lab colleagues at NYU call this mode of cognition: “interpretive.”

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Our sense of self, others, and community depends on thoughtful interpretation. The text of our lives begins with sensory information that is full of spatial and temporal patterns. Our brain is designed to automatically use the data to predict outcomes while being fused with emotional input. As we mature we develop our capacity to interpret what we experience. Neuroscientist, Dr. Joseph LeDoux, studies emotions and feelings as distinct but interacting brain functions, affected by separate but communicating mental links. Because they're more innate, our emotions (like fear) follow a stronger pathway. Feelings, however, require deciphering; the power lines forming the patterns in this system are weaker, and need our attention for stability. Love is a wonderful feeling. Somewhere between the two is intuition, or our "gut feelings." As neuroscientist Michael Gazzaniga (2008) suggests: "Feedback loops have been formed that allow rumination and inhibition and may be the basis for our self-awareness and consciousness."

Mental feedback loops are highly agitated during dramatic events, enhancing declarative memory even in those with dementia. This effect on the brain occurs as peripheral stress hormones interact with the amygdala (the central processing point for emotional reactions and their memory). This little almond-shape mass of grey matter is primed to notice negative frightful events that may threaten our very survival. If a group of Alzheimer patients witnessed the cafeteria sway and plates fall during an earthquake, they could recall and narrate their view of the episode. Just doing so has therapeutic value—in the sharing of their stress, and the exercising of new memories formed.

Though not so dramatic or frightful, perhaps you recall schooldays when you had to memorize and present narrative poetry by Shakespeare or Wordsworth. Researchers have shown exercising the mind in this way helps us learn, to the point of staving off dementia. This method, long valued in the classroom for its effectiveness in imparting a sense of morals and aesthetics, is in decline.

Although rote memory is not much in favor anymore, learning by way of visual media is.

Greetings

The Wise Brain Bulletin offers skillful means from brain science and contemplative practice – to nurture your brain for the benefit of yourself and everyone you touch.

The Bulletin is offered freely, and you are welcome to share it with others. Past issues are archived at www.WiseBrain.org.

Rick Hanson, PhD and Richard Mendius, MD edit the Bulletin, while it's designed and laid out by Brad Reynolds (BradleyYes@aol.com).

To subscribe, please contact Rick at drh@comcast.net.

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If you add a visual component to storytelling you may activate what is known as our brain's network of mirror neurons. They are what researchers, such as Christian Keyers who studies the neurobiology of empathy, call "shared circuits." They are called so because they respond to our own behaviors and emotions whether we engage in an action ourselves (narrowly getting out of the way of a moving car—swiftly moving with heart pounding and fear rising), or simply watching the same event happen to someone else (even in a movie).

Human language acquisition also depends on this mirror system. The mouth has its own set of mirror neurons, as does the hand, both are located in the frontal lobes. Notice how an infant keenly watches the mouth move when a person speaks, and watches non-verbal cues like gestures, to begin to understand word meaning. Since non-verbal expressions and gestures communicate meaning, their potential to create a narrative is implicit. Simply our presence among others is telling a story of who we are, for the attentive audience is always perceiving and ordering social interaction. Our left frontal lobe becomes active when we busy our minds with this internal monologue, or deciphering the semantics of something gestured or said.

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By nature we are very social creatures dependent on communicative interaction. Consider how laughing, yawning, and crying can elicit the same behavior in others. Just the sound of these behaviors triggers the brain to send signals to the area associated with their facial movements. Such mimicry is hardwired. Now studies are finding that when people are directly exposed to happiness, it too acts as a contagion. Being happy also helps us remember certain episodes in our life —just like some smells or sounds. Memory function calls upon both brain hemispheres. Perhaps this is why, according to the January 2007 issue of *Cognition*, this automatic association may be brought to awareness with greater agility by simply recreating the body position you were in during the original episode.

No matter how we remember the past sometimes the stories we tell have us as the villain. The late psychotherapist, Michael White, developed a method called “narrative therapy,” which teaches patients to externalize problems in such situations. This is particularly useful for accounts of trauma. How we respond to troubling situations or their memories is critical to well-being. White also applied his narrative therapy in helping Aboriginal communities in New South Wales. Through storytelling tribesmen were able to adjust to and eventually accept dispossession and forced relocation from their homeland.

The technique of narrative therapy requires re-evaluating what happened by beginning from a more positive point of view as we re-author and re-member. The lifting of blame and shame unburdens anxiety, and allows us to accentuate our strengths and acknowledge supportive social relationships. From this more positive foundation of our life story new found possibilities emerge. Tad Waddington, winner of the 2008 International Business Award for Best Human Resources Executive of the Year, suggests that you place yourself as hero in your own story, because it will serve to motivate you and help you make a lasting contribution.

Most individual stories are narratives of community. The late anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, argued that: “Men’s most important claims to humanity are cast in the accents of group

pride.” For five thousands years the nomadic Hmong, often faced with forced exile, have relied on oral histories and an ethos of working together to unite family and community. Today in the United States we find they have creatively enlarged their capacity to share their culture by the use of home videos. Through this vibrant means of narrative they maintain a strong (extended) family unit across national and international borders.



Cultural groups also use folklore expressions in story form to articulate and affirm the group’s identity. This assures that self-image and esteem is granted that may not come from others. Through their music the native and immigrant Mexican-Americans living in Texas next to the border along the Rio Grande River voice many concerns: longing for their homeland, girlfriend or independence; dealing with work away from home, labor issues, or brutality in the workplace; and historical renditions that voice social injustice.

These ways to acquire self-esteem and self-efficacy can also occur at the larger level of society. For instance, through the song “We Shall Overcome” people spontaneously gathered with a united voice over a common cause. This song began with plantation slaves. In 1945, textile workers sang it on a picket line as a means to air their social protest. Eventually, it was echoed far and wide through the streets of the South during the Civil Rights Movement. The exhibition *Voices of Civil Rights* at The Library of Congress online documents events during this period by drawing from thousands of personal stories, oral histories, and photographs.

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Today oral histories are becoming essential components of museum exhibits. They allow participants an opportunity to engage their social memory and impart their own individual testimony to important local events, people, and places. A willingness to share opens a dialogue between the past and present and between the private and the public. Such oral sources deepen our knowledge of the process of and profound need for oral histories as records of the past. It is a necessary approach to cross-cultural understanding and a complimentary component to historical research and scholarship. Indeed, storytelling proves invaluable in comprehending the events and actions that aid an individual's or a group's ability to adapt and adjust to new cultural settings, and to survive hardships of loss, displacement, and social injustices.

Using narratives is a fledging paradigm shift in the way in which museum exhibits and archaeology are presented to the public. As keepers of the past, public museums are a public trust and are expected to defend an authoritative history. Public history presentations need to impart authentic accounts of the past, but they must also reach a general audience. Having an array of stories that are authoritative, succinct, entertaining, and animated holds the promise of connecting to people's intellect and emotions, the cornerstone of awareness and positive social change.

Cultures and societies are not static or homogenous, nor reducible to essential qualities—such notions of cultural identity are too restrictive. We are compelled, then, to resist taking an event as a cultural text sufficient unto itself, rather, we must locate it in a specific time and place. It is “the ethnography of the particular”. By intervening in this way, we are forced to grapple with the interpretation of its meaning from an intervening vantage point that is, by its nature, ambivalent—for how can we know the whole story? In the end, there is no clear picture

of cultural knowledge. There is a story of the participants, ideally by the participants, that demonstrates the hybrid quality of cultures. This is not to deny cultural differences—it is to give the act of enunciating differences to those closest to the specific empirical instances presented, it also solidifies the notion that there is only a mysterious unknowing of any established “true” cultural identity. Thus, as Homi K. Bhabha asserts: we “enter” into a space of “inter”-national culture marked by histories of the “people.”



The late philosopher, Richard Rorty, claimed that it is through sentimental stories (or a more inclusive history) that we can develop the necessary virtue of sympathy and thus “an increasing ability to see the similarities between ourselves and people very unlike us as outweighing the differences.” This concept rests upon our species unique capacity for education, as well as the flexible nature of our mind and character. It gives hope to humanity that the collective mind will foster ever more peace. As the late literary critic and ethicist Wayne Booth said, “the most important of all critical tasks is to participate in – and thus to reinforce – a critical culture, a vigorous conversation, that will nourish in return those who feed us with their narratives.”

Author Bio

Sue Doherty is an anthropologist and writer living in Santa Rosa, California. If you or someone you know wishes to tell a personal, professional, family, or community story visit Sue's website at: www.storiesmatter.com or e-mail her at storiesmatter@yahoo.com.

The Soul of Parenting

© By Mary Ann Christie Burnside, Ed.D., 2008

Parenting is the hardest job there is. In fact, it can even be overwhelming at times. And although it is the most significant work that those of us with children will ever do, it is the one job for which we are least prepared.

From a mindful perspective, to take on the role of parent is to take up the mantle of becoming our best selves, again and again. For many of us, the unconditional love of a child reminds us of our true nature as precious beings. Through their open and loving countenance, children inspire us to become better men, better women, better partners, and better people. For this reason, among others, parenting can be a spiritual discipline with mindfulness as its very core or soul.



What exactly is mindful parenting? It is both a way of being with our children and a way of seeing them. A general definition of mindfulness is to pay attention to the present moment, with intention and without judgment. When we are mindful, we are conscious of the moment. We are purposefully looking, listening, and thinking about what or who is in front of us. When we are mindful, we stop ourselves from getting lost in the past, anxious about the future, or judgmental about now. When we are mindful, we have an open mind and an open heart, which means that we can listen to whatever there is to hear, whether we like it or not, and we can make thoughtful choices rather than reactive ones. When we work to cultivate mindful relationships in our homes, we transform our experiences as parents and the relationships that we have with our children.

Love and good intentions, which many of us have for our children before they are born, are not enough. Think for a moment about marriage, which also begins with love and good intentions. As time goes by, we learn how hard it is to live in a long-term committed relationship. If marriage is hard, which it is, parenting is harder. We, as parents, love our children and have good intentions but beyond that, we need specific skills. For example, if we can learn to become intentional and purposeful, we can develop a deeper awareness of ourselves, our children, and of our relationships with them. With this awareness comes a nascent set of skills that can both relax us and give us confidence in tougher moments. When we can comfortably settle into our lives as parents and behave as healthy, well-adjusted adults, we model for our children what healthy well-adjusted behavior looks like.

Given that our children's map for relating to the world and to themselves is shaped by their observations and experiences of relationships in the home, our thoughtful attention is well warranted. No matter what our stories or histories, we can learn to lead with love, respect, and integrity rather than with anger, harshness, or withdrawal, which can be common reactions for many of us, particularly when we ourselves are hurt or angry. The quality of our children's everyday lives, and ours, depends on it because it takes love, intention, and skill to create and sustain a healthy family.

Here is a brief, reflective exercise that should give you a sense of what mindful parenting can look like in your life. Take a minute or two to recreate in your mind's eye a particularly difficult exchange between you and your child. In this scene, what are you thinking about your child and about yourself as a parent? What feelings come up for you? Now think about what you tend to do and say when you are feeling off or out of balance. Do you lash out in anger? Do you withdraw? Do

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you blame yourself or your child? What do you tend to say? With all this in mind, replay this scene in your head once more. This time, imagine that you have an awareness of a particular want or need of yours that is not being met. In your mind's eye, imagine that you are speaking calmly and firmly to your child about that want or need. Now respectfully set an appropriate limit around this particular behavior of your child's, which only moments ago, you were struggling with. How do you feel now? How do you think your child feels?

are lovable and learn to love themselves. When we are there for them, they learn trust, security, and confidence.

Our purposeful attention allows us to simultaneously discern our reality and invite the perspective of others. For example, when one of my daughters does something that I have asked her not to do, my reality can quickly go toward the concept of non-compliance and all that I make up about the motivations of my child. However, if I am



When we are conscious, mindful parents, we come to see our children as gifts in our life, which of course, they are. From this place of appreciation and gratitude, it is natural to move toward honoring and protecting their preciousness. When we learn to acknowledge our children's thoughts and feelings, they learn to do the same. When we come to respect them as sovereign people, they come to respect themselves and us. When we really listen to them, they learn to listen. When we look them in the eye, they learn to do the same. When we hold them accountable while remembering love, they learn to hold themselves accountable while remembering their love for us. When we love them, they come to know that they

conscious enough to ask her why she acted that way, I make room for the possibility that I might see things from her perspective, even if I end up disagreeing with her. At the very least, my daughter will have the experience of being heard and come to know that her opinion matters.

The power that comes from knowing our mind helps us to make intentional choices and decisions. For example, when I know what I am thinking or feeling, or what I want or think I need, I can take conscious action, rather than reflexive reaction. Here is a common example. When I am feeling stressed and my children start to act up, I can choose to take a short break or ask my children to

play quietly for a few minutes. If I am not aware of my feelings or wants, I am more likely to react negatively and take my stress out on them, rather than deal with and take care of myself.

An intentional understanding that the only person each of us can control is ourselves liberates us from fruitless, manipulative efforts. When we are not busy being stuck in the helpless pattern of trying to control people or situations, we open ourselves up to the possibility of healthier moves. This is welcome news to those of us who have felt frustrated when we realized that we could not, in fact, control our children or make them do what we wanted. Although we cannot control others, we can certainly influence them. This is especially true of our children, who look to us for guidance in many things.

These are but a few highlights of mindful parenting which connects us to the ones we love, including ourselves. Beyond the immediate benefits of increasing joy and reducing stress in our homes, mindful relationships are healing and restorative for us, as parents. On a good day, we know that we are not simply reacting to our children but are taking responsibility for how we feel and what we do and say. On a bad day, we are better able to hold ourselves accountable by being in touch with our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. Either way, we can live with integrity and while doing so, teach our children to do the same.



Above all else, being mindful means we are living and parenting consciously. When we are able to pay attention, our children guide us toward meeting and knowing the best parts of ourselves. When we speak and act with intention, we feed the hearts and minds of our children, as well as our own. Mindful parenting practices can build our awareness that we are doing our best to raise our children, which is all that we can really do. When we know that we have done our best, we can learn to have peace with the outcome, whatever it is. And we can take comfort in the assurance that the very next moment is a chance for a new beginning.

Author Bio

Mary Ann Christie Burnside, Ed.D. is a developmental psychologist, experienced educator, and mother of two. She founded Hearts and Minds, LLC to educate parents, teachers, and other caregivers of children about mindful relationships and to promote the well being of families. Mary Ann has a private coaching practice, conducts online seminars, and teaches face-to-face workshops near Boston, Massachusetts. Her newest course, Extravagant Love: Our Children, Ourselves, examines love as a set of commitments and practices. This seminar will be offered online early in 2009. Registration begins in January. Visit www.withheartsandminds.com for details on how to register or for more information about Mary Ann and her work.

Seeing Over the Edge

© By Tara Mohr, 2008

Today I went to a workshop on meditation and the self at [Spirit Rock Center](#).

It was taught by Rick Mendius, a neurologist, and Rick Hanson, a meditation teacher. The workshop explored how the latest findings of brain research relate to Buddhist ideas about meditation, mind and the self. You can learn more and access a wealth of fantastic materials at www.wisebrain.org.

My favorite line of the day was “The mind uses the brain to make the mind.” A powerful summation of the relationship between mind and brain, and cause and effect as they take place there.

In this context, I define mind as our full consciousness, including consciousness of thought and sensation. I define the brain as the physical circuitry that makes thinking and sensation possible.

When we engage in meditation, self-reflection, therapy, coaching, journaling, or any other such practice, we are engaging mind to work with the mind. My personal sense has been that in that work there is also a presence of something larger, perhaps a divine consciousness. This presence holds the memory and knowledge of how much more human life can be. This presence persistently longs for change, for more, and is the spark and driver that gets me to the work.

It is in this work of mind looking at mind that we can get beyond habitual responses and mental narratives that don't lead us to the results we want in life - peace, contentment, harmony with others. When we see clearly the patterns and dances of mind, we get access to a small escape hatch - escape from repeating the past. We can see new alternatives and experience what it would be like to live in the absence of a limiting



thought or belief. Illusions crumble into dust in this light. We become prepared to let go of old ideas in this light.

What we now know from brain research is that when we do this, we create new neural pathways and decrease the strength of old ones. This is mind changing the brain, reshaping the brain. Those new neural pathways create, in turn, a new mind - a mind that is more likely to make different choices. If we have done our work to consciously create pathways that lead us in the direction of the results we want, we will get more of those results.

What I know for sure is this: the whole ballgame is finding and doing the practices that enable you to see over the edge of the wall created by your perceptions.

Contemplative practice, therapy, coaching, writing, physical movement, reading new perspectives, experiencing art, being with nature are all amazing vehicles for this work. The work of [Bryon Katie](#), the workbook of *A Course in Miracles*, meditation, co-active coaching, spiritual literature, working the 12 steps, and unpacking a situation with a good friend are all tools that work well for me and those I work with. What tools resonate for you at this stage on your journey?

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Without this work, the life in life is absent. We aren't actually encountering life in the present, we are just running a projection of the past. The set and actors in the movie may change slightly, but the basic plot and the journey of your character will remain pretty much the same.

Whatever gets you peering over the edge of your perceptual walls, take that up as your practice. The work that happens through it is your life path. Following that path of evolution is your charge for this lifetime. Along with giving love and touching the divine, the rewards that come from this work are the richest rewards you can reap on this earth.



Author Bio

Tara Mohr is a writer, life coach and program officer at a bay area community foundation. To read more of Tara's writing on the spiritual life and on living life with greater attention, visit her blog, Bountiful Heart at <http://sophiashouse.wordpress.com>.



Words of Wisdom Celebration

(These are from Linda Graham's great e-newsletter, which you can sign up for at <http://visitor.constantcontact.com/email.jsp?m=1101744766282>)

Except for the still point there would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

~T.S. Eliot

If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, "thank you," that would suffice.

~Meister Eckhart

I've learned that people will forget what you said; people will forget what you did; but people will never forget how you made them feel.

~Maya Angelou

There is more to life than merely increasing its speed.

~Gandhi

Tend to the moment, and the hours, days, years will tend to themselves.

~Matthieu Ricard

Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom

~Marcel Proust

Love frees.

~Meister Eckhart

All who find happiness in this world have done so by wishing for the happiness of many others. All who find unhappiness in this world have done so by aiming just for their own happiness.

~Shantideva

Vision is not enough; it must be combined with venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps; we must step up the stairs.

~Vaclav Havel

Help your neighbor's boat across, and lo! Your own has reached the shore.

~Hindu proverb

Success is moving from one failure to another without loss of enthusiasm.

~Winston Churchill

What the caterpillar calls the end of the world The master calls a butterfly.

~Richard Bach

A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent in doing nothing.

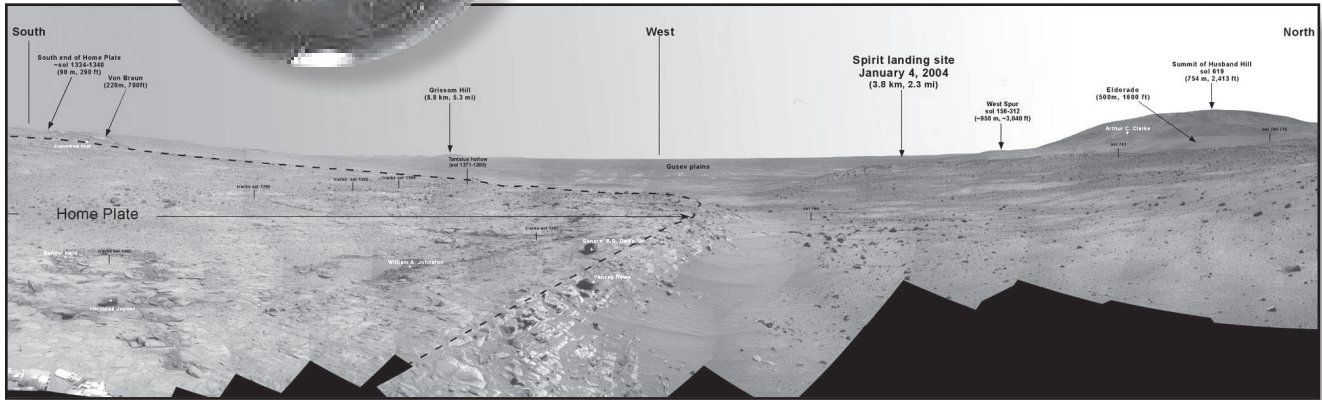
~George Bernard Shaw

San Rafael Meditation Group

Open to beginners and experienced practitioners, we meet on Wednesday evenings at the A Sante day spa in downtown San Rafael at the corner of Brooks and 3rd. "Early-bird" meditation starts at 6:45 with formal instruction at 7:00; meditation ends at 7:30, followed by a brief break, and then a dharma talk and discussion, ending at 8:30. It is led by Rick Hanson, and for more information, check out www.WiseBrain.org/sanrafael-meditation.html. Newcomers are always welcome!



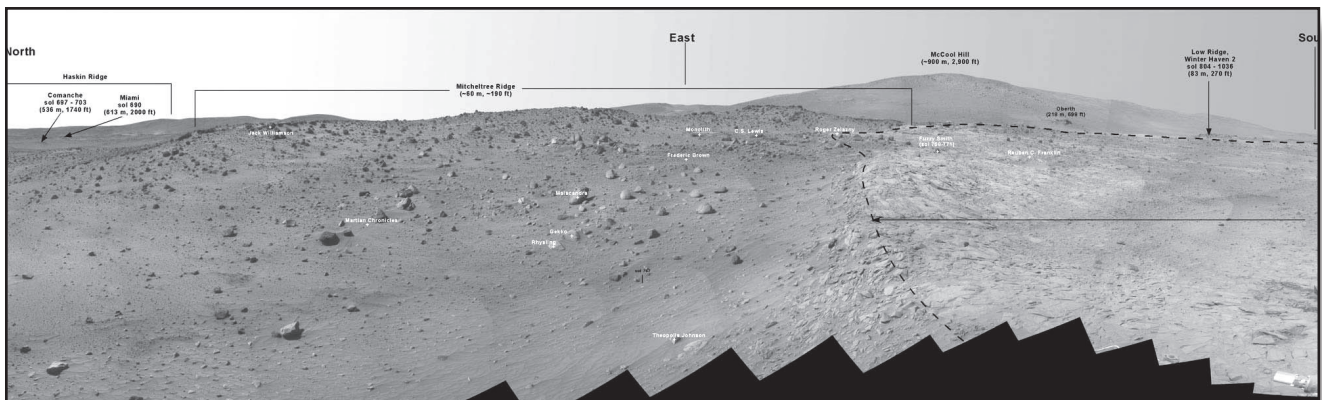
Mars ~ from the Spirit Rover



Grateful Wonder

For this issue's theme of celebration, we've got just one image, but it kind of says it all. It's a panoramic shot of Mars, from the Spirit Rover, which has been trucking around the red planet for five years now. It has survived the frigid Martian winter and traveled miles from its original landing site, gathering information and sending it all to us back home – a home it will never return to. It's our little buddy out there, our own R2D2, and if humanity can produce it, we can do just about anything!

Here's the link: <http://antwpr.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap090120.html>



Offerings

Rick Hanson, PhD, and Rick Mendius, MD

1. Sounds True offers *Meditations for Happiness* by Rick Hanson, Ph.D. It's 3 CD's worth of talks and brain-savvy exercises for increasing your happiness, with an emphasis on experiential practices and practical tools. It is offered as an inexpensive download to your computer, where you can listen to it or burn it to CD's or transfer it to an iPod.

This program truly turned out to be pretty great, and here's a comment about it from the author, Annie Spiegelman:

On his new "Meditations for Happiness" program, benevolent Rick Hanson guides me to sit down and face my inner critic – and then actually see it as a form and shrink it. Being a Master Gardener, I see the critic as a gnome who tiptoes into my brain when no one is looking, with those tiny pointy shoes, and makes me doubt myself. I shrink him down to the size of a snail and toss him out. He knows nothing. The shoes are a dead giveaway.

Here's the link to this program at Sounds True: <http://shop.soundstrue.com/shop.soundstrue.com/SelectProd.do;jsessionid=AA644B8B2BA5A2526E297913DE0434AD?prodId=1715&manufacturer=Sound%20True&category=Exploring%20the%20Psyche&name=Meditations%20for%20Happiness>

2. Rick also has a chapter, "7 Facts about the Brain That Incline the Mind to Joy," in *Measuring the Immeasurable* – which is chock full of essays from luminaries like James Austin, MD, Larry Dossey, MD, Daniel Goleman, PhD., Candace Pert, PhD, Marilyn Schlitz, PhD, Dan Siegel, MD, Charles Tart, PhD, and Cassandra Vieten, PhD. Check it out at <http://www.amazon.com/Measuring-Immeasurable-Scientific-Case-Spirituality/dp/1591796547>.

3. On January, 31, 2009, Rick Mendius and Rick Hanson will be presenting "The Complex Power of Simple Attention: The Brain Science of Mindfulness Methods," at the annual conference of the California Society for Clinical Social Work (CSCSW). If you are interested in attending this conference – on *The Emotional Brain and Wellbeing: Understanding and Promoting Wellbeing in Clinical Practice* – please contact CSCSW at www.clinicalsocialworksociety.org.

4. At Spirit Rock, in 2009, these daylongs with Rick Hanson and Rick Mendius are scheduled:

- **The Neurology of Awakening**, on Sunday, March 1. We'll cover how to nurture the brain states that foster the steadiness of mind leading to the deepest and most liberating insights. This is our foundational workshop, with solid neurology and practical tools for activating, step-by-step, the brain states of the Buddha's progressive process of contemplative illumination.
- **Equanimity**, on Sunday, May 17. Equanimity is the key to freedom from emotional reactions, and to cutting the chain of craving and clinging that leads to suffering. This workshop will also address the neuropsychology of difficult emotions, as well as trauma, and neurologically-informed methods for dealing with those.
- **The Neurodharma of Love**, on Saturday, May 23. The emphasis will be on relationships in general and love in the broadest sense, integrating deep teachings on compassion and lovingkindness with a clear-eyed understanding of how we evolved to be caring toward "us" and often wary and aggressive toward "them."

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more offerings...

- **Resting in Emptiness: The Evolution of Awareness and the Transcendence of the Self**, on Saturday, November 7. This workshop will address the thorny and fundamental question of . . . “me, myself, and I.” The self – with its tendencies to grasp after possessions and take things personally – is perhaps the premier engine of suffering. We’ll explore the evolution of the apparent self in the animal kingdom, and the ways in which the self is real and is also not real at all, coming to rest more and more in the underlying spacious awareness in which self appears and disappears.
- **The Hard Things That Open the Mind and Heart: Practicing with Difficult Conditions**, led with James Baraz, on Sunday, December 13. This is for people grappling with difficult conditions – both internal and external – and for caregivers and friends who support those individuals. These include challenges with the body, mind, and life circumstances. We’ll cover Buddhist perspectives and practices for difficult conditions; lovingkindness for oneself and for any being who suffers; brain-savvy ways to strengthen your capacity to be with the hard stuff; and methods from the intersection of the dharma and neuroscience for lifting mood and cultivating joy.

Also in 2009, there are these additional offerings:

5. At the Awakening to Mindfulness conference in San Diego, April 2 – 4, the presenters include Marsha Linehan, Tara Brach, Steven Hayes, Jack Kornfield, and Rick Hanson. 18 continuing education credits are available, and it should be an incredible program. Rick will be presenting two workshops on Friday, April 3: “The Self-Transforming Brain” and “Taking in the Good.” See www.facesconferences.com for more information.
6. At the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, in Barre, MA, on Saturday, April 11, Drs. Hanson and Mendius will be offering “Neuro-Dharma: Mindfulness and the Shaping of the Brain.” See http://bcbs.dharma.org/Pages/course_detail.lasso?-KeyValue=58&-Token.Action=&image=1 for more information.
7. At Kripalu Center, in Massachusetts, April 12 – 17, Drs. Hanson and Mendius are teaching a weeklong workshop on “The Intimate Brain: Exploring the Neural Circuits of Happiness, Love, and Non-Dual Awareness.” See www.kripalu.org/program/view/IB91/the_intimate_brain_exploring_the_neural_circuits for more information.
8. At New York Insight Meditation Center, on Sunday April 19, Rick Hanson will be presenting “The Neurodharma of Love.” See <http://nyimc.org/index.php/site/eventcalendar> for more information.
9. At James Baraz’s wonderful Awakening Joy course, April 21 and 22, Rick will be a guest speaker. His subject will be how the brain constructs suffering in order to help you survive – and how understanding the mechanisms of that process suggests ways to suffer less.
10. With the Dharma Zephyr Insight Meditation Community in Nevada, Rick will be leading a two day workshop June 6 and 7 on using brain-savvy methods to steady the mind, quiet it, bring it to singleness, and concentrate it, following the road map of the Buddha. See www.nevadadharm.net/zephyr.html for more information.

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11. Through R. Cassidy Seminars, Rick will be teaching continuing education workshops to mental health professionals in Los Angeles and San Diego (September 25 & 26), in Portland and Seattle (November 13 & 14). The workshops will focus on translating neuroscience research, informed by contemplative practice, into tools and skills that therapists can offer their clients. See www.ceuregistration.com for more information.

12. At the Insight Meditation Community of Washington, DC, Tara Brach and Rick Hanson will be offering “The Neurodharma of Love” workshop on Saturday, October 10. See www.imcw.org/index.php for more information.

***The Wellspring Institute for
Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom***

The Institute is a 501c3 non-profit corporation, and it publishes the Wise Brain Bulletin. The Wellspring Institute gathers, organizes, and freely offers information and methods – supported by brain science and the contemplative disciplines – for greater happiness, love, effectiveness, and wisdom. For more information about the Institute, please go to www.WiseBrain.org.

Perspectives on Self-Care

Be careful with all self-help methods (including those presented in this Bulletin), which are no substitute for working with a licensed healthcare practitioner. People vary, and what works for someone else may not be a good fit for you. When you try something, start slowly and carefully, and stop immediately if it feels bad or makes things worse.

Fare Well

~ May you and all beings be happy, loving, and wise ~

