

The Wise Brain Bulletin

News and Tools for Happiness, Love, and Wisdom
Volume 2. 10 (October 2008)

Featured Article:

In•spiration!

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Inspiration may be a form of superconsciousness, or perhaps of subconsciousness – I wouldn't know. But I am sure it is the antithesis of self-consciousness.
–Aaron Copland

What is inspiration? Is there a connection between inspiration, creativity and contemplative practice? What is the relationship between neurology, inspiration and creativity? How are we inspired? Where might our imaginations take us? What does creative inspiration look like in its wildest form?

When we are born we inspire, taking in the world, becoming one with everything in the universe. Inspiration, our first breath, is our first collaborative act. At that moment there is a confluence of energy, all our neurons are firing equally, and life cascades before us. There is great spaciousness within us, nothing is named, and there is no separateness...

Inspiration: The action, or an act, of breathing in or inhaling; the drawing in of the breath into the lungs in respiration. A breathing in or infusion of some idea, purpose, etc. into the mind; the suggestion, awakening, or creation of some feeling or impulse, esp. of an exalted kind. –The Oxford English Dictionary

And then the journey begins: we must apprehend systems of nomenclature, signs, symbols, classifications, meanings, beliefs, ethics, etc., until our consciousness is a cacophony of experience, information, ideas, thoughts, perceptions, knowledge, and interpretations. Individuation is in part a process of learning how to site our selves in terms of the rest of the world rather than as a contiguous element within the whole. We start to travel down learned neural pathways repeatedly and habitually while others fall into disuse. The spaciousness with which we are born, and which keeps us anchored, becomes progressively less prominent in our consciousness, and the moments

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The Art of Teaching

by Frank Marrero

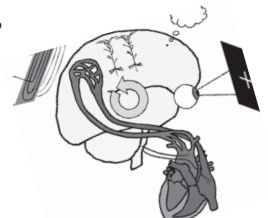
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by Rick Hanson

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To subscribe, please contact Rick at dr rh@comcast.net.

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we retain, when it still infuses our awareness, eventually come to be called “inspiration.”

Creative inspiration is a kind of synergy of experience and understanding. We know it when we intuit the underlying matrix of connection that exists between us and everything else in the world.

Our breath often leads us to it; sometimes it is our ability to see or to remember, or it's our inclination to allow our thoughts to diverge from the known to the mysterious that helps us to recognize inspiration. Inspiration that arises from our own spacious awareness is especially powerful and compelling.

An Inspirational Conversation:

Because inspiration comes in myriad forms across the population, it prompted us to wonder where a “conversation” or dialogue on inspiration might lead. What if, within the realms of neurology, contemplative practice, and art, we “show you our inspiration” and “you show us yours?”

We invite you to send us images, poetry, artwork, music links, documentation of performances, artistic gestures, research insights, anecdotes, accounts of transformative experiences, a meditation practice, diagram, formula, etc.,

anything appropriate to the WiseBrain Bulletin's purpose of offering skillful means from brain science, creativity and contemplative practice that touch upon, or contribute to the wider understanding of inspiration.

Below we offer you images of artworks historically about inspiration or that have inspired us in some way, with links to articles that further elucidate concepts of inspiration and creativity in neurobiological terms. Please respond with what inspires you in any form including your insights about it; send your responses to us at: thoughtsoninspiration@gmail.com.



Melencolia I, Albrecht Dürer, 1514

In Albrecht Durer's engraving, *Melencolia I*, a Renaissance exploration of inspiration, the artist portrayed the 'inspired genius' in a state of 'super awake consciousness' while the 'tools' of creating lie idle...

For an in-depth discussion of *Melencolia I*, see Dame Frances Yates on Inspired Melancholy: <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?PAGE=3566> and Erwin Panofsky: <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8031.html>

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Classical Inspiration:

In our earliest literary works, inspiration's divine origins in the breath of a god are important. The oracle of Delphi and other ancient sibyls received divine "fumes" from within a cave sacred to Apollo before they would prophecy.

Plato and Aristotle both argue that poets break through to the world of divine truth temporarily and are compelled by that vision to create. In Greek thought, the poet is transported into a divine ecstasy or frenzy or even poetic madness beyond his own mind and is given the gods' and goddesses' own thoughts to embody. Invoking a muse, or a god, for inspiration (the breath of god) was commonplace.

In Christianity, it is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is writing inspired by God and imbued with the Holy Spirit, and David was the perfect poet for he best negotiated between the divine impulse and the human consciousness.

Inspiration precedes consciousness and exists outside of skill. It is involuntary and received without any prior or complete understanding. Inspiration is the product of grace – desired but uncontrolled and irresistible.

It is fundamentally a gift. Inspiration comes because the poet is attuned to 'divine winds' and is able to receive such visions, in other words, has done his preparation and honed his skills. Inspiration is fundamentally an agency, such as a person or work of art that moves the intellect or emotions or prompts action or invention.

In tests using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the part of the brain that "lights up" when experiencing an 'Aha!' moment of inspiration and insight is the right temporal lobe (the anterior superior temporal gyrus).

Previous studies linked this part of the brain to language skills – linking together things that are distantly related, or tying together information that you already know but hadn't recognized how it's related until that moment. Secondary experiments using an electroencephalogram (EEG) detected high frequency brain waves in the same area during moments of insight, but none

present when there was no "Eureka!" moment. In being able to begin mapping regions of the brain involved in these processes, scientists have started to demystify some small aspects of creativity. Future research will likely lead to greater understanding of the brain's processes involved in inspirational moments. (Read more in: "Researchers Map Brain's Inspiration Point" by Lee Dye <http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/Story?id=99544&page=3>)

In the realm of contemplative practices, Eckhart Tolle in his book, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*, describes three means by which

"creative manifestation may come to those who stay true to their inner purpose of 'awakening' consciousness: acceptance, enjoyment, and enthusiasm.

He further states that: "whenever there is inspiration, which translates as 'in spirit,' and enthusiasm, which means, 'in God,' there is a creative empowerment that goes far beyond what a mere person is capable of." And continues: "Unlike stress, enthusiasm has a high energy frequency and so resonates with the creative power of the universe. This is why Ralph Waldo Emerson said that, 'Nothing great has ever been achieved without enthusiasm.' The word enthusiasm comes from the ancient Greek *-en* and *theos*, meaning God. And the related word *enthousiazein* means 'to be possessed by a god.' With enthusiasm you will find that you don't have to do it all by yourself. In fact, there is nothing of significance that you can do by yourself. Sustained enthusiasm brings into existence a wave of creative energy, and all you have to do then is 'ride the wave.' [...] Through enthusiasm you enter into full alignment with the outgoing creative principle of the universe, but without identifying with its creations, that is to say, without ego. Where there is no identification, there is no attachment—one of the great sources of suffering. Once a wave of creative energy has passed, structural tension diminishes again and joy in what you are doing remains. Nobody can live in enthusiasm all the time. A new wave of creative energy may come later and lead to renewed enthusiasm."



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The poem comes in the form of a blessing, like the rapture breaking through on the mind. —Stanley Kunitz

It is commonplace to blame the aging process for our lost thoughts, but how often do we attribute new ideas to a new crop of neurons creating new pathways in our cortex? Being aware of our potential to build neural circuitry may lead us to rejoice at the possibilities and to stimulate our minds more vigorously more often.

Our mental flexibility may not change, but inspiration is an endlessly malleable energy. Having down time to allow the brain to do nothing so that it can engage in creatively connective insights from amongst the daily information fed it is important.

Gertrude Stein used to say that *“it takes a lot of time to be a genius, you have to sit around so much doing nothing, really doing nothing.”*

Intimation, incubation and illumination are three of the five stages of creative insight according to Graham Wallas’ model in *The Art of Thought*; preparation and verification are the other two (http://members.optusnet.com.au/charles57/Creative/Brain/wallis_intro.htm).

The left brain is all about logic and sequential thinking and the right brain is all about the abstract flow of consciousness and how it relates to “the big picture.”

The sudden recognition of new connections across existing knowledge, and often across these two brain spheres, is really the main nature of insights.

Spending time and effort to wire new neurons to fire together, in contemplative practices, in creative play (Carl Jung always advocated getting one’s hands in the mud), or in new learning that allows one to see one’s lived experience in new ways, is a physical and mental foundational support for remaining flexible and open and creating conditions for more inspiration.

(Read more about Einstein’s brain and divergent thinking in the prefrontal lobe here: “Exploring the Brain’s Role in Creativity” by Fred Balzac here: <http://www.neuropsychiatryreviews.com/may06/einstein.html>)

I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.
—Isaac Newton

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Only Art Resulting From The Experience Of Individual Walks

Hamish Fulton, 2008



‘Kailash Kora. The Global Influences of Tibetan Buddhism During the 21 Century’

Hamish Fulton describes himself as a ‘walking artist,’ creating art “resulting from the experience of individual walks.” Over the course of his career Fulton has walked over 20,000 miles on five continents. The photographs, texts, performances, mappings and digital imagery inspired by his walks are intended to connect viewers with their own experience of nature, their own landscape.

To experience Hamish Fulton’s work more fully please visit his dynamic interactive website: www.hamish-fulton.com

© Hamish Fulton, 2007



June Leaf, "White Scroll with Dancing Figures," 2008

June Leaf's Dancing Figures....

June Leaf's whimsical yet poignant interactive sculpture, "White Scroll with Dancing Figures" invites the hearts and the minds of viewers to open as they engage with the piece, which is activated by cranking it manually. It challenges viewers to slow down, look closely, and to enter into the work consciously.

"White Scroll with Dancing Figures," is an example of Leaf's masterful ability to create evocative experiences, to subtly push emotional boundaries, and to explore complex questions within the context of aesthetically beautiful and, as in this case, playful objects.

"White Scroll with Dancing Figures," evokes feelings of joy on the edge of uncertainty. The dancer leaps and spins on ephemeral ground as if the rhythm of the dance itself has the power or magic to create equilibrium.

For more on June Leaf and her work please visit the following websites: www.edwardthorpgallery.com/artists/leaf/leafbio.html and www.brooklynrail.org/2008/04/artseen/june-leaf-paintings-sculpture

Nancy Mintz's Introspection....

The rock, locked within its self-reflective cage is an astute and witty insight to the introspective nature of our mind.

Seemingly complete and whole within its creation and experiences, it nonetheless has this capacity to create a satellite self that we project, an observer self that watches us, an imaged self that we mirror back to society or reflect back to ourselves.

On one hand, the tyrannical spotlight interrogation of totalitarian authority is suggested in this simple play with materials, on the other is the sheer illusion of it all as a construct of the mind. An inspirationally freeing realization of the paradox of human nature is crystallized in this concise memorable image.



Nancy Mintz, "Introspection," 2000

Poetry is inseparable from my life force, and that began very early. It was a great gift, and it has sustained me through the years, and the losses that have attended those years. —Stanley Kunitz

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“The Layers” by Stanley Kunitz

**I have walked through many lives,
some of them my own,
and I am not who I was,
though some principle of being
abides, from which I struggle
not to stray.
When I look behind,
as I am compelled to look
before I can gather strength
to proceed on my journey,
I see the milestones dwindling
toward the horizon
and the slow fires trailing
from the abandoned campsites,
over which scavenger angels
wheel on heavy wings.
Oh, I have made myself a tribe
out of my true affections,
and my tribe is scattered!
How shall the heart be reconciled
to its feast of losses?
In a rising wind
the manic dust of my friends,
those who fell along the way,
bitterly stings my face.
Yet I turn, I turn,
exulting somewhat,
with my will intact to go
wherever I need to go,
and every stone on the road
precious to me.
In my darkest night,
when the moon was covered
and I roamed through wreckage,
a nimbus-clouded voice
directed me:
“Live in the layers,
not on the litter.”
Though I lack the art
to decipher it,
no doubt the next chapter
in my book of transformations
is already written.
I am not done with my changes.**

From The Collected Poems. © W.W. Norton, 2000.



© Cy Twombly

Cy Twombly, Quattro Stagioni: Autunno, 1993-5

Intimate immensity perhaps best describes the layered, enigmatic work of Cy Twombly. Twombly's paintings draw viewers deep into a seemingly limitless world where gestures, materials, language (symbolic codes) and literature meld into dreamlike journals of abstract, expressive consciousness.

Cy Twombly's work is currently on exhibition at the Tate Modern, London, England. Please visit the following link to read more about Twombly's work and to tour the exhibition: <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/cytwombly/explore.shtm>

Central to the rich, evocative, intellectually courageous work of Stanley Kunitz, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, recipient of the Peace Abbey Courage of Conscience Award, and United States Poet Laureate, among many other accolades, is the awareness of the simultaneity of life and death, and a profound consciousness of being and transformation.

To explore the work of Stanley Kunitz in greater depth please visit: <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/archive/poet.html?id=3869>. To view Stanley Kunitz reading his poetry (Library of Congress webcast) please see: http://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=3662

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom. – Albert Einstein

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Author's Bios

Lisa Kaftori, M.F.A., is an internationally exhibited, award-winning conceptual artist, and social sculptor. She creates site-specific installation, performance and ecological art, based on extensive interdisciplinary research and collaboration.



© Dorrie Powell

Lisa has lectured and performed at the National Conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution and at universities and symposia around the world. She is co-founder, with artist Joan Giroux, of Compassionate Action Enterprises, an artist collaborative that promotes art geared toward social, political, environmental and cultural activism.

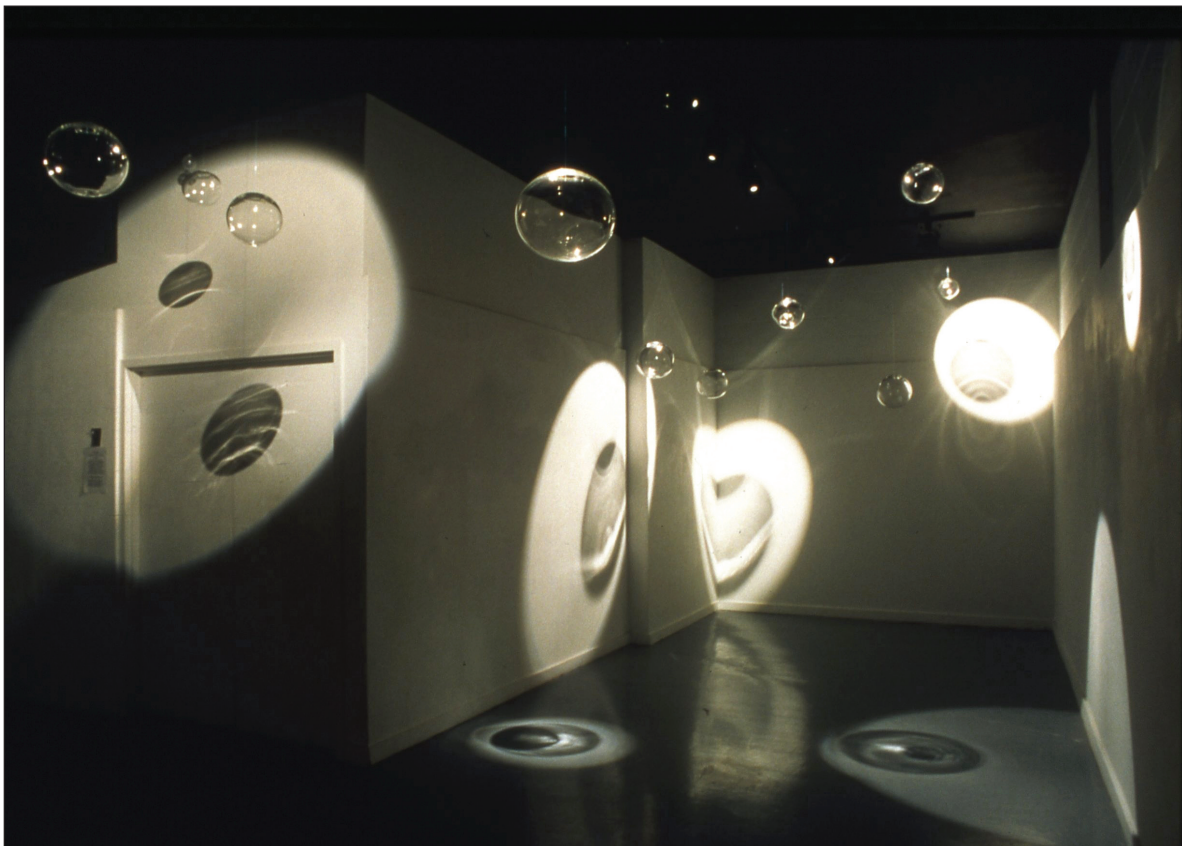
Lisa is a dedicated TM and Raja yoga practitioner. Originally from Southern California, she currently lives in Israel.

Sophia Isajiw, M.F.A., is an award-winning interdisciplinary visual artist whose work and research emphasize interconnective installations and social action performances.



She is the Founder of the Velvet Antler Studio for Print Media at the international Banff Centre for the Arts, an art gallery Director, Curator, arts writer, Public Arts Commissioner, Assistant Professor of Fine Art, and accomplished Reiki practitioner.

She has taught at the California Institute of the Arts, the California State University, the University of Toronto, the University of Windsor and has lectured across Canada and the US. You can learn more about her work at: www.ccca.ca or <http://www.artreview.com/profile/SophiaIsajiw>



© Release, Sophia Isajiw

Words of Wisdom

On Cutting Loose

No one imagines that a symphony is supposed to improve in quality as it goes along, or that the whole object of playing it is to reach the finale. The point of music is discovered in every moment of playing and listening to it. It is the same, I feel, with the greater part of our lives, and if we are unduly absorbed in improving them we may forget altogether to live them.

~Alan Watts

But if we continue to think that everything will remain as it is, then we will be just like rich people still discussing their business projects on their deathbeds!

~Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche

The most terrifying thing is to accept oneself completely.

~Carl Jung

“Nothing whatsoever should be clung to as ‘I’ or ‘mine’.” To understand this is to heal all illness and sorrows. Let yourself be still, without grasping or resisting. The wise person lives in voidness, with an open and free heart that does not cling to anything. This is the peace of Nirvana. It is always here, available whenever we let go.”

~Ajahn Buddhadasa

You are complete Here and Now! You are always Free.

~H.W.L. Poonja

Try to be mindful, and let things take their natural course. Then your mind will become still in any surroundings, like a clear forest pool, and you will clearly see the nature of things. You will see many strange and wonderful things come and go, but you will be still. This is the happiness of the Buddha.

~Ajahn Chah

To expect a personality to survive the disintegration of the brain is like expecting a cricket club to survive when all of its members are dead.

~Bertrand Russell

But meditation, well, it abides none of that noise. It brings you into the here and now and plops you into the lap of stillness and reminds you that there is more to it all, that you have incredible power to change your own habits and tendencies and daily love quotients, that God often speaks in whispers and flutters and quiet little licks on your heart and only when you dial down your raging internal dialogue can you actually hear what she's trying to say. What's not to like?

~Mark Morford

Delight sits within what we seem to be losing.

~Pico Iyer

This life is yours. Take the power to choose what you want to do and do it well. Take the power to love what you want in life and love it honestly. Take the power to walk in the forest and be a part of nature. Take the power to control your own life. No one else can do it for you. Take the power to make your life happy. The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.

~Helen Keller

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!

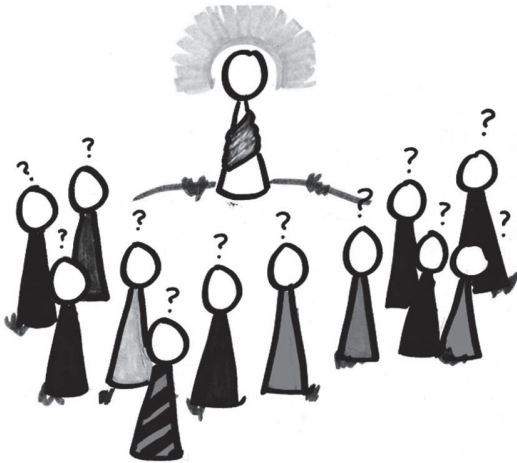
The Art of Teaching

© Frank Marrero, 2008

There is an art whereby a teacher elicits learning, elicits participation, elicits creativity and growth. It is the art of openness, challenge, and invitation.

In developing this art, the teacher sees through skin color and gender, sees through the façade of social faces, and sees through every act of need and fear.

The teacher sees clearly the spark or light that is at the core of each and every one, sees how to invite that livingness into openness and trust, sees how to tend that spark into a fire and that vibrancy into genius.



When the teacher matures in this dual-sensitivity of graciousness and growing demand, she or he becomes a kind of priest or priestess, artfully attending the sacred fires who are their students.

To invite children into the joy of continual growth, one must be involved in a practice of continual growth. Inspirational teaching is spiritual, attending to the spirit of each student.

To lead children out of inability and reactivity to response-ability is not openness only, but openness joined with spirited challenge and gracious invitation.

A great teacher's "spiritual x-ray vision" sees clearly a unique moment in the interaction with children: the first split second when your eyes meet theirs.

For if you look through your social face and theirs, you can always see the question that riddles the flesh and complicates every soul: "Are you going to hurt me?"

Capturing that initiation, the great teacher is prepared. Deep in her or his heart, he or she is already chanting, "I see you, I'll care for you". In an instant, the student sees the teacher as a friend and the teacher's caring eyes plant a seed of hope in their heart.

The first split second when your eyes meet theirs is a great opportunity, and only care and vigilance are required to catch it.

The art of teaching is to tender that place in every child that nobly responds to the call to grow.

Frank Marrero, M.A.T., has been engaged in education for over three decades, specializing in the affective domains. He is a fifth grade teacher in Pinole, California, adjunct Instructor at John F Kennedy University (Dept of Religion and Philosophy), and is the father of two bright kids.

Currently, he has finished **Big Philosophy for Little Kids**, a free curriculum for teaching the arts and techniques of writing while exercising emotional and character strengths. This curriculum, as well as a wide range of other writings, can be found at www.frankmarrero.com



Neuroscience Perspectives on Spiritual Practices

© Rick Hanson, Ph.D., 2008

- Simply localizing function in the brain may add little information of *practical* use to an already adequate psychological or spiritual account – even if there’s a picture.
- Neural networks are extraordinarily interdependent and dynamic; linking complex mental activity to isolated and static “circuits” is a simplifying heuristic, but also potentially reductionistic and reifying.
- Neuroscience is a young science; the links from neural activity to conscious experience could take centuries to work out fully; materialist claims that the “obvious” default view is that mind is only the brain at work are unfounded.
- Nonetheless, while it’s natural to think an extraordinary phenomenon like the mind requires an extraordinary cause, lots of *ordinary* causes can be enough for an extraordinary result. Ordinary DNA molecules – across billions of years, and countless organisms and environments – enabled extraordinary humanity. Similarly, ordinary synapses – 100 trillion of them, most firing dozens of times a second – may be sufficient to enable extraordinary mind.
- In any case, mind does not *causally* reduce to brain: when its patterns of information can be represented by any suitable neural network (like a song can be recorded on any CD), they are causally independent of the neurons they “ride,” and then mind causes mind.
- Further, when twin studies are corrected for homogeneity of environments, most genetic factors account for a third at most of intelligence, happiness, success, or spiritual growth. The normal brain can hold both horrible and wonderful thoughts. It’s the contents of mind that are primary, not the organ that enables them.
- Vast numbers of people have progressed on their chosen path without neuroscience.
- Neuroscience is useful for “Transforming the Embodied Mind” when it:
 - Fosters conviction, both about spiritual teachings and the fruits of practice
 - Helps “unpack” the beneficial elements of a spiritual practice through understanding the multiple neural structures and activities that correlate with the practice.
 - Supports the skillful individualization of practice, based on a growing understanding of the natural diversity of brains (e.g., the neural mechanisms underlying temperamental differences)
 - Clarifies the common neural underpinnings of seemingly disparate practices . . . and the differing neurology of practices with similar names
 - Draws attention to the cultivation of general-purpose skills and personal attributes that are implicit in spiritual practices
 - Enables a kind of reverse engineering: (1) pick a mental state of interest, (2) identify plausible neural substrates of the mental state, and (3) find methods for stimulating and strengthening that neural substrate to support and deepen the desired mental state.
- Explicit and implicit aspects of spiritual practices:
 - Explicit usually gets most attention, as a matter of doctrine or tradition
 - But implicit often matters most through its general effects, such as a training in using frontal lobe based capacities to manage uncomfortable emotional reactions, developing more supple control over the parasympathetic nervous system, cultivating positive emotions, and even expanding the amount of neural real estate routinely allocated to the global workspace of consciousness.

From Our Contributors...

So Much Light

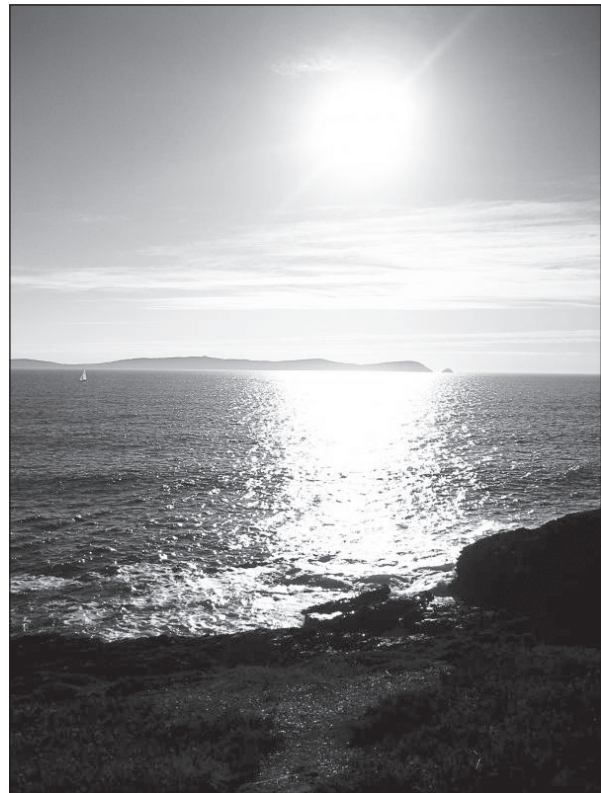
There is so much light
today, in every spider's strand
too many to count
in the gnats' wings against the sun
in each cell of each leaf of bay and oak.
There is so much light
I haven't seen my self.

Carolyn Dille

No Time

"I have no time," the young man said,
For I must travel on.
The Sun is lower in the sky,
And soon I must be gone."
He packed his bag and picked it up,
Then placed it on his shoulder.
"Alas, my friend I cannot sup,
For as we talk, I'm older."

The stranger smiled and shook his hand,
He had no need for haste,
For he had crossed the sea and land,
And he had seen much waste.



"You talk of time," The Stranger said,
"As if it can be measured;
The years, the days, the paths you tread
Are fashioned to be treasured,
But if you hurry on, my friend,
You'll miss Today's fine gift;
The rainbow comes but has no end-
It need not be so swift.
Please stay a while, and sit you down
And feel the Sun's warm rays.
For time is NOW, it wears a crown-
Knows not of years and days!"

The young man paused and looked around,
Then let his burden drop.
The stranger joined him on the ground
And helped the time to stop.
They sat there and they took their meal;
They marveled at the sky,
And time didn't seem so very real-
It came and went right by.

The Sun began to meet the sea;
And darkness came right then,
But they looked on and let it be,
And let it rise again.

Bruce Silver



Grateful Wonder

For this issue's theme of inspiration, here are mind-stretching images and videos.

- Science magazine's imagery awards for 2008:
<http://www.sciencemag.org/vis2008/>
- See all those little dots, blurs, and ellipses? Most of them are galaxies. No big deal: our universe has only about 200 billion of them!
<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap080616.html>
- The Earth at night, seen from orbit. Check out the lights in the middle of Africa, central Asia, whatever places you've never been . . . people there, eating and sleeping, worrying and joyful, making their way through this world of wonders . . .
<http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/ap081005.html>
- The extraordinary beauty of simple gases, spun by light from the sun, our planet's thin and fragile skin, home to all its life: the atmosphere.
<http://www.atoptics.co.uk/>
- The best of 10 years of the best: The Hubble's Heritage Gallery.
<http://heritage.stsci.edu/gallery/gallery.html>

Offerings

Rick Hanson, PhD, and Rick Mendius, MD

1. In early September, Sounds True will have available for download a three CD set of talks and (mainly) brain-savvy exercises for increasing your happiness, by Rick Hanson. Check out www.SoundsTrue.com and just search on “happiness” and you’ll find it. Like any publisher, Sounds True will evaluate the popularity of this material from its sales . . . so we appreciate any word-of-mouth support you can give it!

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, Stanley Krippner, PhD, Bruce Lipton, PhD, Andrew Newberg, MD, 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. At Spirit Rock, in 2008, these daylongs with Rick Hanson and Rick Mendius are scheduled:

- *The Hard Things That Open the Mind and Heart: Practicing with Difficult Conditions*, led with James Baraz, on Sunday, November 2. 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

- *Resting in Emptiness: The Evolution of Awareness and the Transcendence of the Self*, on Sunday, November 30. 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.

4. At Claremont Graduate University, during October 19 – 21, along with Father Thomas Keating, Richard Davidson, Evan Thompson, and Dan Siegel, we’ll be speaking at a conference on using neuropsychology to help illuminate the common ground – and differences – among the contemplative practices of different faith traditions. It’s titled *Neuroscience and Spiritual Practices: Transforming the Embodied Mind*, and it’s being organized by Wellspring Institute Board member, Dr. Andy Dreitcer. For more info, go to: <http://neurospirituality.blogspot.com/>

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.***