



Mind & Life Institute Summer/Fall 2011 Newsletter

Alleviating suffering and promoting well-being by developing
an integrated understanding of the human mind.



Letter from the Chief Academic Officer



Greetings and Welcome,

2011 has been an eventful and successful year for Mind and Life. This year's Mind and Life Summer Research Institute (MLSRI) at the Garrison Institute was a rich and inspiring meeting of scientific, scholarly, and contemplative minds. The level of research acumen and contemplative scholarship present at this year's MLSRI was a testimony to the quality and commitment of the scientists, scholars, academics and contemplatives involved in the fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies.

This year's MLSRI was particularly poignant as it celebrated the life and work of Mind and Life co-founder Francisco J. Varela, on the 10th anniversary of his passing. During his life, Francisco made tremendous contributions to science and to what would become Contemplative Science through his neuroscience research and his work in the areas of autopoiesis and neurophenomenology. Neurophenomenology was Francisco's term for describing the interdisciplinary integration of first- (experiential) and third- (objective) person perspectives and methods in research. Even following his passing, Francisco's legacy and pioneering investigations continue to inform the cutting edge research in the field. We owe a great debt and thanks to Francisco.

We also owe a great debt and appreciation to another pioneer in the field, Adam Engle. Adam's vision, entrepreneurial spirit and dedication have been the backbone and stimulus for Mind and Life for almost 25 years. Without Adam, the field of Contemplative Science would not be where it is today. As Adam continues forward with his transition plan, we offer him deep gratitude for his many years of vision and service.

Currently, a broad CEO search is underway. As we prepare and anticipate a new era of investigating the mind, we reflect fondly on the foundation and contributions that Francisco and Adam have made, which will enable Mind and Life to continue its work as a leader in the fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies.

One of the qualities Adam espoused was collaboration, and in that spirit, Mind and Life and its co-sponsors will host the first-ever International Symposia for Contemplative Studies in April, 2012 in Denver. The Symposia will be the go-to event in the field, and include many of the leading international researchers and contemplatives.

Finally, we wish to offer a bow of appreciation and gratitude to all of you who support Mind and Life in many ways. Without your interest and commitment, we could not do the important work we do. We thank you and look forward to seeing many of you at the Symposia and other gatherings in the days ahead.

With warmest regards,

Alfred W. Kaszniak, Ph.D.



Mind and Life Chairman and Co-Founder R. Adam Engle Retires

As part of a planned transition, Mind and Life Chairman and Co-Founder R. Adam Engle will retire as Chairman in January, 2012. The announcement at the March, 2011 Board of Directors meeting was accompanied by the initiation of a formal search for a new President and CEO. Since March, Mind and Life Chief Academic Officer, Alfred Kaszniak, Ph.D., has served as Interim CEO.

The Mind and Life Board has hired Rusher Loscavio Executive Search to help identify the next CEO of Mind and Life. [Information about the position is available on the Mind and Life website.](#) A shortlist of the most highly qualified candidates will be interviewed by a search committee composed of Mind and Life Board and Program and Research Council members, which will make recommendations to the full Board. To date, Rusher Loscavio has identified several highly qualified candidates. We anticipate completing the selection process by the end of 2011.

Adam Engle co-founded Mind and Life with Neuroscientist Francisco J. Varela and His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1987. Engle was aware that His Holiness was interested in science, and after two years of effort, succeeded in holding the first Mind and Life Dialogue. These dialogues continued approximately every other year until 2000, when broader scientific interest in contemplative practices began to grow. Under Engle's direction, over the next 10 years, Mind and Life successfully hosted several major conferences, attracting the interest and participation of major universities and research centers including MIT, Harvard, the John Hopkins Medical University, Georgetown Medical Center, the Mayo Clinic, and many more.



In 2004, the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute (MLSRI) and accompanying Varela Awards were launched to provide a forum for education, networking, collaboration and pilot research among junior and senior scientific investigators, contemplatives and contemplative scholars.

The result of the dialogues, conferences, MLSRI and Varela Awards has been an explosion in the research of what is now called Contemplative Science, which includes contemplative neuroscience, contemplative clinical science, contemplative developmental science, contemplative education, and contemplative scholarship. More recently, we have added Contemplative Studies to the investigation of contemplative practices. This sister field brings the perspectives of the Humanities and Social Sciences to the research.

As Mind and Life approaches its 25th year of cultivating collaborations, field building and research in these areas, it acknowledges the tremendous vision, courage and tenacity of Adam Engle, which has enabled great accomplishments for the organization and the fields of investigation.

Looking forward, Mind and Life sees tremendous opportunity to build upon its accomplishments and continue as a leader in the fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies. One of the key factors we have identified through the work of Engle and others is the need for a comprehensive investigation of contemplative practices to produce an integrated way of knowing and understanding specific practices and their benefits. More importantly, we understand the need for both third-person and first-person perspectives in the investigation of contemplative practices in order to provide a complete and accurate understanding of the techniques and benefits.

Over the past 25 years we have grown from a partnership between neuroscience and Buddhism to a global collaborative of integrated and cross-disciplinary investigators and contemplative scholars. In April, 2012, Mind and Life will host, with its co-sponsors, the first International Symposia for Contemplative Studies, in Denver, CO. This Symposia promises to be the ground-breaking event in the fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies, bringing together the most accomplished researchers, academics, contemplatives and contemplative scholars in the world's first integrated open scientific conference of its kind.

Mind and Life offers a deep bow of gratitude and thanks to Adam Engle for all of his work, success and devotion over the past 25 years. Thanks to his formidable leadership, Mind and Life is prepared for its own transition into the next phase of investigating the mind.



Mind and Life Summer Research Institute – 2011

The 8th Mind and Life Summer Research Institute (MLSRI) was held again at the Garrison Institute this past June. By some accounts, this was the best year yet, featuring strong collaborations between scientists, contemplatives, contemplative scholars, students and faculty. This year's theme, "New Frontiers in the Contemplative Sciences," was devoted to research in neuroscience, basic psychological science, clinical psychology, philosophy and contemplative studies. Plenary talks and breakout groups were dedicated to exploring the progress made to date as well as the outstanding challenges in the developing fields of contemplative neuroscience, contemplative clinical science and contemplative studies. 2011 also marked the 10th anniversary of co-founder Francisco J. Varela's passing, and this year's MLSRI was held in honor of his life, work and his great vision of collaboration between contemplative traditions and mind-brain science.

This year's MLSRI kicked off in typical fashion with evening welcoming remarks, followed by a special viewing of "Monte Grande: The Life and Work of Francisco J. Varela." The evening concluded with an introductory meditation guided by Roshi Joan Halifax and Sharon Salzberg.

Day 1

On Day 1, morning sessions included a presentation from Matthieu Ricard outlining past achievements and future challenges in Contemplative Science collaboration. Ricard explored this view vis-à-vis

the experience and vision of Francisco Varela as well as through his extensive experience as a longtime monk who has also worked closely with scientists in the field.



MLSRI Participants

inforce and stabilize those qualities in the mind."

Ricard stressed that the true benefits of meditation are the outcomes of compassion, proper perception, and wisdom.

"It is quite possible that the impact of mind training and meditation might bring you to understand reality in a way that the gap between the way things are and the way they appear is bridged," Ricard said. "That is one of the characteristics of wisdom and enlightenment."

Ricard acknowledged the challenges of reductionism in science and the ineffable questions in contemplative practice but stressed that the value of investigation and collaboration in this cross-disciplinary field, which is essentially just beginning, goes beyond the challenges it presents.

Also on the morning of Day 1, Evan Thompson, Ph.D. presented "From Autopoiesis to Neurophenomenology," a review of Francisco Varela's life work and its engagement with Buddhist philosophy.

"It's possible," Ricard said, "that if there are instant changes when you meditate, that repeating those changes again and again will re-

"So we could say that autopoiesis as a system is self-specifying," Thompson said, "that everything is conditioning everything else in the domain. And because of this there is a relational identity that is sustained under precarious conditions; it's a fancy way of talking about impermanence – they hold together because they are conditioning each other in this way."

Citing Varela's early research, Thompson pointed out that perception is episodic, made up of measurable moments, although it appears continuous, that the mental states and flow of moment-to-moment experience are self-generated, and further that studies suggest that meditative practices are enhancing the mental abilities and influencing the underlying neuro-rhythms of such states and experiences.

Day 1 continued with contributions from Giuseppe Pagnoni, Ph.D., in his talk, "The Emptiness in Mindfulness: An Inquiry into the Interaction of Spontaneous Thoughts and Attentional Processes during Zen Meditation," where he explored conceptual processing in Zen meditations.

Also on Day 1, Kalina Christoff, Ph.D., discussed "The Cognitive Neuroscience of Spontaneous Cognition and Mind Wandering," which looked at spontaneous thought and daydreaming from the position of both experienced meditator and neuroscientist.

Day 2

Day 2 commenced with an historical presentation from David McMahan, Ph.D., "The Intertwining of Buddhism and Sci-

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2011 SRI *continued from Page 4*

ence: Historical and Cultural Reflections,” where he explained that significant transformations in Buddhism in the last 150 years, specifically Buddhist Modernism, have made the current dialogue between Buddhist meditative traditions and cognitive science possible.

Also on the morning of Day 2, Chakravarthi Ram-Prasad, D.Phil., presented “Hindu Philosophy of Contemplation and Contemplative Science: Prospects and Challenges.” Ram-Prasad’s talk highlighted the increasing inclusion of practices outside Buddhism in the Contemplative Science conversation and research.

According to Ram-Prasad, classical Advaita Vedanta is likely the one Hindu system most relevant to Contemplative Science, as a high proportion of contemporary practitioners locate themselves within its tradition. But the practices of Yoga and the philosophical techniques of Nyaya and Mimamsa also informed Advaitic approaches to consciousness and its disciplining. In the light of this, certain challenges face contemplative science in the exploration of Vedanta, although these challenges may also apply to Buddhist, Jain and other traditions:

1. The influence of Western philosophy of mind on the conceptual vocabulary of contemplative science.
2. Reductionism in neuroscience.
3. The bridging vocabulary between neuroscience and contemplative practice and ethics.
4. The problem of whether computational notions of cognitions are apt for contemplative theories of consciousness.

The afternoon of Day 2 began with a Contemplative Practice Forum represented by Geshe Dorji Damdul, Andrew Dreitzer, Ph.D., Richard Freeman, Barry Kerzin, M.D., and Sharon Salzberg; moderated by Roshi Joan Halifax, Ph.D. The panel reflected on the science-contemplative dialogue from the perspectives of multiple Asian and Western contemplative practice traditions.

Roshi Joan stimulated a rich discussion
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Richie Davidson and Al Kaszniak

This reframing has emphasized the rational, meditative, and textual aspects of Buddhism, while de-emphasizing ritual, magical, merit-making, and devotional elements pervasive in more traditional Asian forms of Buddhism, McMahan said.

In the News: Mindfulness for Pain Mitigation

Varela Awardee Fadel Zeidan shows how meditation alleviates pain

2007 Varela Awardee Fadel Zeidan recently published his Varela study, “Brain Mechanisms Supporting the Modulation of Pain by Mindfulness Meditation,” (*The Journal of Neuroscience*, April 6, 2011. 31(14):5540–5548). Fadel, a cognitive neuroscientist now conducting research at Wake Forest School of Medicine, has also attended the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute four times since 2006.

“This study is my Varela Project,” Fadel said. “This research would not be possible without the Varela Award I received in 2007. Moreover, I was able to land a heavily sought out post-doctoral fellow-

ship with Dr. Robert Coghill in part because of my Varela funding. I am very grateful to the Mind & Life Institute and their respective donors for their invaluable contributions.”

In the study, Fadel and fellow researchers John McHaffie (2004 and 2005 Mind and Life Summer Research Institute Senior Investigator), Robert Coghill (leading neuroimaging expert in pain) and others, stimulated subjects with painful though harmless heat on the back of their calves while measuring brain activity with functional MRI. Then, subjects underwent four days of 20 minutes/day of basic mindfulness training. Following the training, subjects were re-exposed to the pain stimulus while practicing mindfulness,

and again brain activity was measured.

“We found a dramatic reduction in the pain ratings,” Fadel said, “including a 40 percent reduction in pain intensity and a 57 percent reduction in pain unpleasantness.”

By contrast, other studies show that a clinical dose of morphine only provides a 20-25 percent reduction in pain unpleasantness employing a similar rating scale.

Fadel said that while preliminary studies
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with her first question, “What do we mean by mindful and how do we work in a world where nationalism is giving way to more global expressions as Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism are moving into the global culture with other profound traditions?”

The conversation explored various traditions and definitions, and provided consensus that the growing collaboration between science and contemplative practices is beneficial as it will help each domain broaden its understand and ultimately provide respective benefits to humankind.

On the evening of Day 2, presentations from four recent Varela Awardees were delivered:

Holly Rau

Application of the Neurovisceral Integration Model to Mindfulness: Implications for Stress Regulation and the Development of Insomnia



Contemplative Practice Forum Speakers

Melissa Ellamil

Investigating the Neural Basis of Spontaneous Thought with Real-Time fMRI and Contemplative Mental Training

Thorsten Barnhofer

Using MBCT to Prevent Relapse to Suicidality in Patients Suffering from Ongoing Depressive Symptoms

Julie Brefczynski-Lewis

Changing our Perception of Others through Compassion Meditation

Day 3

Day 3 was a day of silent retreat and contemplative practice led by Roshi Joan Halifax and Sharon Salzberg. This mini-retreat included morning yoga and guided meditation practices throughout the day. In addition to Day 3, each day of MLSRI also included early-morning yoga as well as morning and evening meditation followed by recommended evening silence.

Day 4

Day 4 resumed the plenary talks with a morning presentation by Amishi P. Jha, Ph.D., “Strengthening Working Memory with Mindfulness Training.”

According to Jha, working memory capacity (WMC) is used in managing cognitive demands and regulating emotions. Persistent and intensive demands, such as those

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show that meditation can reduce pain, this study shows how meditation reduces pain. “It illustrates the brain mechanisms involved in reducing pain,” he explained. “The short answer is: there is not just one mechanism – mindfulness meditation reduces pain through multiple avenues.”

According to the study, meditation reduced pain-related activation of the contralateral primary somatosensory cortex, reduced pain intensity through increased activity in the anterior cingulate cortex and anterior insula, areas involved in cognitive regulation of pain and introspective awareness, and brain areas involved in the regulation of emotions such as the

prefrontal cortex.

Fadel intends to continue his research by further exploring the specific pain-mitigating aspects of meditation training and other self-regulatory techniques. “I will continue to assess the effects of meditation on pain by really diving into the investigation of the mechanisms involved in meditation-related pain relief, especially as compared to other robust control conditions,” he said. “Once we understand what the active mechanisms are, we can try to implement those in clinical settings.”

Fadel’s study is getting hearty mainstream coverage, some of which can be accessed here:

- [NPR](#)
- [CNN](#)
- [Huffington Post](#)
- [Men’s Health](#)
- [Contemplative Mind](#)
- [Scientific American](#)

To see an abstract of the study, go here: <http://www.jneurosci.org/content/31/14/5540.abstract>

Mind and Life is proud of Fadel and his accomplishments to date, and we encourage him to continue his excellent work in exploring the mind.



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experienced during high-stress intervals, deplete WMC and lead to cognitive failures and emotional disturbances. Jha presented findings showing that mindfulness training in highly stressed military persons improved their emotional well-being and promoted ethical decision making.

Next, Willoughby Britton, Ph.D. presented “Adverse Effects and Difficult Stages of the Contemplative Path,” outlining adverse outcomes and stages of meditation practice, and explaining that many are described in Buddhist texts and well-known to Buddhist meditation teachers. Some of these effects and difficult

stages include periods of disorientation, perceptual changes, emotional lability and de-repression of psychological material; extreme fear, and profound changes in the sense of self. Britton said that the lack of research on this topic has propagated a potentially misguided assumption that meditation can be applied

to nearly any condition without a need for caution or additional knowledge or training. But in interviews with more than 40 meditation teachers, practitioners and Buddhist scholars (including Jack Kornfeld, Joseph Goldstein, Shinzen Young and Alan Wallace) she found a wide range of interpretations from progress to pathology. Britton discussed possible risk factors which may exacerbate expected, but perhaps difficult or challenging meditation effects into the need for psychiatric intervention and suggested that more research is needed to establish appropriate safety parameters.



Kalina Christoff

On the afternoon of Day 4, Contemplative Science Keynote, Richard Davidson, Ph.D., presented “The Emergence of Contemplative Neuroscience,” an overview of the convergence of scientific and extra-scientific factors that have permitted the emergence of a new hybrid discipline, Contemplative Neuroscience. Davidson said that some of the key factors were developments in our understanding of neuroplasticity and epigenetics, the development of modern methods for interrogating human brain function, the publications of basic research on meditation in top-tier mainstream scientific journals,

the active involvement of the Dalai Lama and the Mind & Life Institute in the promotion of this work, and the presence of several high profile research centers focused on this work at major research universities in the U.S. and abroad.

The talk summarized some of the key findings that have emerged

as well as future methodological and conceptual challenges that must be faced.

The evening of Day 4 included a Data Blitz by 12 Varela Awardees followed by a Poster Session.

Day 5

Day 5 began with a talk by Clifford Saron, Ph.D., “The View From Within Studied From Without: Adventures, Findings, and Issues In Contemplative Science.” Drawing on his experience conducting the Shamatha Project, Saron consider two

questions: “What do people do when they engage in contemplative practice?” and, “What do people do differently because they have engaged in contemplative practice?” Saron described the need for longitudinal studies to answer these questions and reported findings from the Shamatha Project, as well as exploring the global hypothesis that meditation increases adaptive functioning.

The morning of Day 5 also included a presentation by John Dunne, Ph.D., “Best Practices and Future Challenges,” which examined some of the most persistent current methodological challenges to researchers. Dunne suggested that the question, “Why would one engage in such research at all?” needs to be asked and that the answer to this question requires an assessment of one’s own cultural location, including the various assumptions and hopes that inevitably inform any research agenda. “The question of goals is likewise central to contemplative traditions themselves,” Dunne said, “and engaging with such traditions requires an ability to distinguish the motivations for claims made by traditions and the way that those claims clarify or obscure the nature of the practices themselves.”

The afternoon of Day 5 featured a talk by Contemplative Studies Keynote: Maria Heim, Ph.D., “Moral Phenomenology in the Theravada Contemplative Studies.” Heim described her approach to moral phenomenology in the thought of Buddhaghosa, a 5th century Theravada scholar, offering a general account of how Buddhaghosa’s commentaries on the Abhidhamma explored the factors of moral experience and the nature of mind. She also discussed moral sentiments as exam-

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ples to illustrate how and why the tradition regarded certain mental phenomena as morally valenced, and explained that in her current work, Buddhaghosa's understanding of intention (*cetana*) and agency is central to understanding the nature of conscious experience and its relationship to action.

The week-long event concluded on the evening of Day 5 with a Contemplative Practice Keynote address: Michel Bitbol, M.D., Ph.D., "A Balanced Approach of Consciousness in which Contemplation Matters." Bitbol asked, "How can we avoid bias in the dialogue between Buddhism and neuroscience?" Accordingly, he responded, "If objective science were taken as a revelation of reality as it is, it could claim precedence over Buddhism for elucidating everything, including mind and consciousness. But this over-ambitious view of science is easily challenged on epistemological grounds, and one then becomes receptive to a Buddhist understanding of science as part of conventional truth, in contrast to an absolute truth." According to Bitbol, accounting for

consciousness no longer means explaining away the first-personal approach of Buddhism in terms of the third-personal approach to neuroscience, but means properly articulating both approaches. A model for this articulation between Buddhism and neurosciences is provided in the way Francisco Varela articulated neurophenomenology, Bitbol said.

The purpose of the MLSRI is to advance collaborative research among scientists, contemplative scholars, humanities scholars and contemplative practitioners, based on a process of inquiry and dialogue. Through this collaborative program, we are nurturing a new generation of scientists interested in exploring the influence of contemplative practice and meditation on the mind, behavior, brain function and health, and are fostering the development of new fields of research collectively referred to as the Contemplative Science (including contemplative neuroscience, contemplative clinical science, contemplative education,

and contemplative scholarship). The aim of Contemplative Science is to advance our understanding of the human mind and how training the mind through the



Matthieu Ricard

use of particular contemplative practices can lead to reduced suffering, enhanced health and cognitive/emotional functioning, greater happiness and increased social harmony. Work within the contemplative sciences, deriving from intellectual dialogues with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, other distinguished contemplative teachers and practitioners, scientists, philosophers, and contemplative scholars, has integrated the rigorous methodologies of modern science with the philosophical and experiential insights offered by the world's contemplative traditions.

The Mind & Life Institute Francisco J. Varela Research Awards

The Mind and Life Institute Francisco J. Varela Research Awards (Varela Awards) for graduate students and post docs were established in 2004 as a companion program to the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute and have been a critical element in supporting the development of Contemplative Science. Since inception, Mind and Life has distributed more than \$1.15 million to Varela Awardees. At least 62 articles have been published in peer-reviewed journals by Varela Awardees, with at least 14 additional articles under review and 46 in preparation. Varela Awardees have also given 52 scientific poster presentations and 123 varied other presentations

on the research and findings related to their investigations. Further, the relatively small pilot grants of \$10,000 to \$15,000 have, to date, stimulated more than \$12 million in follow-on funding from federal and private grant sources for the areas of research funded by the Varela Awards.

The Varela Awards solicit research grant proposals that stimulate basic and translational research that evaluate both state and trait effects of contemplative practice and incorporate first-person contemplative methods into cognitive/affective neuroscience research. The Awards emphasize empirical examinations of contemplative

techniques with the ultimate goal that findings derived from such investigations will provide greater insight into the mechanisms of contemplative practice and its benefits for reducing human suffering.

Eligibility

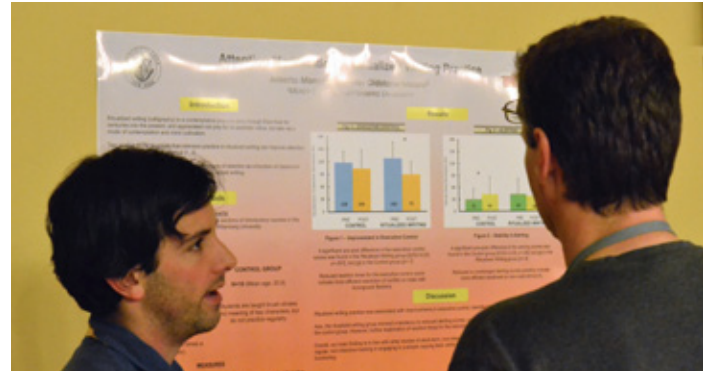
In order to apply for the Varela Awards, the applicant and any co-investigator must have attended, as a Research Fellow, the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute within two years of the current application.

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Mind and Life is proud to support the 2010-2011 Varela Awardees. We also acknowledge and express our deep thanks to the John Templeton Foundation and the Hershey Family Foundation for supporting this important grant program.



Michael Lifshitz and Martijn van Beek at MLSRI

2010-2011 Varela Awardees

- Micah Allen, M.A., Aarhus University, Århus Denmark**
The Neurophenomenology of Mindfulness: Meta-Cognitive Awareness as a Mechanism for Adaptive Change
Funding \$15,000
- Grace Bullock, Ph.D., University of Oregon**
Yoga for Parenting Success: YPS
Funding \$15,000
- Gaelle Desbordes, Ph.D., Boston University**
Neural and Physiological Correlates of Tibetan Energy-Channel Meditation in Highly-Trained Practitioners
Funding \$15,000
- Jessica Flynn, M.S., Kent State University**
Effects of Training in Loving-Kindness Meditation on Underlying Approach and Avoidance Motivations
Funding \$15,000
- Tim Gard, MSc., Bender Institute of Neuroimaging, Giessen, Germany**
The Effects of Kripalu Yoga on the Brain: A Longitudinal Cortical Thickness and Diffusion Tensor Imaging Study
Funding \$15,000
- Andrea Hayes, University of Wisconsin-Madison**
Differential Effects of Mindfulness and Yogic Breathing on Cognitive and Emotional Processes
Funding \$15,000
- Britta Holzel, Ph.D., Bender Institute of Neuroimaging, Giessen, Germany**
Do White Matter Changes Contribute to Improved Fear Extinction Following Mindfulness Training?
Funding \$15,000
- Daniel Levinson, B.S., University of Wisconsin-Madison**
Breath Counting: Developing a Behavioral Measure of Mindfulness
Funding \$15,000
- Kristen Lyons, Ph.D., University of Minnesota**
The Effects of Mindfulness Meditation Training in Early Childhood
Funding \$15,000
- Jose Raul Naranjo, Dipl. Phys., Center for Meditation, Mindfulness and Neuroscience Research, Evaluation Research in Complementary Medicine, Department of Environmental Health Sciences, University Medical Center Freiburg**
EEG Spectral Signatures of the Impact of Mindfulness Meditation on Perceptual-Motor Awareness and Self-Agency
Funding \$15,000
- Eva Oberle, Ph.D. candidate, University of British Columbia**
Mindfulness-Based Education in the Elementary School Classroom: Individual and Joint Effects of a Teacher and Student Program on Children's Classroom Behaviors, Peer Relations, Classroom Hierarchy, and Stress Reactivity
Funding \$15,000
- Autumn Wiley, B.A., University of Arizona**
Exploring the Effects of Mindfulness Meditation on Self-Control Failure
Funding \$10,000



INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIA for Contemplative Studies

The inaugural International Symposia for Contemplative Studies will be a collaborative effort among Centers and Laboratories around the world that explore the correlates and consequences of contemplative practice. The Symposia brings together world-renowned researchers, scholars, teachers, and students in keynote addresses, concurrent master lectures, panels, workshops and poster presentations.

The Symposia promises to be the foundational and pivotal meeting in the fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies, bringing together some of the world's renown scientists, academics, contemplatives and contemplative scholars. The Symposia is co-sponsored by many of the leading research centers, laboratories and other organizations dedicated to investigating the mind, mindfulness and contemplative practices. The level of collaboration and cooperation present in the Symposia is unprecedented in the field of Contemplative Science and promises to elevate the field and set the stage for new levels of sharing and working together.

Registrations are selling out fast, as the venue has limited seating. To reserve your place today, visit contemplativeresearch.org and click on "Register Now."

The purpose of the International Symposia for Contemplative Studies is to bring together academics and other interested attendees for presentation, discussion, and collaborative networking in the fields of contemplative basic science, contemplative clinical science, contemplative philosophy and humanities, contemplative education, and those domains of contemplative practice that relate to and interact with these fields of research and scholarship. These distinct, though overlapping fields of contemplative study each focus on advancing our understanding of the human mind and how training the mind through the use of contemplative practices can lead to a reduction in suffering, enhanced health and cognitive/emotional functioning, greater happiness, and increased social harmony.

There has been growing consensus on the need for a regular and recurring venue in which researchers, scholars, and students

in these emerging contemplative fields can come together to share new research and scholarship and network with established and potential collaborators. Such a venue would be an important vehicle for shaping and encouraging an interdisciplinary and cohesive field of contemplative studies in which basic and applied science, scholarship, and contemplative traditions collaboratively develop an integrated way of knowing in which first- and third-person perspectives are equally and synergistically included.

The International Symposia for Contemplative Studies will begin the evening of Thursday, April 26, 2012, and conclude in the early afternoon of April 29. The format of this meeting will include invited keynote addresses and master lectures, along with submitted and invited concurrent symposia, workshops, panels and paper presentation sessions, poster sessions, and contemplative practice opportunities. Evening activities will be designed to facilitate networking, ongoing collaborative relationships, and the establishment of new collaboration.

www.contemplativeresearch.org

International Symposia for Contemplative Studies Co-Sponsors*

Baumann Foundation
Brown University Center for Contemplative Studies
Center for Addiction and Mental Health - Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Clinic
Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education
Center for Contemplative Mind in Society
Center for Engaged Compassion, Claremont Lincoln University
Center for Investigative Healthy Minds
Center for Mind and Brain, UC Davis
Center for Mindfulness
Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, School of Psychology, Bangor University, Wales, UK
Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
CU Boulder: Dimidjian Lab

Emory Collaborative for Contemplative Studies
Garrison Institute
Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley
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Institute of Noetic Sciences
Mindful Awareness Research Center
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Naropa University
PEP Lab, UNC Chapel Hill
Prevention Research Center, Penn State University
Shambhala Sun
University of Arizona Neuropsychology, Emotion and Memory Lab
University of Miami Mindfulness Research Initiative



Why Give?

The work of the Mind & Life Institute is supported almost entirely by contributions from individuals and family foundations. We have received a few grants from institutional foundations, and over the years we have held a few events for which we have charged admission, but the survival of the Mind & Life Institute depends essentially upon the kindness and generosity of people like you who support our vision and mission and have confidence in our ability to execute our strategy.

We recognize that the health, well-being and happiness of individuals and societies are primarily dependent on our individual and collective thoughts, emotions and decisions. Most of the problems facing humankind today stem from the minds of people—wars, environmental degradation, social and economic inequality. These are not natural disasters. To deal effectively with these issues it is crucial to understand how the human mind works and to develop programs and practices that train our minds to be mentally and emotionally healthy. Science has shown that physical fitness is vital to health and well-being. It is now time for science to demonstrate that mental and emotional fitness are equally essential to health and well-being.



The Mind & Life Institute is at the forefront of this investigation into cultivating an optimally healthy mind, which will lead to healthier people, healthier societies and a healthier planet. We are very grateful to be involved in this important work. Over the past 25 years, under the leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, other contemplatives, and world renowned scientists and scholars, the Mind & Life Institute has become a leading pioneer and catalyst in this emerging field of Contemplative Science. Our ability to continue to lead this critical development depends upon your kindness and generosity. We have the knowledge, experience and management to carry on this important work and, as our work grows, we need financial partners to join us.

We want you to grow with us as we grow our collaborative community. Together, we can build on our vision for understanding, awareness and a better world. Your donation is paramount in ensuring that the important work we do with scientists and contemplatives around the world continues. Without supporters like you who see the value in the change we all seek, we could not continue. Please consider making a donation to the Mind & Life Institute.

We are deeply grateful to all of our supporters who have shared our vision and entrusted us with this important mission thus far, and we are excited to welcome new friends joining us in the vital work we do.

[Click here to make your donation - Thank you!](#) To discuss a significant or multi-year gift please contact Chris O'Brien, Development and Communications Officer at chris@mindandlife.org or (303) 530-1940 x106.

A deep bow of gratitude and thanks!

The Mind & Life Institute

P.S. Please share this newsletter with your friends and family.

The Mind & Life Institute is a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are fully tax-deductible.



A TWENTY-FOUR YEAR HISTORY OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Mind and Life Dialogues

The titles of these dialogues between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and leading scientists show the range of topics that the Mind & Life Institute has explored. For more details on these conferences, please go to www.mindandlife.org.

- 2010: Contemplative Science: The Scientific Study of the Effect of Contemplative Practice on Human Biology and Behaviour
- 2010: Latest Findings in Contemplative Neuroscience
- 2010: Altruism and Compassion in Economic Systems: A Dialogue at the Interface of Economics, Neuroscience and Contemplative Sciences
- 2009: Educating World Citizens for the 21st Century: Educators, Scientists and Contemplatives Dialogue on Cultivating a Healthy Mind, Brain and Heart
- 2009: Attention, Memory, and the Mind
- 2009: Latest Findings in Contemplative Neuroscience
- 2008: Investigating the Mind-Body Connection: The Science and Clinical Applications of Meditation
- 2007: Mindfulness, Compassion and the Treatment of Depression
- 2007: The Universe in a Single Atom
- 2005: Investigating the Mind: The Science and Clinical Applications of Meditation
- 2004: Neuroplasticity: The Neuronal Substrates of Learning and Transformation
- 2003: Investigating the Mind: Exchanges between Buddhism and Biobehavioral Science on How the Mind Works
- 2002: The Nature of Matter, The Nature of Life
- 2001: Transformations of Mind, Brain and Emotion
- 2000: Destructive Emotions
- 1998: Epistemological Questions in Quantum Physics and Eastern Contemplative Sciences
- 1997: The New Physics and Cosmology
- 1995: Altruism, Ethics, and Compassion
- 1992: Sleeping, Dreaming, and Dying
- 1990: Emotions and Health
- 1989: Dialogues between Buddhism and the Neurosciences
- 1987: Dialogues between Buddhism and the Cognitive Sciences

Mind and Life Books and DVD Sets

The following books and DVD sets describe discussions between His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Western scientists. Books in print can be obtained from major booksellers; DVD sets are available directly from the Mind & Life Institute. For more information about each title, please go to www.mindandlife.org.

- Available in hardback January 1, 2012 - *The Mind's Own Physician: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama on the Healing Power of Meditation*, based on Mind and Life XIII in 2005
- *Altruism and Compassion in Economic Systems*, DVD from Mind and Life XX, in 2010
- *Educating World Citizens for the 21st Century*, DVD from Mind and Life XIX, in 2009
- *The Science of a Compassionate Life*, DVD from His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Denver Public Talk, in 2006
- *The Science and Clinical Applications of Meditation*, DVD from Mind and Life XIII, in 2005
- *Train your Mind; Change your Brain*, from Mind and Life XII, in 2004
- *Investigating the Mind*, DVD from Mind and Life XI, in 2003
- *The Dalai Lama at MIT*, from Mind and Life XI, in 2003
- *Mind and Life: Discussions with the Dalai Lama on the Nature of Reality*, from Mind and Life X, in 2002
- *Destructive Emotions: A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama*, from Mind and Life VIII, in 2000
- *The New Physics and Cosmology: Dialogues with the Dalai Lama*, from Mind and Life VI, in 1997
- *Visions of Compassion: Western Scientists and Tibetan Buddhists*, from Mind and Life V, in 1995
- *Sleeping, Dreaming, and Dying: An Exploration of Consciousness with the Dalai Lama*, from Mind and Life IV, in 1992
- *Healing Emotions: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Mindfulness, Emotions, and Health*, from Mind and Life III, in 1990
- *Consciousness at the Crossroads: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on Brain Science and Buddhism*, from Mind and Life II, in 1989
- *Gentle Bridges: Conversations with the Dalai Lama on the Sciences of Mind*, from Mind and Life I, in 1987

Mind and Life Research Initiatives

- **Mind and Life Summer Research Institute** - A week-long residential science retreat for 200 scientists, clinicians, contemplative scholar/practitioners and philosophers from around the world, working together to develop new fields of science and studies that examine the effects of contemplative practice and mental training on brain, behavior, philosophy, religious studies and the humanities. This is an annual program of the Mind & Life Institute which began in June, 2004, and has continued yearly since then.
- **Mind and Life Francisco J. Varela Research Grant Program** - providing small research grants to investigate hypotheses developed at the Mind and Life Summer Research Institute. Ten to 15 Varela awards are awarded annually.
- **Mind and Life Education Humanities and Social Sciences Initiative** - ensuring that the emerging fields of Contemplative Science and Contemplative Studies are multidisciplinary and integrated among first, second, and third-person modes of investigation.
- **Mind and Life Developmental Science Research Network (formerly MLERN)** - exploring human development issues and creating education-related programs that can help children cultivate the mental qualities of attention, emotional balance, kindness, confidence, and happiness early in life.



Mind & Life Institute • 7007 Winchester Circle, Suite 100 • Boulder, CO 80301 USA
Phone: 303-530-1940 • Email: info@mindandlife.org • Website: www.mindandlife.org

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