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2013 Georgia School of Addiction Studies: A Shared Vision - Integrating  
Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Toward Whole Health

August 27, 2013; 9:30am – 5:00pm

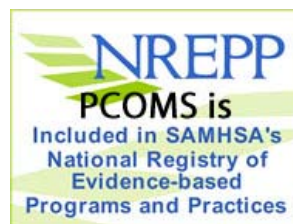
**Mindware: Recovery counseling  
and  
neuro-positive psychology**

with

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The Endless Vine: An ancient symbol  
of life, infinity or the interweaving wisdom of the  
flow of time and movement on the path with That Which Is Eternal



## **Mindware: Recovery counseling and neuro-positive psychology**

- I. This workshop introduces four decades of clinical neuroscience research and two millennia of mindfulness practices for changing behavioral health conditions including addiction, depression, and obsessions-compulsions. Intentionally and repeatedly focusing attention impacts the growth of brain cells (neurogenesis), the density of their interconnections and the speed with which they communicate (synaptogenesis) and the physical reallocation of brain areas (cross-modal functional neuroplasticity). The results include an enhanced awareness of one's emotions, thoughts and behaviors and significant improvements in managing how we respond to the external environment, including other people. We will practice mindware techniques for influencing on our perceptions and decision-making.
  
- II. Objectives. Upon completion of this training participants will be able to:
  - A. Identify three brain-mind capacities (neuroplasticities) associated with emotions, thoughts and behaviors.
  - B. Explain tolerance, withdrawals, addiction, relapse and recovery based on current neuroscience.
  - C. Recognize the impact of self-directed mental force, a four step process for identifying and replacing deceptive brain-generated messages that hold us back from recovery or other changes that we want to make.
  - D. Practice mindfulness techniques for changing addiction into long-term recovery.

### III. Schedule

|         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| 9:30am  | Session I        |
| 11:00am | 15 minute break* |
| 12:30pm | Lunch            |
| 1:30pm  | Session II       |
| 3:00pm  | 15 minute break* |
| 5:00pm  | End              |



#### IV. Safety and Respect Guidelines

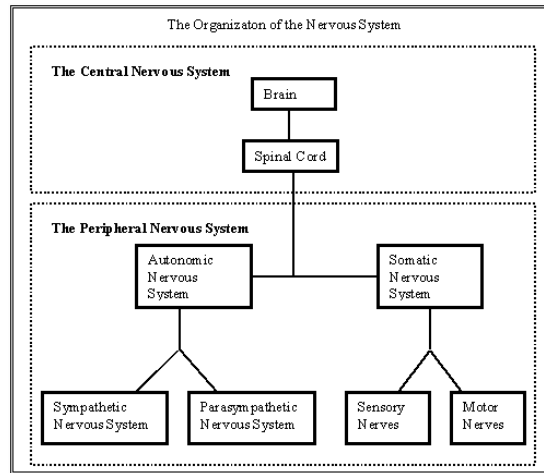
- A. Turn off cell phones, pagers and other PDAs (personally distracting devices)
- B. No fixing: Share what has worked for you by using “I” statements
- C. “Ouch”: Say if someone says something that offends you and assume it was unintentional
- D. “Vegas rules”: Say before a statement that you request not be repeated outside of this session
- E. “Oops”: Say if you wish you hadn’t said something
- F. “May I”: Ask for permission before you share what you have learned about another participant’s journey
- G. Stretch: Request that you change your role, even if for a short time
- H. Notify someone before you leave the room or will return more than 15 minutes late
- I. Other guidelines that will help make this a safe and respectful place to maximize your learning experience?

#### V. Biodots

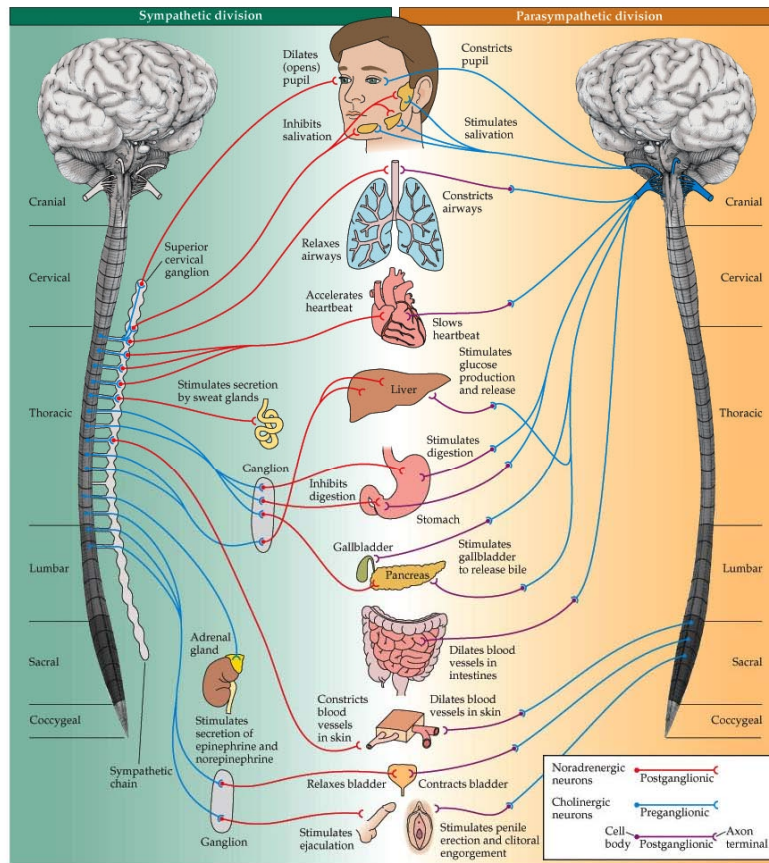
- A. Biofeedback machines that measure skin temperature
  - 1. Black <89.6°
  - 2. Amber 89.6° Tense
  - 3. Yellow 90.6° Unsettled
  - 4. Green 91.6° Involved (normal)
  - 5. Turquoise 92.6° Relaxed
  - 6. Blue 93.6° Calm
  - 7. Violet 94.6° Very relaxed
  - 8. Black >94.6°



## B. Nervous system organization



## C. Autonomic nervous system effects: fight-flight-freeze-tend



## VI. The Mind – Homo sapiens – Latin: wise man

- A. Yes and No Exercise
- B. Daniel Siegel. (2010). Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation, Chapter III. Mind is the embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information. Based on eight senses:
1. vision,
  2. audition,
  3. olfactory
  4. tactile (external)
  5. gustatory (taste),
  6. interoception: awareness of internal bodily states [equilibrioception (internal sense of balance), proprioception (internal sense of joints and muscles, body's place in space, hunger, feeling sick, having to excrete, etc.), thermoception (heat), and nociception (internal sense of pain from skin, joints and bones, and organs)],
  7. mindsight: ability to look into within and perceive the mind, to reflect on our experience
  8. relational sense: awareness of the interconnectedness of elements of a system; internal simulation – mirror neurons
- C. Awakened mind – not just finding personal inner peace and equanimity but has implications for cultural evolution.
1. Integration of brain, mind and relationships = attunement with others and this is the essence of mindfulness meditation
    - a. activates the middle prefrontal and insular cortex – the resonance circuits; also known as the left shift: to be open to other people's signals, to accept them as they are, to attune to other people
    - b. the thickness of the middle prefrontal and insular cortex has been correlated with the number of hours of mindfulness meditation
    - c. Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction: Jon Kabat-Zinn, University of Massachusetts Professor of Medicine Emeritus Eight weeks – improved immune system functioning and a “left shift”
- D. Stephen. Porges, S. (2011). *The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-*



*regulation*. New York: Norton. Director of the Brain-Body Center, University of Illinois at Chicago.

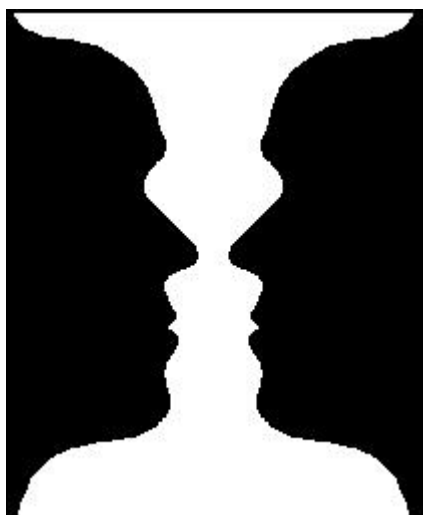
1. Neuroception: perception of danger or non-danger. Is it safe or not? Not – activates the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system – fight or flight response
  2. Brain stem (medulla) connects to the vagus, or tenth cranial nerve and the parasympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system (PANS). Each vagus branch is associated with a different adaptive behavioral strategy, both of which are inhibitory in nature. The vagal system is in opposition to the sympathetic (adrenal) nervous system (SANS). Creates four potential responses to threats: freeze, fight, flight or tend.
  3. Ventral vagus – unmyelinated, older connection; threat and helplessness causes most vertebrates to freeze or faint, conserving their metabolic resources. Drop heart rate and breathing rate – faint or freeze.
  4. “No” creates the neuroception of danger – system goes into high alert and turns off the social engagement process.
  5. Dorsal vagus – myelinated PANS signals that mediate the “freeze, fight or flight” behaviors in the service of social, affiliative behaviors including social communication, self-soothing and calming – the “tend” response.
  6. “Yes” creates a sense of safety. Self-engagement and social system engagement
- E. Left shift is the basis of eudaimonia (vs hedonic happiness) – a sense of connection with self and others, a sense of meaning, equanimity
1. Equanimity = Latin – having an equal mind/soul = a state of psychological stability and composure which is undisturbed by experience of or exposure to emotions, pain, or other phenomena that may cause others to lose the balance of their mind
  2. Left shift is an approach state = stay present for the emotion, pain, etc.
  3. Trauma: withdrawal leads to more wounding and creates suffering.
  4. Neural integration leads to:
    - a. Secure parent child attachment – prosocial growth and healthy emotional regulation
    - b. Mental health
    - c. Mindfulness



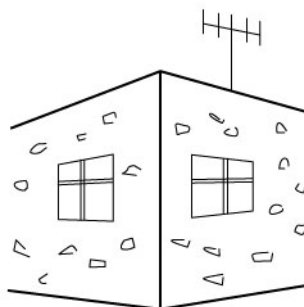
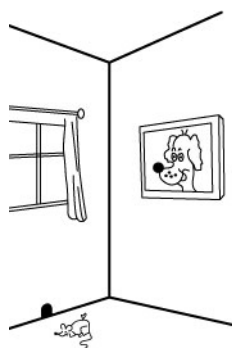
VII. Integration Choir

VIII. Why “recovery” counseling?

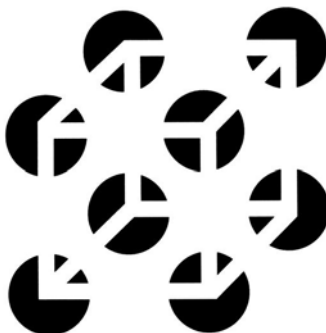
- A. Understanding of Alcoholism Scale
- B. Dualism. Figure-ground: Automatic, fundamental (genetic?) meaning making process - perception. Who’s reality is right?



- C. Muller-Lyer Illusion: You must see unequal length center lines



- D. Schwartz & Begley (2002): One's choice of what aspect of experience to focus on is an expression of the active life part of mental life.



- E. Dualism vs Integration: Wise heart and mindful brain = find an awakening inside of ourselves to transform the path of internal experience, relational and cultural evolution = Both/And

Addiction Counseling

Acute symptoms  
Denial  
Progressive disease  
Character defects  
Confrontation  
Authoritative goals and tasks  
Culture of suspicion

Recovery Counseling

Long-term recovery  
Ambivalence (DARN CAT)  
Progressive health & wellness  
Strengths & passions  
Relationship enhancement skills (OARS)  
Client-directed goals and tasks  
Culture of feedback and adjustment

Recovery-oriented systems of care honor the roles of diverse behavioral and physical health care providers and many pathways to recovery!

- F. William James. (1890). Principles of Psychology.  
This strain of attention is the fundamental act of will. The effort to *attend* is therefore only part of what the word 'will' covers; it covers also the effort to *consent* to something to which our attention is not yet quite complete.... So that although attention is the first and fundamental thing in volition, *express consent to the reality of what is attended to* is often an additional and quite distinct phenomenon involved.

- G. Schwartz, J. & Begley, S. (2002). The mind and the brain.





Refocusing attention generates the mental energy-force necessary to sustain mindfulness and so activate, strengthen, and stabilize... the plastic and enduring changes in the brain and hence the mind. Intention is made causally efficacious through attention.

- H. The brain may determine the content of our experience but our mind chooses which aspect of that experience receives attention. The mind can change the brain!

IX. The Relaxation Response: Herbert Benson (1975); [relaxationresponse.org](http://relaxationresponse.org)

- A. Stress reduction; improved immune function; the ability to balance emotions; enhanced capacity for compassion, empathy, and equanimity; insight; and identity shift.
  1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
  2. Allow your eyes to close.
  3. Think about each muscle, beginning at your feet and progressing up to your face. Deeply relax all your muscles. Keep them relaxed.
  4. Breathe through your nose. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word, "ONE", silently to yourself. For example, breathe IN ... OUT, "ONE",- IN .. OUT, "ONE", etc. Breathe easily and naturally.
  5. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes.
  6. Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to not dwell on them and return to repeating "ONE." With practice, the response should come with little effort. Practice the technique once or twice daily, but not within two hours of a meal, since the digestive processes seem to interfere with the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.



## IX. The Brain and Drugs

- A. Jones, Alan. (2011). A map of the brain.  
<http://youtu.be/XBcPFhg0BC8>: 0:42 – 4:32 a real brain then neurons and genomes
- B. Hand model of the brain. Adapted from Seigel (2011). Useful to visualize the interconnected parts of the brain.
1. Stretch your fingers out and point both hands up. Place your thumbs in the middle of your palms and wrap your fingers tightly over each thumb. Put your two hands together. This is slightly smaller than your actual brain. Notice it has two halves or hemispheres – a left and a right – and that each hemisphere is mostly symmetrical.
  2. Three regions, representing Dr. Paul MacLean’s triune brain, are contained in your hand model. Each area is made up of many structures that developed during evolution.
  3. The oldest, and first to develop in an individual, is the brainstem – Reptilian brain. Controls species-typical instinctual behaviors involved in aggression, dominance, territoriality, and ritual displays. Also receives input from and send signals to the body to regulate functions needed for survival, e.g., breathing, heart rate; energy and arousal levels (sleep, wakefulness, etc.); fight-flight-freeze-tend response; and basic motivational systems.
  4. Lift up your fingers – the thumb represents MacLean’s limbic system (paleomammalian or “old mammalian brain” appeared around 200 million years ago). Creates basic drives and emotions. The hypothalamus controls the endocrine system via the pituitary the four f’s: feeding, fighting, fleeing, and sex! Cortisol from the adrenal gland combats stress by ramping up our metabolism. Emotions and emotional attachment to one another is controlled here as is memory (hippocampus and amygdala [fear response]). Basic forms of emotional and perceptual memories are weaved into factual and autobiographical recollections/reconstructions.
  5. Lay your fingers back over your thumb. The fingers represent the Neo (new) mammalian or neocortex (bark). Creates neuronal firing patterns that represent the three-dimensional world beyond our skin

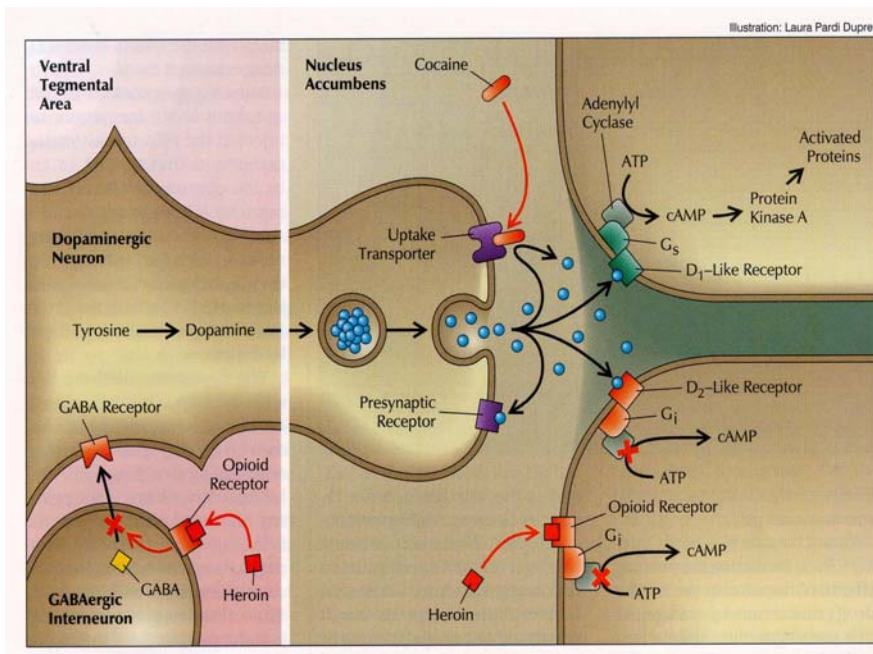


and survival reactions mediated by the lower, subcortical areas. The frontal cortex makes firing patterns that that represent its own firing patterns. In other words, it allows us to think about our thoughts, emotions, dreams, memories, imaginations, etc.

6. Especially important is the area of your first knuckles to your fingertips on your two inside fingers. This represents the prefrontal cortex where, beyond the bodily and survival concerns of the brainstem and the evaluative and emotional limbic system and the motor and perceptual process of the posterior cortex, we create concepts such as time, a sense of self, and the ability to pause before acting, having insight and empathy, and making moral judgments and maps of ourselves and others.
7. Notice that the prefrontal cortex touches the other two brain systems – it connects everything! It integrates our sense of our bodies with that of the outer world including our understanding of other people with whom we have relationships.

### C. So how does alcohol and other drug use affect our brains?

1. Zoom down to the level of the neuron or more specifically the tiny gap between neurons called a synapse. This is where AOD effect the brain.



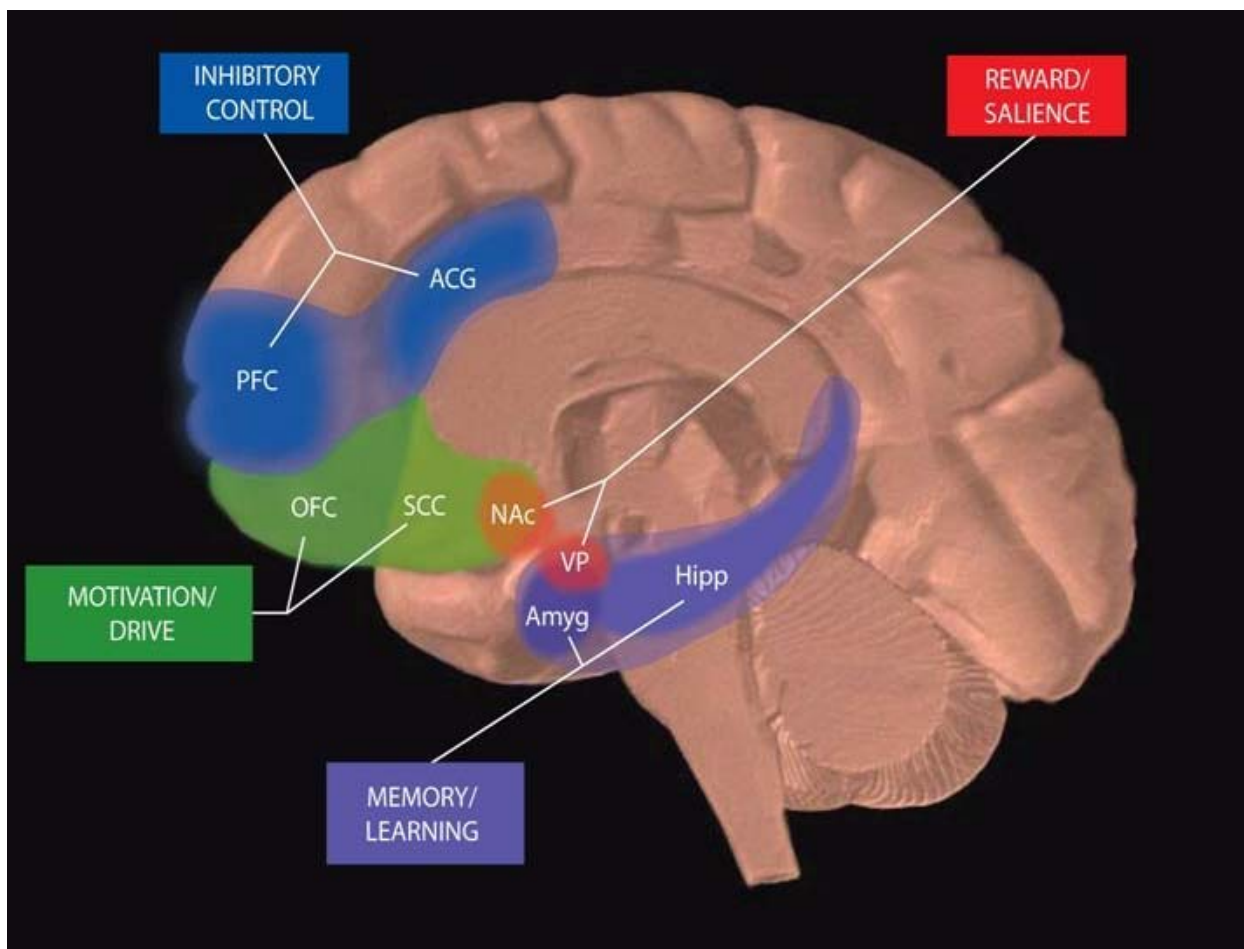
2. You can see the end of one neuron, the axon, and two dendrites of other neurons. Communication between neurons begins at the



cell body (soma) that somehow decides based on the 10,000 or so inputs from other neurons if it should repeat the message. If it decides yes, it sends an electrical charge runs down the axon that causes chemicals called neurotransmitters, shown about as blue balls stored in vesicles or sacks, to move to the membrane, open up and spill into the gap. They cross the synapse and bind with specific receptors that respond to only certain shaped chemicals or neurotransmitters. Like a light switch, the effect on the neuron is to turn it either on or off. Then, after binding, the deactivated neurotransmitters are released to return to the original neuron to make new neurotransmitters. Why is this important? Everything that we do occurs because of this activity between neurons. What is a behaviors, thought, feeling, emotion, dream, plan, or an evaluation? Communications between neurons. And, this is where drugs have their effect.

3. Notice that cocaine is depicted as an oval or cylindrical molecule. The cocaine molecule doesn't "get" you high. Rather, it blocks the reuptake portal thereby putting higher-than-usual amounts of dopamine into the synapse than has ever been there before. Now remember, dopamine is experienced as a life-enhancing chemical. It marks that experience as life enhancing and the more dopamine that's released, the more life enhancing the experience must be according to this part of our brain. But here's the thing. When the neuron detects the superabundance of dopamine it stops making it besides it eventually runs out of the substances needed to make it because the re-uptake mechanism is blocked. What occurs when this happens? The high wears off and is replaced with withdrawals! So, we do more of the drug, more withdrawals, etc. etc. Each time we get a little less high requiring more of the drug to produce the desired effect. What's this called clinically? Tolerance!





4. Represented here are the brain areas most affected by AOD. So the essence of this is when dopamine levels are elevated from drug use the brain “registers” the experience in this area (point to NAc and VP) as not only feeling good but also as potentially life enhancing – in other words important for survival.
5. This area (point to Hipp) remembers the sensory “facts” of the experience much of it that we never paid attention to: where you are, who you are with, and what happened when you experienced the high, the smells, flavors, sounds, the tools used to take the drugs, the scenery, etc. And much of this happens in the part of the brain whose most important goal is to keep us alive. In fact, think of the highest “high” you’ve ever felt “naturally” (*give a few examples – the birth of your first child; jumping out of a plane; winning the lottery*). While you are doing whatever caused that highest high would not produce the amount of dopamine that follows cocaine and amphetamine use. Also, this area (point to Amyg) registers the experience from a feeling or emotional perspective – positive or negative. That’s why most of us can



remember exactly where we were when we first heard what happened on 911. The facts of what happened (point again to Hipp) connected to a strong emotion about it (point again to Amyg) and “locked” that memory in place.

6. In healthy people, this region (point to prefrontal cortex in blue), which you can see is the higher level, thinking part of the brain, is responsible for stopping us from doing something we know is bad for us. It says, “its time to stop doing this because is causing too many problems” or it’s costing too much money.” It puts on the brakes. But for some people when they continue to use, this part of the brain (point to green, purple and red) starts to override this part of the brain (point to blue), leading to the compulsive behaviors that characterize addiction.
  7. Add to this scenario re-experiencing the cues that were consciously or unconsciously associated with the positive experience and whammo the vague desire to re-experience the “high” leads to apparently irrelevant decision that bring us eventually to a recognized desire to use again = cravings.
  8. But we know we can change how we respond to those messages coming from our brains. Just like the brain changes as the drug use is repeat, we can produce equally profound changes by focusing on prosocial and healthy behaviors, thoughts and emotions.
- X. Mindware Basic Principles: It’s not just about personal well-being, inner peace and equanimity but this also has implications for cultural evolution.
- A. What you focus attention on activates specific circuits of the brain.
    1. Neurons that fire together, wire together: Hebb, 1949. Learning and memory are based on strengthening the synapses between neurons
  - B. Activating specific circuits of the brain stimulates the growth of the architectural features of the brain = neural plasticity.
  - C. With the intentional focus of your attention, aware of awareness, you create a state of activation. Repeatedly creating intentional state over time changes the brain so that you develop a trait.





- D. The solo practice of mindful reflection activates the social circuitry of the brain that also overlaps with the regulatory circuitry = stress reduction, improved immune function, enhanced capacity for compassion and empathy, the ability to balance emotions, insight, and identity shift.
- XI. Three Neuroplasticities: Rewiring the brain (Schwartz and Begley, 2002)
- A. Increased density of neuronal interconnections and the speed with which they communicate (synaptogenesis)
1. Hebb (1949): Neurons that fire together, wire together.
  2. Learning and memory are based on strengthening the synapses between neurons and coating neurons with myelin.
- B. Growth of new brain cells (neurogenesis)
- C. Physical reallocation of brain areas/networks of neurons (cross-modal functional neuroplasticity)
- D. Plasticity is induced by external (sensory) stimulation and internal or mental force!
- XII. Schwartz, D, & Gladding, R. (2011). You are not your brain: the 4-step solution for changing bad habits, ending unhealthy thinking and taking control of your life. New York: Penguin.
- A. Four steps to changing the brain wiring in healthy, adaptive ways
1. Relabel: Identify your deceptive brain messages and the associated uncomfortable sensations; call them what they are.
  2. Reframe: Change your perception of the importance of the deceptive brain messages; say why these thoughts, urges, and impulses keep bothering you: they are false brain messages (it's not me, it's just my brain!).
  3. Refocus: Direct your attention to an activity or mental process that is wholesome and productive – even while the false and deceptive urges, thoughts, impulses and sensations are still present and bothering you.



4. Revalue: Clearly see the thoughts, urges and impulses for what they are, simply sensations caused by deceptive brain messages that are not true and that have little to no value (they are something to dismiss, not focus on).

XIII. Positive Psychology: Seligman, Martin E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.

A. PERMA: five proposed, measurable elements of well-being

1. Positive emotion: transient state of subjective happiness and life satisfaction
2. Engagement: subjective loss of self-consciousness, time stopping or complete absorption in a task
3. Relationships: positive relationships and engagement that produces indescribable joy, uproarious laughter, enormous pride
4. Meaning: transient state of subjective belonging to and serving something bigger than oneself.
5. Achievement: the achieving life that is dedicated to accomplishment for the sake of accomplishment, even when it brings no positive emotions, no meaning and no positive relationships

B. Flourishing as the goal of positive psychology: Increase the amount of flourishing in your own life and on the planet

C. Creating your happiness with positive psychology exercises

1. The gratitude visit
  - a. Close your eyes and visualize the face of someone still alive who years ago did or said something that changed your life for the better. Someone you never properly thanked; someone you could meet face-to-face next week.
  - b. Write a letter of gratitude to this person. Be concrete, 300 words that describe what s/he did for you and how it affected your life. Let her/him know what you are doing now and mention how you often remember what s/he did.
  - c. Call this individual and ask to visit to catch up – be vague about the purpose.
  - d. When you meet, take your time reading your letter. Read every word. Then, discuss the content and your feelings for each other.





2. What went well
  - a. Every night for a week set aside 10 minutes.
  - b. Write down three things that went well today and *why* they went well.
  
3. Strengths and happiness scales:
  - a. Go to [www.authentichappiness.com](http://www.authentichappiness.com) when you have 20-30 minutes. Free scales that provide immediate scores and comparisons to others who have used the website. Stores your scores so you can return, retake the scales and see progress. Complete the registration form. Your responses to the scale will be used in research about happiness but without your name, email address, address and password. Perhaps begin with the Engagement Questionnaires.
  - b. Scroll down and click on the VIA (Values in Action) Character Strengths Test link in the middle column of the page.
  - c. Create a Username (your email address works fine) and Password. The website will store all of your test results for future review.
  - d. Complete the test then print your top five strengths and decide on one activity for the next week that uses one or more of your strengths.
    1. [www.viame.org](http://www.viame.org): Values in Action Institute Character Strengths Profile. Also have a page for professionals.
    2. <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu>: Positive Psychology Center. Many studies in which you can participate including the 21 Day Self Help Study.
  
4. Start a Three Good Things Journal.
  - a. Find a notebook or a piece of paper to start a journal.
  - b. Take 5 minutes every day/evening to list three good things that happened during the last 24 hours.
  - c. Start by writing the date. List three good things. Next to each item, briefly say why it happened and what you did to help it occur. If you aren't sure why it happened, write "Unsure." If you did nothing, write "Nothing."
  - d. Don't worry if you come up with less or more than three



#### XIV. A Paired Practice of the Dimensions of the Awakened Heart

A. A traditional contemplative practice adapted and expanded from Jack Kornfield ([www.jackkornfield.com](http://www.jackkornfield.com)) and Joanna Macy([www.joannamacy.net](http://www.joannamacy.net))

1. In a minute I will ask you to, without words, find someone you can look at silently for about 10 minutes – shocking for American culture - and do a guided meditation. This contemplative practice goes through the qualities of the Awakened Heart – the qualities of love, compassion, joy and equanimity - in ways that you can discover and sense if this is so in yourself and in another person. So that these are not just nice words but rather a real felt experience. This Awakened Heart meditation is designed to encourage awakening, develop presence, and cultivate true compassion from within each of our consciousness that is eternally bound to what some call Allah, Buddha, God, Great Spirit, and many other names. I invite you to bring your whole self to this experience, and come fully present in what is our deep sea of consciousness.
2. Because we are kind of shy as human beings and that's fine, it makes this practice difficult in some ways. It can feel a little bit awkward but I promise you it's perfectly safe. More than that, it is really worthwhile and worthy.
3. So without any words find a partner. Please stay quiet as you settle into a comfortable, relaxed place facing one another. And take a couple of deep breaths. Now center yourself with these breaths, and exhale whatever tension you might have and begin to let yourself look softly into the eyes of the person seated before you. As you look in the eyes of the other, if you feel discomfort, or an urge to laugh or to look away just note the embarrassment with patience and gentleness and return your focus when you can back to your partner's eyes, for you may never see this person again. You don't know. For the opportunity to behold the uniqueness of this particular human being is given to you now and the opportunity may never happen again.
4. And as you look into this person eyes, first, let yourself become aware of another being with a beautiful spirit, and an exquisite heart. Sense the potential that is there. Open your awareness to the gifts and strengths in this being.



5. Behind these eyes are unmeasured reserves of courage, and intelligence, of patience, and wit and wisdom. Great gifts of which this person may be unaware or reluctant to acknowledge. A beautiful spirit and a great capacity for love. As you look deeply, let yourself see the original goodness in this being.
6. If this person were your own child, how you would wish them well. Safe from harm. How you would imagine them smiling in joy and bringing forth their gifts to the world. How you'd want them free from fear and danger. And how much you would wish their wellbeing. Their success. Their profound happiness. That they too might remember who they are.
7. And know that what you are experiencing now is the great heart of loving kindness. The innate well-wishing and seeing the beauty in another.
8. And as you rest in this loving kindness, now gently release it back into the stream of consciousness from which it came. As you continue to look in these eyes, stay in the present. For you will now continue to look deeply and see another dimension of this being. And as you look again into these eyes let yourself become aware of the measure of sorrows that is there. Of the unknown pains. The burdens that have been given to her or him to carry. There are sorrows accumulated in their life, as is in all human lives, that you can only guess at. Let yourself see the measure of disappointment, and loss. The loneliness and failures. The hurts beyond the telling. And let yourself open to the measure of pain that they bear. The hurts this person may never have told another being. Pause
9. You cannot fix this pain. But more importantly, you can be with it. With a spirit of courage you can simply witness and be with the measure of suffering they bear. And as you do you can imagine them as a child, hurt, frightened, and what your natural response might be perhaps to reach out, to comfort, and to hold. This courageous heart that turns toward the sorrows and opens.
10. Know that you are now experiencing the great heart of compassion. It is essential for the healing of the world.
11. And staying connected to these eyes, breathe deeply again. There are two more dimensions of the awakened heart.



12. Let yourself release the compassion back into the sea of consciousness and look anew into these eyes as best you can with innocence, that of an inquisitive child. And now as you look let yourself see the happiest moments of this person life. Their best adventure perhaps as a young child or as an adult. The creative force within them fully expressed and acknowledged. Imagine them taking risks, laughing, conspiring together with you in adventure. Celebrating their successes and the joy of being alive.
13. As you sense their happiest moments, their laughter and triumph, their deepest joy and gratitude for life. Know that as you open to this you are experiencing what is called Mudita in Sanskrit, the joy of experiencing the joy of another. The great joy of life seen through the eyes of this being. Unstoppable joy.
14. And finally last. Staying connected to these eyes take a breath or two and release the joy to be open in a new way. And let your awareness now drop deeply like a stone sinking below the level of what words can touch, to the deep consciousness and spirit that underlies all experience. That weaves together through space and time. Behind these eyes, see this being before you. See the consciousness behind these eyes as if seeing one who at another time and another place had been young, and old, awake, and asleep. Has been at another time and place your child, your mother, your father, your enemy, your friend, your partner, your student, your teacher. And now you meet in this eternal moment and feel all of our lives interwoven in the vast net of being. The boundless consciousness that connects all that lives. Within consciousness is this state of equanimity - the psychological stability and composure which is undisturbed by experiencing or exposure to thoughts, memories, plans, expectations, emotions, pain, or other phenomena that loosen the balance or integration of our minds in favor of clinging to the smaller sense of self we call identity.
15. Who are we really? What is it that you are looking into. And who am I that is looking. Not the body nor the thoughts, but this timeless awareness of consciousness itself, taking form. Rest in this vast space. Trust it. Rest in this great peace and the pure knowing.



16. And from this everything is possible. For you are now experiencing the great peace of equanimity and wisdom that is unshakable. It is coming home. And it is with you and us always.
17. And now let your eyes close for a moment. And the sense of space, presence and peace remain.



## XV. References

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