



Sperry Andrews, facilitator and teacher of Group Consciousness

Interviewed by James E. Beichler

Sperry had an NDE at age four, and as an experiential scientist since 1983, he has been exploring humanity's capacity to share a commonly-sensed consciousness. He collaborated for five years with an experimental psychologist, Dr. William Braud at the Mind Science Foundation (MSF), where they utilized a multidisciplinary approach to the scientific study of human, animal, and machine communication anomalies. He helped pioneer the field of Distant Mental Interactions with Living Systems (DMILS) and directed a multinational, scientifically based, social action media research project to potentially demonstrate our indivisibility on instrument under double-blind conditions with aikido masters, Buddhist monks, and well know celebrities stationed at multiple scientific laboratories in widely separated geographic locations. This project is still underway with the intention to be popularly presented in films.

He initiated the Human Connection Project over thirty years ago to present life-changing, scientifically derived images of our interconnectedness via news reports, print media, talk show formats, feature documentaries, and dramatic films so people can (re)awaken easy access to their combined intelligence and spiritual unity. He also founded the Human Connection Institute in 1990 and has facilitated hundreds of groups internationally for the last forty years. He learned to teach anyone interested how to effectively recreate these experiences in-person, and gave invited presentations on human interconnectedness and the Human Connection Project at the University of Connecticut (1988/89), the Association for Research and Enlightenment (1990), the United Nations (1992), World Business Academy (1993/94), Duke University (1995), the Foundations of Mind conferences, U.C. Berkeley (2014/15), and ASCSI conference in Raleigh, NC (2018).

Whether one-on-one, serving on a team or as a group facilitator, Sperry loves sharing experientially and insightfully. His background is in physics, neuroscience, philosophy, (para)psychology, art and art history,

healing, mysticism, and filmmaking. As founder/co-director of the Human Connection Institute, a research partner with the Consciousness Quotient Institute, and advisory board member of the Lifeboat Foundation, Sperry designed and implemented a wide spectrum of experientially-based educational programs. (His full bio is available at <https://connectioninstitute.org/PDF/BIO.pdf>)



There are a great many different takes on consciousness, how it works and what it ultimately turns out to be. How is your approach different from all the others?

I follow the advice of Nicola Tesla: "The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence." In doing so, I consider the physics of non-material - yet still physical

phenomena by demonstrating that point-centered processes facilitate the expansion of our universe and the presence of our non-material consciousness: i.e., a dimensionless mechanism and its dimensional by-products produce what is physical, emotional, mental, soulful, and spiritual.

You've told me that you have an undergraduate degree in science, that you have taken advanced physics courses and worked with other scientists, yet your approach to both consciousness and physics is through intuition and logical deduction rather than the strict logical reduction of the physicist. How do you do this?

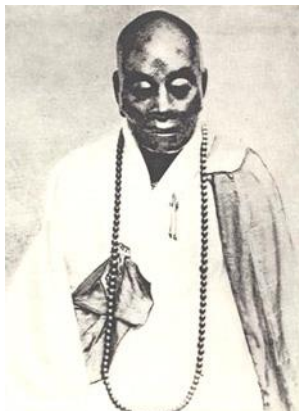
I owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. James E. Beichler for rigorously exploring these ideas in his papers and for our four-year collaboration on what we both refer to as "our model." Widespread understanding of what 'we' now mutually agree to is truly profound. We intuit these findings have far-reaching implications for humanity's survival.

According to ancient Hindu texts, as well as Tibetan Buddhist teachings, a non-physical Void is spiritually manifesting a "dream of form" through cause and effect.

Lessons from The Sixth Patriarch

by Jim Beichler

Buddhism began in the seventh century BCE with the enlightenment and teaching of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha. The first notable surge of Buddhism came in the third century BCE when the emperor Ashoka conquered a large part of the Indian sub-continent. Ashoka is credited with spreading Buddhism throughout southern India and Sri Lanka. In the following centuries, Buddhism found its way west to Afghanistan, north to Nepal, Tibet and into China as well as south-



east into the lower portions of Asia (Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Malaysia) and into Indonesia (Bali). At one-time Buddhism cut a large swath throughout eastern and southeastern Asia. Buddhism is different from other religions, if it can even be called a religion rather than either a form of transcendental philosophy or transpersonal psychology, because it not based upon worship of a God or gods. So, there are intimate subtleties to Buddhist concepts that are not satisfied by describing its principles in such simple terms as are usually the case in western religions, i.e., dharma and karma. Yet there does remain a single underlying principle in all of Buddhism that unites everyone and that is the singular fact that within every person, without fail, there exists a unique 'buddha-nature' and every person has the innate ability to break free of the cycle of birth and rebirth, attain nirvana or enlightenment, just by realizing and developing their own inherent 'buddha-nature'. A person's 'buddha-nature' can be equated to the western spiritual/mystical concept of a person's true 'self' or higher-consciousness. These ideas in the East date back nearly three-thousand years in one form or another, but one of its greatest proponents and best-known teachers came much later.

During the sixth century CE, Bodhidharma (called Daruma by the Japanese) officially introduced Buddhism into China and founded the Shao Lin temple where the practice of Kung Fu (a form of meditation through movement) purportedly originated. The Chinese already knew a great deal about Buddhism from earlier pilgrims, travelers and teachers by this time, but Bodhidharma came to China specifically to teach Buddhism and under his teachings, Buddhism took on some of the major characteristics of Taoism, forming Ch'an Buddhism. Ch'an is interpreted as recovering the 'original mind' through meditation. The word itself is a Chinese form of the Indian Sanskrit word 'dhyana'. Ch'an Buddhism thrived over the next century and was

studied in many monasteries, including the Shao Lin monasteries famous for their Kung Fu boxing style and meditation based on breathing techniques. However, the Ch'an tradition split in the seventh century when Hui Neng (638-713, from Ghangzhou, China), the sixth Patriarch, was forced to flee from the Shao Lin temple with his followers.

Hui Neng was a poor illiterate beggar boy who was naturally and spontaneously enlightened upon hearing the Diamond Sutra being recited in a marketplace, before he came to the temple to study Buddhism. Only the Fifth Patriarch of the temple recognized and understood Hui Neng's enlightenment, but after being allowed to enter the temple Hui Neng held no special position within the Temple political structure. He was only allowed to be a lowly servant. When it came time for the Fifth Patriarch to pick his successor, he knew that Hui Neng was the only person qualified to truly follow him, but the politics of the temple would not allow a simple illiterate servant of the temple to be appointed the new Patriarch. So, the Fifth Patriarch initiated a poetry contest to choose his successor. A poem written by the chief monk was very popular among the other monks, who highly praised it, and won the contest because Hui Neng could neither read nor write.

The body is the Bodhi-tree,
The heart is like a bright mirror stand,
Strive to clear it at all times,
And allow no dust to cling.

The poem was philosophically correct, but obviously did not reflect the intuitive understanding of enlightenment that comes from firsthand experience.

When the winning poem was read to Hui Neng by a friend and fellow servant, he disagreed with the sentiments of the poem and had his friend secretly write a rebuttal in the form of another poem on the wall of the temple.

Fundamentally no Bodhi-tree exists,
Nor the stand of a mirror bright.
Since all is empty from the beginning,
Where can the dust light?

Hui Neng's poem clearly reflected his firsthand experience of enlightenment. The Patriarch knew immediately who the author of the new poem was because only Hui Neng had reached the level of enlightenment that was expressed in the new poem. So, the Patriarch gave Hui Neng the official insignia of the office, the Patriarch's robe and bowl, and told him to run for his life. Thus, the Ch'an Buddhist movement split into different feuding factions and Hui Neng became the sixth and final Patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism.

Ch'an Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the thirteenth century where it is known as Zen Buddhism, so named because the practitioners practice 'zazen' or sitting in meditation without purpose or goal. In Japan, Buddhism took on whole strange new twist when it became entangled with the fighting philosophies of the warrior caste.

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President's Message

We need Trust and Respect for others, not political correctness! Human civilization is built upon one simple word – trust. If we are driving down a road or walking alongside a road on the sidewalk, we trust other drivers not to hit us or cross the road and collide with us head on. We trust mail carriers to deliver out mail and not steal it, and we trust that when they put it in our mailboxes no one else will steal it. We trust that our brakes are in good working order and that the lights will come on when it gets dark outside. We trust manufacturers to supply us with safe and practical medicines that will not make us sick and/or kill us.



We trust nurses, doctors and healers to help us when we are sick, and we trust the hospitals and clinics where we seek healing. We trust grocery stores to sell us good food and products at a fair price. We trust our governments to run out municipalities and cities, states and federal governments to pass and enforce laws in a proper manner to keep us safe. And we trust other foreign nations not to attack us, infringe upon our rights and bomb or invade us. We even trust nature and everything in nature to always act in the same predictable way, every day and year after year, so that we know when to prepare for the worst that nature can throw at us and still come to no harm.

When we are talking to other people, we trust that they are truthful with us and not lying to us. And when we love someone, we trust them to look out for our interests as well as their own and be truthful with us. After, trust the next important thing is respect that holds us and our civilizations together is respect. Respect both complements and supplements all of our trust in others and other things. If we respect others, whether individuals or groups of people, everything runs smoothly, and we can follow our paths through life with the least resistance to our passage.

When we respect others, we treat them fairly and equally as we all should, and respect is something that we have to have for others before we can expect respect from them. Respect is a two-way proposition. Both trust and respect are the hallmarks of spirituality and consciousness, both at the individual and the collective level. These form the fundamental basis of our spiritual and religious beliefs, both within our communities and outside of our respective cultural communities.

When trust and respect for others, our common cultural institutions break and those of others break down, we are in deep trouble. Unfortunately, that seems to be the hallmark of today's political, cultural, national and international problems. As trust and respect have broken down, unbridled and

illogical hate has grown in their place. Hate on its very definition is anti-spirituality and anti-consciousness. Hate, by its very nature, emphasizes an illogical this-worldliness and blocking of a person's or a group's connections to other people and groups. That is why spiritual and religious leaders have always taught love and compassion. Love emphasizes our special connections to others and compassion our special connections to groups and everything else in our existence.

Our consciousness has a dual nature, our mundane everyday consciousness is this-worldly (what we logically know and interact with in this material world of our existence) and our higher consciousness emphasizes the other-worldly (our intuition and gut feelings about things based on our five normal senses) aspects of our being, the special connections and bonds (our intuitions and things we know to be true without knowing how we know them, based on our sixth sense) that we have with others, including both love and compassion.

Our mundane consciousness (self) corresponds directly to our mind and brain, while our higher consciousness goes beyond this common world (our immediate environment of realized physical matter) that is sensed and interpreted by our brain and mind. Our higher consciousness (true self) is where our spirituality originates, exists and grows as we gain greater knowledge and experience of our true higher reality, and where we seek to understand the fundamental truth of our overall reality that stretches well beyond our material world not the pure physical (non-or pre-material) world of potential.

When we lose trust and respect, at any level of our being and existence, hate grows, controls our minds, emotions and thoughts, and de-emphasizes the contributions of those life experiences that further the growth of our higher consciousness and even blocks the one-to-one correspondence between mundane and higher consciousness. Hate clearly and profoundly damages our consciousness and its association with spirituality. That is why hate is anti-consciousness and anti-spirituality, and that is why we are in so much trouble, our cultures as well as our fundamental civilizations based on our cultural norms are deteriorating.

Why is this happening to us? It is happening now because we are approaching a fundamental evolutionary leap in the overall level of human consciousness, and such fundamental changes are always preceded by chaos, in this case a mental/emotional chaos that is running and ruining our lives. If we understand this, we can take steps to control the changes, overcome our hate, return to trust and respect for each other, and move onward together toward a higher collective consciousness for the whole of humanity. Given this, there would be no need for political correctness, which is just cheap prejudicial method of mind control.



Searchlight Media Watch



by Tom and Lisa Butler, NST

Consciousness: Scientists have long been trying to understand human consciousness, the way we are made aware of thoughts and sensations inside our minds. There used to be an assumption that consciousness is produced by our brains, and that in order to understand it, we just need to figure out how the brain works. But this assumption raises questions. First of all, decades of research has not shown this and there are discrepancies between consciousness and brain activity. Brain cells fire away almost as much in some states of unconsciousness (such as deep sleep) as they do in the wakeful conscious state. Also, if you held a human brain in your hand, you would find it to be a soggy clump of grey matter, a bit like putty, weighing about 1.3kg. How is it possible that this grey soggy stuff can give rise to the richness and depth of your conscious experience?



As a result, many eminent philosophers such as David Chalmers and Thomas Nagel and scientists like Christof Koch and Tononi have rejected the idea that consciousness is directly produced by brain processes. They have turned to the alternative view that it is actually a fundamental quality of the universe. This might sound far-fetched but think about the other “fundamentals” in the universe we take for granted, such as gravity and mass. Consciousness would have the same status as those.

From: Taylor, Steve. “Spiritual science: how a new perspective on consciousness could help us understand ourselves.” *The Conversation*. 2019. theconversation.com/spiritual-science-how-a-new-perspective-on-consciousness-could-help-us-understand-ourselves-116451

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Is Life a Dream: One of the strange things about dreams is that, most of the time, we aren’t aware we’re dreaming. Typically, our memory and our reflective ability are substantially limited within dreams causing us not to notice incongruencies

ability of the dream world to appear real has led many thinkers to wonder whether the world we experience while awake might itself be a dream. If



the dream world feels just as real as the waking one (at least while we are in it), how can we know for sure that we’re not currently living

in a dream, a dream from which we may one day wake up?

A number of people report having had experiences that appear to them as even more real than those they have in their normal, waking state of mind. For example, “realer than real” is a description often used by those who have had near-death experiences. Many near-death experiencers also report enhanced cognitive function and a sudden increase in knowledge. This perception of enhanced cognitive function and increased knowledge is often dismissed as an illusion by those who are unfamiliar with the scientific literature on near-death experiences, but careful investigation has shown that concrete, verifiable information has been obtained in these states that was not available to the experiencer by way of their five senses. The experience of those who have tasted non-ordinary states of consciousness raises the possibility that the age-old question of whether “life is but a dream” is real.

From: Rawlette, Sharon Hewitt Ph.D. “Is Life a Dream?” *Psychology Today*. 2019. psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mysteries-consciousness/201907/is-life-dream?eml

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Terminal Lucidity: An elderly woman suffering from late-stage Alzheimer’s disease had neither talked to nor reacted to any of her family members for years. Then, one day, she suddenly started chatting with her granddaughter, asking for news of other family members and even giving her granddaughter advice. “It was like talking to Rip van Winkle.” Unfortunately, the reawakening did not last—the grandmother died the next week. That

event got written up as what authors call terminal lucidity—a surprising, coherent episode of meaningful communication just before death in someone presumed incapable of social interaction. “If the brain were able to access that normal state, even if it’s transient, it would suggest that there’s some requisite level of machinery that can work under some kind of unique circumstance,” anesthesiologist and neuroscientist George Mashour director of the Center for Consciousness Science at the University of Michigan says then this prompts a reconsideration of whether or not at this late stage in the disease, even with known degeneration, there is some kind of functional configuration that the brain can achieve with what remains.

From: Denworth, Lydia. “Awakenings’ in Advanced Dementia Patients Hint at Untapped Brain Reserves.” Scientific American. 2019. scientificamerican.com/article/awakenings-in-advanced-dementia-patients-hint-at-untapped-brain-reserves/

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Studying Terminal Lucidity: An interdisciplinary research team is investigating cases of terminal lucidity, a phenomenon in which a person with severe dementia suddenly “wakes up” and exhibits surprisingly normal behaviors, only to pass away shortly thereafter. The report was published in the journal *Alzheimer’s & Dementia* and the researchers outline what is known and unknown about this type of lucidity. The study is one of the first to scientifically investigate all phenomena, although such incidents have been reported all throughout history. The new paper describes earlier work documenting case studies of individuals with advanced dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease, appearing to be able to communicate and recall in a seemingly normal fashion at the end of life, to the astonishment of their caregivers.



From: Pedersen, Traci. “Study Explores End-of-Life Clarity in Dementia Patients.” Psych Central. 2019. psychcentral.com/news/2019/07/01/study-explores-end-of-life-clarity-in-dementia-patients/148315.html

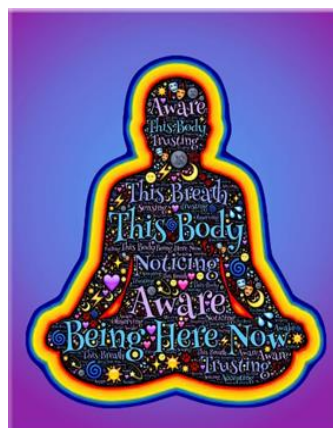
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The Aha! Challenge was a month-long Australian science experiment that kicked off during their National Science Week in August of this year. The experiment aimed to explore sudden bursts of clarity and insight when we experience an Aha! Moment. In effect, it was a nationwide quest to find the things that make you go “aha!” One of the most interesting early results was in response to questions about where aha moments occur. The most frequently cited was “in nature”, which accounted for 40 percent of responses with “in bed” following closely behind at 37 per cent.

From: Lucas, Freya. “Time outside is the key to sparking big ideas, scientists say.” The Sector. 2019. [At thesector.com.au/2019/08/15/time-outside-is-the-key-to-sparking-big-ideas-scientists-say/](http://thesector.com.au/2019/08/15/time-outside-is-the-key-to-sparking-big-ideas-scientists-say/)

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The Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC) at UCLA has just released a new app for iOS and Android called



“UCLA Mindful.” The app has all the MARC web-based meditations for general use and for MAPs classes in English and Spanish, additional short meditations, meditations for those in the hospital, and a weekly podcast meditation from the Hammer

Museum. Find it on iTunes or on Google Play store under UCLA Mindful.

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Being Optimistic: Research has identified many risk factors that increase the likelihood of diseases and premature death, much less is known about positive psychosocial factors that can promote healthy aging. Boston University School of Medicine has reported on a decades-long study of 71,000 women and men. Researchers found that the most optimistic adults in the study lived up to 15% longer and had as much as 70% greater odds of reaching age 85 compared to the least optimistic in the group.

From: “New Evidence that Optimists Live Longer.” Boston University School of Medicine. 2019. bumc.bu.edu/busm/2019/08/26/new-evidence-that-optimists-live-longer/

INTERVIEW *From page 1*

Western science can now validate these observations and experiences. The geometry used in general relativity and the non-geometric theory of quantum mechanics are here shown to be compatible, where these highly accurate theories had been considered complete in themselves and incompatible for the last hundred years.

Einstein, Gauss, Minkowski and others never adequately addressed the pivotal importance of point-centered locations and processes as a geometric necessity. They instead chose to focus exclusively on extensions in space. Despite the rigorous study of point-centered particle-like phenomena in quantum mechanics, physicists continued to overlook the countless potential contributions of a point-centered primordial Void. As utilized in general relativity, Riemann's original conception of curved spatial surfaces offers an n -dimensional space embedded in an $n+1$ dimensional manifold. When we let $n = 0$, we discover that a non-dimensional (0D) point functions as an invariant absence. This 0D point is kept from collapsing back into the Void by a (virtual) vortex of equal and opposite torsional potentials called "twists" initiating the 'apparent extension' of curved spatial surfaces.

This essay suggests the universe is an observational measurement system which grows by re-uniting with its 'Self.' That which cannot be divided against itself (i.e., an absolute Void) is by definition unbounded, immeasurable, and (virtually) non-existent. It can retain these qualities as any number of non-dimensional (0D) points. The introduction of any 'form' of spatial process - between and among 0D points - is 'bound' to be accompanied by some form of (albeit virtual) spatiotemporal field phenomena.

It is known that wavelengths of sufficient intensity - impinging at a point - induce an implosion resulting in the emission (explosion) of light. In laboratory experiments, intense heat is created that is estimated to be many times the temperature on the surface of our Sun (20Ko Fahrenheit). It makes sense then that the density of (virtual) potential mass/ energy concentrated within the shortest possible fluctuations of space over time could (even now) be incrementally accelerating the expansion of this universe.

What is the fundamental physical problem with our modern physics paradigms?

Current theories in physics can only speculate about such small scales as 0D, so they can say nothing sensible about a moment in which the universe was a single point. 'Extending' a 0D point-centered Void in space over clock-time - as an irreversible progression of observer-driven 'measurements' - supports the evolution of 3D forms, forces, fields, light, matter and energy from no-

thing. These (virtual) potentials 'drive' the rapid replication of (discrete) 0D coordinate locations to 'take the form of' an expanding 3D volume relative to a single 0D polar point (a witness) in the fourth dimension of space (4D), which most physicists think of as a discrete point in time.

The 'apparent' absence of clock-time within 4D (in the 3D frame of reference of the speed of light) is due to the extreme limit on any measurable form of spatial extension. Our challenge as human beings is that who and what we are is actually 'immeasurable' in the 4th dimension.

0D/4D observational measurement systems serve a dual function as 1) dissipative gradients (implosively) 'absorbing and resolving' shorter wavelengths and higher frequencies to sum to zero 'through' every 0D point-centered process, 2) to (explosively) 're-emit their momentum' in a more extended and expanded form as longer wavelengths and lower frequencies. In this way, point elements become spatial metric extensions over clock-time. Without need of any force or intention, the absence of form continuously 'orchestrates' the 'apparent' extension and expansion of form.

Hereafter, 0D points are embedded in all higher-dimensional Riemannian spaces forming nested hierarchies which include and transcend all lower dimensions. Each higher polar point re-originates a primal form of consciousness, as an observer-driven mechanism, uniting, measuring, and manifesting gradations of self-organizing electromagnetic and gravitational potential.

All 0D points sustain their 'non-material' absence—in space over time—as the indivisible presence of a primordial (Godlike) awareness which we can consciously experience as an 'insightful witnessing all-knowing mirror-like intelligence.' As a dimensionless Void must retain its formless nature, all that 'takes form' must be constructed out of discrete 0D point-twists with their accompanying equal-and-opposite virtual torsion fields maintaining their formless unity in ever more complex ways.

We experience primal 0D 'unconscious' awareness (throughout 3D) as the basis for our self-centric (subjective) experience. This underlying 'structureless-structure' of 0D points ensures that higher-dimensional structures (5D and up) include and transcend all lower dimensions.

So, you are taking the physical approach of a multi-dimensional Riemannian geometry, similar to but well beyond Einstein's general relativity. How does this hyperspatial interpretation and understanding of consciousness affect normal observational theories of physics?

It is one of the most astonishing discoveries in today's physics that each higher dimensional point localizes the nonlocal whole as an 'observer-driven mechanism' recalibrating and re-generating all electromagnetic and gravitational field potentials. ^[SEP] This model also explains all paranormal phenomena, the afterlife, and our innate spirituality. This means that to directly experience, recognize, and understand this phenomenon as a species, every human being must be consciously observing it.

All 0D points maintain their 'non-material absence' as the indivisible 'presence' of a primordial (Godlike) awareness which we (can) experience - both individually and together - as an 'insightful witnessing all-knowing mirror-like intelligence.' In other words, our experience is made possible by that which is always present, all-knowing, and therefore all powerful. Meaning, we (can) experience this awareness to be who and what we are.

4D observation determines how we appear both physically and psychologically. It demands that we make sense of our everyday experiences. It functions as our very own (self/Self-aware) observer. Free will is the effect of 0D/4D observer-driven consciousness on 3D geometry, biology, and psychology. The manipulation of things, thoughts, and activities in 3D requires 4D self-aware-consciousness. To the extent that you are able to predict it, what appears to be ahead of you during the remainder of your present incarnation?

So human 'free will', a subject which philosophers, theologians and scholars have debated for millennia, can be properly explained using your higher-dimensional physical model of consciousness. Are there any other known consequences or physical side effects that we can easily relate to a person's innate higher-dimensional awareness?

If stressful, 'this' is experienced as pain and suffering (i.e., psychophysiological tension) and can often manifest as PTSD and similar disorders. This is why what we attend to, and how well we pay attention, has consequences. 4D consciousness of our 3D experience encourages us to utilize our free will in more meaningful ways - to discover the most beneficial ways of directing our attention. For example, freedom from suffering occurs once we are seamlessly aware-of-awareness as a self-organizing resonant syntropy. In physics, we can describe 'this' as the alignment of 0D, 3D, and 4D with all possible higher dimensions.

This has all been spontaneously orchestrated. Our 'unborn' immortal nature 'evolved' into unique indivisible beings adding 'us' to a virtually fathomless multiverse, renewing its 'Self' and 'selves' through our gradual enlightenment as a species. Like a mirror, 4D unites, reflects, and transforms our experience of who and what we all are: a universal intelligence appearing as uniquely individuating minds and bodies. 4D

consciousness requires an effortless alignment and the wholly sensitive embodiment of a subjective 0D/3D experience. By consciously sharing awareness of our own 'awakeness,' the delusions of separation dissolve, awakening and enlightening our 'selves' and all of humankind.

By attuning our perceptions (both internally and externally) to consciously perceive every 'thing' as a by-product of our consciousness, we (can) experience our 0D Voidlike nature as an observer of 3D. We (can) realize we are every 'thing,' every 'one,' and no-one thing in particular, going no 'where' and yet every 'where' forever as who and what we all are, unborn, and that which cannot die. 'Self-Realization' can reliably fulfill 'lifetimes' of yearning' for an everlasting love.

In a 'life review during an NDE, a comparatively unlimited number of memories and perspectives can occur within a shorter period of (specious) clock time (as when hovering near the event horizon of a black hole). At this zero point, the human observer (can) be aware of being in the world but not of it. At one extreme, time stands still and 3D space is dreamlike. There can be a life-altering 'experience' of continuously contributing to the spontaneous re-creation of one's (spatiotemporal) reality.

You've given our human consciousness far more of a fundamental and essential role in the universe as a whole than would normally be given by modern scientists, many of whom still believe that human consciousness is completely unique to the human species and thus an evolutionary epiphenomenon, i.e., an accident of evolution and nature. Within this context, how do you explain our 'conscious experience' of an external natural world?

We can effectively view consciousness as a superposition of non-existence and existence. Our non-local (4D) being is also a local (0D/3D) experience. By means of mutual understanding, collective mindfulness, collaborative activities, and sharing a commonly sensed consciousness, we (can) sense our unity as a species. We can cocreate a world which works for everyone.

From my experiential research, involving hundreds of multi-cultural groups internationally over forty years, I have found whenever self-selected participants experientially notice the quality and presence of awareness as a group, a profound peace unfolds throughout everyone's body, heart and mind. We spontaneously rediscover an ever-present, all-knowing, all-powerful 'presence' throughout our perceptions of a formless, timeless, witnessing 'absence' which flawlessly re-unites, regenerates, and remembers all that can change by being unchanging and indivisible.

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The Sixth Patriarch - continued from page 2

The samurai warriors of Japan so respected the discipline of mind exhibited by the Zen Buddhists that they based their Bushido warrior's code on Buddhist thought. This happenstance is not so hard to believe given that Ch'an Buddhism in China led to the development of Kung Fu. In this manner, some of the basic Buddhist principles were incorporated into various forms of Japanese martial arts. In a sense, this completed the adaptation of Taoism and Buddhism that began in China. The syllable 'do' in the word Bushido is just Japanese for the word 'Tao', which can be translated as the 'way' or the 'path'.

It is from the story of Hui Neng that we have a perfect example of the simple truth that rote knowledge, in the form of philosophical and logical knowledge of consciousness, does not necessarily offer a direct path to higher levels of consciousness, *i.e.* spiritual/mystical enlightenment. Enlightenment of this type can only come from other physical factors (whole-body experiences through quiet stationary meditation or moving meditation, *i.e.*, the careful study of martial arts and development of internal 'chi' or 'ki') or perhaps a mentally significant spontaneous mental shock, which are necessary for a new complexity of knowledge to emerge (intense enough to rewire some neural nets in the brain) as a higher state or level of consciousness. NDEs are similar in their results but do not rise to the level of enlightenment, and it may be possible for some people to be born with more sophisticated neural net wiring that is more easily adaptable to higher states of consciousness and full-blown enlightenment.

Since rote knowledge and learning of that knowledge alone (gathering and memorizing facts) are not enough to initiate the high-level changes in consciousness, that does not mean that natural knowledge of our true physical being and reality (as is ideally expressed in science, *i.e.*, natural philosophy which seeks the truth or true nature of our physical reality) cannot help a person reach a higher state or level of consciousness. Knowledge and acceptance of natural truth can help under special conditions. In other words, neither science nor humankind in general needs the accumulation of more data and facts alone, either about consciousness or the physical context of consciousness and physical reality, to reach higher levels of consciousness, either individually or collectively, but rather the emergence of a new physical context (scientific theory) of both consciousness and the universe in its wholeness that better relates them together and explains their intimate connection. But pure logical philosophical knowledge and practice does not help and could possibly hinder the pursuit of higher levels of

consciousness under some extreme circumstances. Human made logic and philosophy alone normally emphasize only the material worldliness of our existence and being rather than the otherworldliness and oneness of our being within and as a part of nature.

Natural philosophy, or what we call science, is different from other forms of philosophy in that it is only restricted by nature and our experienced or observed external reality and thus subject only to external natural limitations, rather than and self-imposed limitations of the human mind as is the case in normal philosophy. So only natural philosophy can lead to a truer and more accurate picture and understanding of the true internal nature of our own being within the external context of a greater and better understood universe. Science grows and evolves in tandem with the natural evolution of our own minds and consciousness, as well as evolves our consciousness and neural net structure and bodies over time to better conform to the natural world, even against the worldly logic of the mind. So correct science is more conducive to developing higher levels of consciousness.

Since human consciousness is a product of evolution, whether internally (genetic) or externally (natural selection) inspired and influenced, true knowledge of the external world is not necessarily an illusion as is our internally motivated and constructed philosophies, and thus true science need not inhibit and should predictably enhance consciousness, higher levels of consciousness and even offer help along the path to spiritual enlightenment. It certainly wouldn't complicate the path as do normal and other forms of human derived philosophy, even in the form of some religions and religious philosophies.

Hui Neng's story also demonstrates that the highest level of enlightenment can also come spontaneously, although spontaneous enlightenment is rare. This implies that the human brain and mind are highly capable and already primed for spiritual enlightenment (Satori and attaining a state of Nirvana) through no more than evolution, while practice of special methods and some types of learning are more advantageous than just rote philosophical knowledge. The brain and mind are also primed for developing science or some similar form of interpreting and explaining nature and the natural world around us in concert with developing consciousness but fail when the internal reality of our consciousness is kept separate from the external physical reality of our being. In reality, they are one and thus continuous with each other. We are one with each other and the wholeness of the universe.

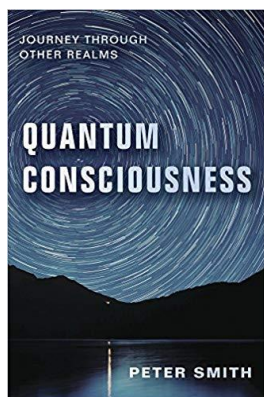


Quantum Consciousness: Journey through other realms, by Peter Smith, Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd., 2018. 240 pages. Available online at Amazon.com.

There are two worlds that we depend upon to help us understand our place in the universe, the world of science and the world of spirituality...both with their own version of “truth”. For centuries these worlds have been separated by philosophical, logical and even indoctrinated viewpoints, though a revolution is taking place that is starting to bring these opposing landscapes towards alignment. Science started to change about a century ago with the discovery of Quantum Mechanics. Suddenly the smallest scientific environments imaginable became even smaller, and we began to understand that at the level of subatomic particles, the laws of Newtonian Physics that had served us well for hundreds of years, no longer worked at all!

Gradually we discovered that we are part of the fabric of the universe, and that the small toe on our left foot is made up of the same particles as a planet. We discovered that ultimately, we are all connected into a divine matrix of energy, potentially made up of tiny vibrating strings that underpin reality as we know it. We discovered that there are other dimensions, alternate realities, parallel universes and that it all started with a “big bang”. The biggest surprise for scientists, was that these theories could all be proven through either mathematics, experimentation or both. Those two bastions of credibility, good old fashioned (and some new) mathematical formulas and the repeatable experimentation in closely controlled environments, showed clearly that our view of the universe was wrong. In parallel, a different group of people had been exploring consciousness in many and various ways.

These consciousness pioneers were doing their own experimentation and were busy researching and validating Past Life Recall, (sometimes under Hypnosis, sometimes not), Near Death Experiences, Astral Travelling experiments and the Realm Between Incarnations. These expanded states were showing that consciousness does not need a body to survive and could either leave the body for a while and return or recall an



out of body experience while still in body. The doctrines offered through the traditional religions, suddenly seemed to be helpful, merely up to a point, before the thirst for personal experience took people into their own journey of discovery.

Quantum Scientists tell us that we are energy, consisting of subatomic particles and the entire universe is our home. Consciousness Researchers tell us that we are an energy that shifts, changes and travels unbound by time and space. Both are right, we are Quantum Consciousness. We are a window to a dynamic and unfolding universal journey. Simply put, we are a human portal waiting to be released into the fabric of the cosmos itself.

The essence of Quantum Consciousness has four key aspects: “**The Creator Effect**” embraces the concept that we can create anything we desire through our intention. This concept has origination in the Quantum principle of “The Observer Effect”. This experimentally proved theory states that we affect an outcome just by observing an event, it encapsulates the power of intention and confirms we are the masters of our own destiny. “**Intanglement**” embraces the concept of oneness, that we are all part of the energy of the universe and that some particles are more entangled than others. When we turn the Quantum principle of “Entanglement” internally into our own personal universe, we can seek and find our other selves. We who live in a timeless space of all ages, all alternate realities, parallel lives and our pure soul state. All are held within our personal universe. “**Everywhereness**” works on the Quantum principle of “Nonlocality”, that electrons can be in more than one place at one time, in fact they are everywhere at once in their awareness that they exist as probabilities until observed. We exist in all dimensions at the same time, beyond though including all linear time zones. We can visit these places to find the healing and wisdom that serves the greater being that we are. “Holographic Healing” works on the Quantum principle that we live in a “**holographic universe**”. A universe in which the large and the small are the same and that the smallest piece contains all. This simply means that any wisdom we uncover from our other selves, any healing we undertake can then send an evolving wave of higher consciousness rippling out into the fabric of the cosmos to serve the universe itself. Our personal universe is simply a holographic subset of all there is.

Under these four aspects, the intention for the journey is set and we start in our **Present Consciousness**, activating the quantum possibilities of our subatomic and offering the present consciousness the sacred role of

particles, releasing the restrictions of the conscious mind integration once we return, forever evolved from the journey. All offered through the gentle vibrational tones of the voice and energy field of the Facilitator. We first of all expand outwards to explore the **Stored Consciousness** of the Client. The energy of all our experiences within this life that we know may hold remarkable wisdom or the need for healing. We engage, we explore, we heal, we share. All those who come forward have the opportunity to raise their vibration.

We expand further out through our **Alternate Consciousness**, where those other selves who made different life choices can join us to share what they have learned, or to learn from us. These paths were created at those turning points in our lives, where we activated a split in our timeline, moving in both directions as our soul desired to learn from both paths. Our next realm offers us the experience of **Parallel Consciousness**, where our consciousness exists in other bodies on earth outside of the restrictions of time and space. We have lived in many eras and different bodies during our incarnations and we can claim this hidden wisdom or offer to share or exchange healing with those who come forward.

We expand further now out through our **Interdimensional Consciousness** where we can see, feel or re-experience what it is like to be in another type of existence either in physical or energetic form in this or other dimensions. Ultimately our consciousness doesn't need this body or any other body to be in existence. So much can be learned as we surrender the influences of this human form that create limitations to our deeper understanding. We expand further now, out through our personal universe to our **Eternal Consciousness**, embracing this purest form of ourselves. This remarkable expanded state of being is experienced as something profound and eternal, and then rather than be part of the universe, we are the universe, no limitations, no boundaries, we are simply what we are. We are all there is...

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Having undertaken this remarkable journey, we then move back through our realms to the forever changed **Present Consciousness**, to integrate, grow and evolve from what has been discovered. Sometimes a longer period of time has passed back here in human form while we were outside time and space and some deep reflection will follow as the assimilation of our discoveries takes place.

These journeys into Quantum Consciousness are for the true explorers. They work best for those who have experienced some form of expanded state previously and are as unique as the Client who seeks to travel. However sometimes the experience unfolds in a different way to what has been offered above, reflecting the uniqueness of the Client themselves. One common characteristic has come through in the cases we have seen. The Clients report a lightness in the energy experienced as we move outside of the heavy energy that permeates humankind and the experiences of this planet over time. It is like we move into the lighter state of being as we expand through the Quantum realms of our consciousness. It would appear that it is our deepest potential to be those lighter beings... There is an overriding philosophy that underpins the journey into Quantum Consciousness that brings great hope and intention to humankind in the midst of a troubled world, desperate to awaken to a greater collective sense of self...

Quantum Consciousness is about "The Remembering". Ultimately, we are all these things, already. All that we discover on the journey is already here nestled gently within us, waiting to be rediscovered so we can again experience our greatest authenticity. Our deepest and most profound potential for our consciousness has already been found...it is now time for humankind to remember.

* * *

***Profile:** Peter Smith is the founder of the Institute for Quantum Consciousness. He can be reached through his webpage at (www.instituteforquantumconsciousness.com). He is a leader in Spiritual Hypnotherapy globally and an emerging thought leader in consciousness studies. He speaks regularly at conferences, on radio programs and has participated in a number of documentaries both in Australia and overseas. He was president of the Michael Newton Institute for Life Between Lives Hypnotherapy for ten years before being appointed Director of The Newton Legacy. His book "Quantum Consciousness – Journey through other realms" (Llewellyn Publishing, August 2018) documents research and life changing case studies, in this emerging field of blending Quantum Physics with Expanded States of Awareness.*

Can St. Francis of Assisi Save Our Divided World Today? Are You Willing to Take Up the Shepherd's Staff -- and Help Spread Love & Peace

By James Twyman, author *Brother, Son, Sister, Moon*. Soon to be performed on Broadway.

Set aside your computer for a moment and see if you can guess who wrote these words: "I made a mistake. Without doubt, an oppressed multitude had to be liberated, but our method only provoked further oppression and atrocious massacres. What was really needed...were ten Francis of Assisi's."

I love asking this question and I'm not surprised when people give credit to revolutionary characters like Gandhi or Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. When I tell them, they're wrong their answers become even more interesting - Napoleon, George Washington, etc. "How about John Lennon?" someone recently asked.

"You're close," I said, "but only because their names sound similar. The answer is Lenin, not Lennon - the architect of the Russian Revolution, Vladimir Lenin."

Lenin? Is it possible that the communist leader who referred to religion as "medieval mildew" and called the clergy "gendarmes (French policemen) in cassocks" had fallen in love with a twelfth century Italian mystic who gave everything he owned to the poor in order to live the Gospel of Jesus as perfectly as he could? Clearly St. Francis has inspired millions of people for more than eight hundred years, to the point that statues of the saint occupy gardens everywhere you look today, but how did an atheist like Lenin become so enthralled?

Maybe Lenin has something to teach all of us in this regard. The end of the quote is: "What was really needed in Russia were ten Francis of Assisi's," but we could just as easily substitute that in our own world today - and it would be just as true.

Does it sound like a ridiculous dream in the world of bullying, fake news and racist attacks? When you know a little about the history of Europe, especially at the time of St. Francis, you realize things weren't that different - the pope was at odds with the Holy Roman Emperor, city states were

all-time high.

Which leads to the question Vladimir Lenin seemed to be asking - Are we trying to solve the problems of the world with the same thinking that got us into trouble? If so, maybe ten radical people like St. Francis of Assisi are enough to turn things around.

Margaret Mead famously said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Was Mead's thinking influenced by St. Francis when he wrote: "Pure, holy simplicity confounds all the wisdom of this world?"

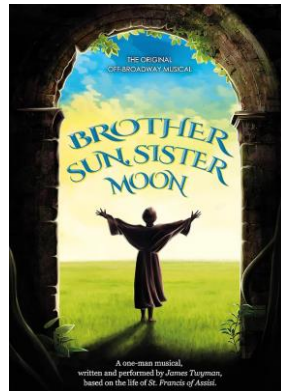
When you examine the current direction of the world - especially politically - it's easy to agree that the current wisdom isn't so wise, so maybe thinking outside the box isn't such a bad idea.

Presidential candidate Marianne Williamson has taken considerable heat for challenging the status quo. She encourages us to "love with conviction" and "wage peace," the same ideas St. Francis would have expressed if he was alive today. But at least she is willing to stand for these ideas on a national stage, inching these concepts forward, planting seeds in the minds of people who may not have viewed the world from this perception.

So, I've decided to throw my hat into the ring, but not as a Presidential candidate. I want to take up the challenge issued by Lenin and become one of the ten St. Francis's needed to turn the world around.

Here are a few things I'll need to do if I'm to accomplish my goal: Be willing to give everything for love; think less about my own comfort and more about the wellbeing of others; and finally, challenge my own limiting beliefs and be willing to see everyone through the eyes of love. If I can do that, even in some limited way, maybe others will make a similar decision and step forward in their own way. *All I need are nine more.*

St. Francis's example directly challenged the powers that ruled Europe eight hundred years ago, and yet his vision is celebrated today. He lived at the end of what we now call the Dark Ages, but he was also one of the inspirations that initiated the Renaissance, an era of great light and creativity. Is it possible that hundreds of years from now people will look back at this time in a similar way, calling it another Dark Age? And if they do, will they also



celebrate the few dedicated people who stepped forward just as St. Francis did? Are we on the cusp of a New Renaissance?

* * *

James Twyman, bestselling author of *Giovanni and the Camino of St. Francis*, will bring his stirring new musical on St. Francis **Brother Sun, Sister Moon** to Broadway on February 20-March 1, 2020. And with the beloved saint as his model-he will travel a continent penniless, on foot and with whatever food, housing and further transportation that God will provide to get him there, presenting the play in 10 cities along the way. Twyman is also the *NY Times* bestselling author of 15 other books including *The Moses Code and Emissary of Light*. He has also recorded more than 18 music albums including the Billboard chart bestseller *I AM Wishes Fulfilled* along with Dr. Wayne Dyer; as well as produced or directed seven feature films. For more information on Twyman, and the **Brother Sun, Sister Moon Musical Tour** stops and performances—and *Giovanni and the Camino of St. Francis*—visit <www.JimmyTwyman.com>.

Interview continued from page 7

Consciousness has been described as limitless. It is both impersonal and transpersonal, yet it is also what is most personal. It appears to be formless and it's the life force within all that we are.

As mortal creatures who have survived and thrived by defining 'our' personal boundaries and defending 'our' chosen physical and psychological territories, we have attended to 'our' things, thoughts, and activities, to who we imagine our 'selves' to be. As a result, we've developed a habit of feeling separate and isolated, preferring to pay attention to what is pleasurable and promising while withdrawing our consciousness from what we imagine will be painful and threatening.

We (may) have been objectified from an early age as a little boy or girl, as though we were another thing or thought. The ever-changing content of our lives can 'too often' distract us from the presence of an awareness that reunites us with what we have not yet fully felt or understood.

Whenever awareness becomes overly structured by imagery, it can become opaque and narrowly constricted. We cannot know true freedom if we are suffering from an 'overactive' imagination.

Experientially being, seeing, feeling, and sharing awareness (itself) inclusively, within, between, and among our 'selves' (can) eliminate these fears of not feeling whole and spiritually holy. But, without devoting

sufficient time and attention to this practice of self-realization - individually and socially - we are unlikely to realize how utterly simple and peaceful we are capable of being together.

I also understand that you have devoted your life to awakening a higher state of consciousness in others. That is the purpose of your organization, the Human Connection Institute. Yet by 'awakening our collective selves', as you describe your work, aren't you in a sense competing with religious philosophies and people's beliefs in 'God'?

Eminent physicists and spiritual adepts teach us that "...the true essence is the Void, the real condition of the individual and all phenomena." The Three Great Mysteries of Consciousness, free will, and God are resolved by socially realizing our four-dimensional simplicity. We can then also understand what seems unimaginably complex - as all of nature is effortlessly orchestrated by the quality our awakening 'presence.'

All that can change is precisely coordinated by what does not change. This ensures that every moment of our lives must be experienced as incomparably unique. As a collective consciousness, the truth of what we are occurs in us and for us. We are awakening, as both one and many, in an eternal now. As each of us has been relatively unconscious of being inseparable from a universal Consciousness, our current circumstances are largely due to our not paying attention in an undivided way as a species.

The depth of our insensitivity depersonalizes, deludes, and deceives 'us.' Our persistent myopia has confounded the unity of our consciousness. We are indivisible, but our false sense of a separate self has kept the majority of us from enjoying our spiritual freedom.

We are not who, or what, we imagine our 'selves' to be. By identifying with our imagination(s), it's no wonder we have 'avoided the Void' at all costs. We are afraid of being unimaginable and immeasurable. Still, we must know our 'selves' as a Void - to be fully alive.

But how can we mentally cope with this? What you are saying seems to be overwhelming to most people.

In an infinite present, inside a relative reality, wherein every 'one' is there for every 'one' else, we would all know every 'thing' is fleeting, except what cannot change. Our ability for empathy, compassion, loving-kindness, and shared sensitivity is rooted in an absence which gives rise to our awakesness. Without a constant indivisible Void-based 'reference frame' linking every point centered event, process, and geometric coordinate location, it would well be 'impossible' for us to be who we are. Whether we are aware of it or not, 'all of us' share these ever-changing forms, extended-and-expressed as our bodies, hearts, and minds. Our creative freedom,

love, and understanding rely on how well we pay attention as well as what we pay attention to.

Not knowing who-or-what we are has physical, neurological, and psychological consequences. If we seek relief from fear and pain by clinging to insubstantial forms and mind-made ideas, we suffer. Whenever attention is allowed to become overly identified with these fragments of a greater whole, a mind-made personality 'tries' to take control of these pieces of experience to create a 'peace' that is missing. Yet, this trying is futile and goes on endlessly, as the mind promises to make life behave the way it imagines it 'should.' When filled solely with the knowledge of thoughts and things, we cannot begin to know the actual integrity of awareness.

What about conceptual abstractions - from consciousness and common feelings that are associated with consciousness - what modern philosophers call the 'hard problem'. Those 'things' that are immaterial and hard to pinpoint, let alone explain. They go beyond just the neurophysiological aspects of the brain, and cannot be so easily explained by material and/or physical means? Take, for instance, love.

After my NDE at the age of four, I learned the word Spirit. I recall falling in love with how simple life is. By giving up control, I found how easy it is to be transparent to our 'selves' and one another, to be every 'thing' and nothing whatsoever - to be unconditionally all-loving together. As such, Self-realization reliably fulfills 'lifetimes of yearning' for an everlasting love.

Your approach to a physical and theoretical understanding of consciousness basically starts from a geometrical and relativistic point of view, but you also used quantum mechanical terms and explanations. How is this possible within the context of contemporary physics, where the quantum and relativity are incompatible and separate?

Consciousness is essential for transforming the probabilities of quantum mechanics into the precisely observed measurements of classical relativity. 'No-thing' and 'no-one' coexist as (virtual) potentials re-united by an indivisible primordial Void. In this light, a commonly sensed, empathic, compassion consciousness appears to have been designed (unintentionally) by the absolute absence of any-thing or any-one. The spiritual implications and their consequences, for both scientists and society comprehending the co-creative and re-creative (dreamlike) nature of 'reality,' calls each one of 'us' to the task of successfully popularizing our innate potential.

Metaphysically speaking, 0D is absolute. By itself, it cannot be 'conscious' of its quality or presence. Yet, primal awareness is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, orchestrating and organizing "All That Is" as a mirror-like rest frame in which 'things' are 'a-causally' related by meaning rather than causation.

Awareness can be aware of itself.

Many others working on consciousness and the true physics of our external reality have suggested that everything, both consciousness and external reality, is just 'information'. Yet you seem to have overcome this difficulty by unifying our internal awareness and our externally sensed natural physical reality into one single thing called consciousness. Within this context, you seem not to need the word information to explain reality. What word would you use instead to fill that gap?

Knowing! A Void serves as an 'assembly point' throughout our neuropsychological anatomy. We accelerate our evolution by experiencing what is familiar in an unfamiliar way. We improve our health and well-being the more we share this consciousness - as everyone of us and all things are made of it.

The Void helps to form even the smallest thing, but it is never limited by what it has 'caused' as its potentials are infinite. If we all knew not one thing happens without this Void suggesting 'it' to happen, we might accomplish much more with far less effort—by being empty to be full.

The 4D mind utilizes the 3D body to know its absolute nature as the indivisibility of 0D, the unmanifest causing the whole of manifestation. This reversal of flow, from being 'at the effect' of the mind and body to being, the cause of the body/mind, energetically makes the rewards of 'true love' the source and origin of collective consciousness. Instead of being burdened by things, thoughts, and activities, lost in the forest among the trees, the 'I am' is everything and no-one-thing. We are the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, in each and every moment.

Could you briefly summarize what you've told us? In other words, what is the essential point in your physical model of consciousness that our readers can take home with them?

It has been shown how an indivisible Void serves in a re-creative, ever-awakening process that is essential to our evolution and the emergence of our universe. How the 'engine' that is driving all creation is not a thing, or a force; how the lowest energy state of this system unites higher-dimensional behavior; how an indivisible and invariant absence serves as the foundation of spatial transformation, creating order out of chaos.

Observation drives 'collapse and expansion,' creating space over time, energy and matter, minds and bodies - in an ever-present 'now.' We are pre-destined by design to ever more sensitively share this communion of 'all that is' as a whole - individually and socially - as a form of 'unconditional' love.

The original essay (with bibliography) that this interview summarizes is published in the 2018 ASCSI Conference Proceedings, and can also be accessed at https://connectioninstitute.org/PDF/Resolving_3_Mysteries.pdf

Defying Death in Retirement Homes

Based on a television commercial, a certain retirement home in Hawaii is the place to be in your old age. People who live there are content, happy, and having a lot of fun, fully enjoying their senior years. When they are not strolling around the beautiful gardens or playing deck shuffleboard, they are probably at the nearby shopping center or playing a round of golf down the road. They'll likely end the night with some fine dining, all smiling and having the time of their lives. Yet, when I visited my in-laws at that same retirement home on a number of occasions several years ago, I found it a somewhat depressing place. The residents looked like zombies, seemingly not knowing each other, and outside of taking meals in the dining room they were all holed up in their individual apartments. There, they kept to themselves as much as possible. I saw none of the gaiety or merriment depicted in the television commercial.



It was much the same thing at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington, D.C. when I visited an old friend there about 10 years ago. I had expected to see a lot of camaraderie – many old soldiers gathered around in a circle, sharing old war stories, laughing, reminiscing, slapping each other on the back, and otherwise having a ball. However, I found it much like the Hawaii retirement home. The residents who were not in their rooms napping or watching TV were just sitting around staring off into space, eyelids at half mast, mouths half open, drool sometimes hanging from their chins. In the dining room, they, for the most part, sat at individual tables, seemingly not knowing each other.

My friend, then 99 and a well-decorated World War II veteran who had resided there for some 20 years, usually sat alone in the dining hall and didn't appear to know most of the other old warriors. He knew the person in the room adjoining his just enough to nod to him whenever he saw him in the hallway, but he didn't know much about him.

More recently, I have observed much the same depressing environment at another Hawaii retirement home as my wife and I visited her aunt. The building is new, the furnishings fine, the lounge comfortable, the lattes served by the lounge machine especially tasty, but on more than 20 visits to the home I have seen very little of the residents, except at mealtimes.

They all seem to stay in their small rooms, watching television or sleeping. A few of them sit in the hallway staring at the walls or sleeping in a sitting position. They head for the dining room in a parade of walkers three times a day, though they don't eat much and don't talk to each other at the table. They just sit there, looking at the food, seemingly wondering if it is worth the effort to take another mouthful. After 30 minutes or so, they slowly position themselves in front of their walkers, and shuffle back to their rooms.

The administrators appear to do their best to keep them occupied, encouraging them to engage in such activities as balloon volleyball, in which they sit on opposing couches and attempt to hit a balloon over

a coffee table, or an exercise session in which they don't do much more than windmill their arms, but only a small percentage of them participate. Most prefer to confine themselves to their rooms.



The sense I got at those retirement homes as well as others I have visited over the years is one of despair and hopelessness – people just waiting around to die, although not wanting to think about death. On a couple of occasions, I tried to engage some of them – the few who leave their rooms – in a conversation, hoping to get some clue as to what they are thinking about and what their thoughts are on death. However, the mere mention of death resulted in a look of shock or dismay and I was unable to get any real philosophical musing from them. The conversations had to be limited to the weather, the tasteless food in the dining room, or the reason their children don't visit more often.

As I observed the hopelessness and despair among the retirement home residents on a more recent trip to the "Old Soldier's Home" in

Washington, D.C., I thought about the interview with Julien Musolino, professor of psychology and cognitive science at Rutgers University, I had read on the Internet. Musolino contends that there is no such thing as a soul and the quicker people realize that the happier, they will be. They'll feel liberated and that liberation will lead to both truth and happiness. That seems to be the view of so many of the philistines promoting nihilism on the Internet.

They say we should live in the moment, enjoy each day as it comes, and forget about the future. Nearly all of them come across as young people rebelling against the God of their parents. They are able to escape into various activities each day – texting, tweeting and phoning each other about their mundane activities, not taking the time to realize how meaningless those activities are in the great scheme of things.



I wonder if they will feel the same way when they end up in a retirement home, when living in the moment means staring at the walls and napping all day, with drool dripping, when it means graying, grunting, grumbling, grimacing, groaning, growling, griping, grieving, groveling, and groping, when the only thing you have to look forward to is the next meal, and when you make it to table you don't even want to eat.

Now in my 83rd year, I qualify for retirement homes, but I can't see myself living out my final years in such a depressing environment. Philistinism – whether it be no belief at all in the survival of consciousness at death, such as that espoused by Musolino, or merely a hope that comes from the blind faith of orthodoxy – doesn't work for me, and from what I have witnessed it doesn't work for most others in their declining years. The non-believers, like Musolino, can pretend to rejoice in their "heroic" march into an abyss of nothingness, but they'll never convince me that it is anything but bravado. As Kierkegaard saw it, such people are in despair even though they think they are happy. "The reason is that his sensuous nature and the psycho-sensuous completely dominate him," the famous existentialist offered. "The reason is that he lives in the sensuous categories agreeable/disagreeable, and says goodbye to truth, etc.; the reason is that he is too sensuous to have the courage to venture to be spirit or to endure it."

To quote William James, the pioneering psycho-

logist and renowned philosopher: "Let sanguine healthy-mindedness do its best with its strange power of living in the moment and ignoring and forgetting, still the evil background is really there to be thought of, and the skull will grin in at the banquet. In the practical life of the individual, we know how his whole gloom or glee about any present fact depends on the remoter schemes and hopes of which it stands related. Its significance and framing give it the chief part of its value. Let it be known to lead nowhere, and however agreeable it may be in its immediacy, its glow and gilding vanish. The old man, sick with an insidious internal disease, may laugh and quaff his wine at first as well as ever, but he knows his fate now, for the doctors have revealed it, and the knowledge knocks the satisfaction out of all these functions. They are partners of death and the worm is their brother, and they turn to a mere flatness."

The believers who rely on blind faith and the teachings of orthodoxy are really not much better off than the non-believers, as strumming harps and singing psalms 24/7 for eternity is hardly more appealing than extinction. The orthodox believers repress the idea of death by escaping into the same twaddle to which the non-believer clings. They are philistines, nonetheless.

I am convinced that one must move from blind faith to true faith, or conviction, if he or she is to live the retirement years with some purpose. "Too many indeed hold the solemn verities concerning the hereafter in a sort of half consciousness, believing in them, yet nevertheless not fully realizing them," wrote Dr. Madison Peters, a Christian author of a century ago. "They must flame within us, setting our whole moral and intellectual nature on fire, sending a life current of energy though every part of our being, arousing us to impetuous action and to sustained effort born of strong conviction."

Such conviction comes from giving up the 10 G's for the 10 S's: seeking, searching, studying, striving, struggling, sacrificing, serving, surrendering, solving and then soaring.

To quote Carl Jung, the renowned psychologist: "Death is psychologically as important as birth, and like it, is an integral part of life. ... As a doctor, I make every effort to strengthen the belief in immortality, especially with older patients when such questions come threateningly close. For, seen in correct psychological perspective, death is not an end but a goal, and life's inclination towards death begins as soon as the meridian is passed."

– Michael Tynn



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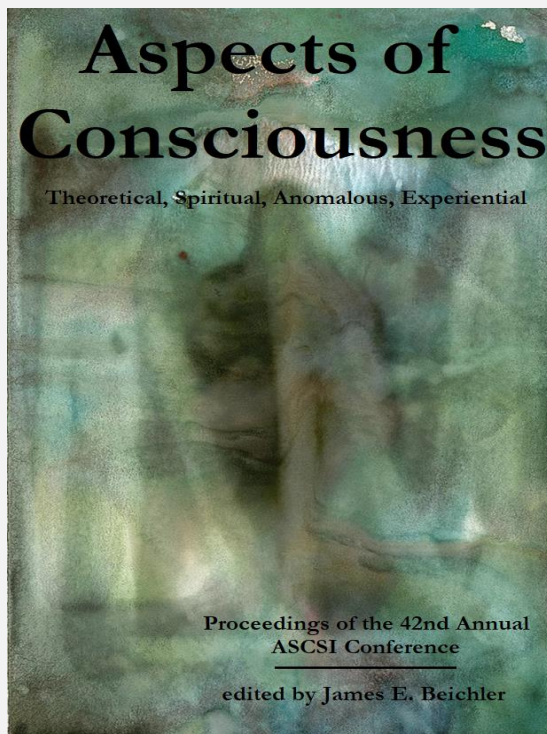
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