



## **Dan Siegel's Mindsight Lecture Series: Monthly Topical Lectures Topics for 2013-2014**

### **Session #1 – September 6, 2013**

#### **Mindful Awareness and Neuroplasticity**

Focusing the mind with curiosity, openness, acceptance, and positive regard activates the “resonance circuits” that integrate our internal and interpersonal worlds. Training the mind to be mindful in this way improves immune function, raises telomerase levels, creates a shift in the brain’s activity to approach rather than withdraw from challenges, and even stimulates the neuronal activation and growth of the integrative fibers of the brain.

#### **Objectives:**

- Identify 3 core aspects of mindful awareness training
- Describe 4 neurophysiological benefits to mindfulness practice

#### **Recommended Reading:**

- Siegel, D.J. (2007). *The mindful brain: Reflection and attunement in the cultivation of well-being*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Davidson, R.J. (2012). *The emotional life of your brain: How its unique patterns affect the way you think, feel, and live—and how you can change them*. New York: Plume.

### **Session #2 – November 22, 2013**

#### **Applied Neuroscience Part 1: The impact of genes and epigenetic regulation on neural development**

Everyone can benefit from a deep understanding of how neuroscience can be applied in our everyday lives to improve our well-being. The nervous system develops from the differentiation and linkage of neurocircuits that are shaped by both genetic and epigenetic factors as well as by the impact of experience on unfolding neural connectivity.

#### **Objectives:**

- List 4 components of the neuron
- Describe how genes and their epigenetic regulation influence neural development

#### **Recommended Reading:**

- Louis, C. (2013). *The social neuroscience of education: Optimizing attachment and learning in the classroom*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Siegel, D.J. (2012). *The developing mind, second edition: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. New York: Guilford Press.

### **Session #3 – December 6, 2013**

#### **Applied Neuroscience Part 2: The connectome and neural integration**

The connectome (meaning the interconnected neural networks of the brain) reveals how differentiated areas of the brain are both anatomically and functionally connected. When such integrative linkages are established, the brain is able to create balanced coordination and regulation of processes such as attention, emotion, thinking, behavior, and interpersonal relating.

**Objectives:**

- Identify 3 major integrative regions of the brain
- Name 9 processes that emerge from the interconnected prefrontal cortex

**Recommended Reading:**

- Siegel, D. J. (2010). *The mindful therapist: A clinician's guide to mindsight and neural integration*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Siegel, D.J. (2012). *Pocket guide to interpersonal neurobiology: An integrative handbook of the mind*. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Session #4 - January 24, 2014****Thinking, Deciding, and Behaving**

Information streams through various circuits of the brain to influence our thought processes, reasoning, and decision making. Ultimately, our behavior is shaped by how the motor system of the brain is influenced by both slow and rapid information processing.

**Objectives:**

- Identify 2 routes of thinking
- Recall 3 aspects of decision making in the adolescent brain that may increase the chance of risky behavior

**Recommended Reading:**

- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. New York: Farrar.
- Siegel, D.J. (2012). *Pocket guide to interpersonal neurobiology: An integrative handbook of the mind*. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Session #5 - February 7, 2014****Attachment Inspired Psychotherapy**

Attachment relationships shape the regulatory circuits of the brain and influence our sense of self and how we relate to others. Fortunately, our models of attachment can be shaped through neural plastic changes that can be optimally harnessed within the therapeutic relationship to cultivate a more integrated and secure internal and interpersonal way of living.

**Objectives:**

- Assess 4 factors essential for secure attachment
- Name 3 categories of insecure attachment

**Recommended Reading:**

- Siegel, D.J. (2010). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. New York: Bantam.
- Shore, A.N. (2012). *The science of the art of psychotherapy*. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Session #6 - March 7, 2014****The Adolescent Mind and the Journey into Adulthood**

The changes in the teenage brain bring a new set of dimensions to the adolescent mind. We can view adolescence not as a period to "just get over," but as a time of life with essential qualities we need to hold on to as we move into our adult years.

**Objectives:**

- Describe 4 essential aspects of adolescence
- Differentiate 2 dimensions of change in the adolescent brain

**Recommended Reading:**

- Siegel, D.J. (December 2013). *Brainstorm: The teenage brain from the inside out*. New York: Penguin.

- Spear, L. (2009). *The behavioral neuroscience of adolescence*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Reyna, V.F., Chapman, S.B., Dougherty, M.R., & Confrey, J. (Eds.) (2011). Adolescent brain: Learning, reasoning, and decision making. *American Psychological Press*.

### **Session #7 – March 28, 2014**

#### **Drug Experimentation, PTSD Treatment, and “Spiritual Transformation”**

Recent applications of chemicals that have psychedelic properties to treat individuals with post traumatic stress disorder (“PTSD”) raise important questions about the mechanisms involved in both healing trauma and catalyzing expanded awareness of the nature of reality. “Spiritual Transformation” is a phrase that some use to refer to widening a sense of belonging and meaning in life and is a process that emerges with both neural integration and for some, drug experimentation. We will discuss the implications of these phenomena for our understanding of the mind and human development.

#### **Objectives:**

- Describe 2 ways in which psychoactive drugs may positively impact PTSD
- Contrast the healing of trauma and “Spiritual Transformation”

#### **Recommended Reading:**

- Roger, W., & Grob, C.S. (Eds.)(2005). *Higher wisdom: Eminent elders explore the continuing impact of psychedelics*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kornfield, J. (2009). *The wise heart: A guide to the universal teachings of Buddhist psychology*. New York: Bantam.

### **Session #8 – April 18, 2014**

#### **Autism and Social Cognition Challenges**

The prevalence of social cognition difficulties, including autism, has been rising for reasons we do not yet fully understand. Preliminary research suggests that impaired differentiation in the brain compromises the development of complex capacities needed to understand the mind of self or others. In this presentation, we’ll discuss autism and related disorders and how we might best approach individuals with such challenges to neural integration and social functioning.

#### **Objectives:**

- Explain the fundamental steps of social cognition
- Discuss how autism and related conditions vary in how social cognition is carried out

#### **Recommended Reading:**

- Siegel, D.J. (2012). *The developing mind, second edition: How relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are*. New York: Guilford Press.

### **Sessions #9 – May 16, 2014**

#### **Presence, Attunement, and Resonance in our Relationships**

The way we connect with each other in close relationships is built on how the presence of each individual allows for attunement to the internal experience of each person. With such presence and attunement, the internal state of 2 individuals begins to resonate as one system. Cultivating presence, attunement, and resonance supports the development of healthy relationships across the lifespan.

#### **Objectives:**

- Contrast the processes of presence, attunement, and resonance
- Recognize how integration emerges in close relationships

**Recommended Reading:**

- Siegel, D. J. (2010). *The mindful therapist: A clinician's guide to mindfulness and neural integration*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Ackerman, D. (2012). *One hundred names for love: A memoir*. New York: W.W. Norton.

**Session #10 – June 6, 2014****Cultural Evolution and Mindfulness**

Relationships within our society are based on collective patterns of communication. Individuals within a culture can be viewed as nodes in a narrative network that transmits meaning across the generations. When those narratives embed mindfulness within them, they can enable individuals to move beyond automatic reflexes to create a kinder and more compassionate community.

**Objectives:**

- Explain how cultural evolution is based on patterns of communication
- Compare a mindfulness-full culture to a mindfulness-less culture

**Recommended Reading:**

- Wentzel van Huyssteen, J., & Wiebe, E.P. (Eds.)(2011). *In search of self: Interdisciplinary perspectives on personhood*. New York: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Berreby, D. (2008). *Us & them: The science of identity*. New York: University of Chicago Press.