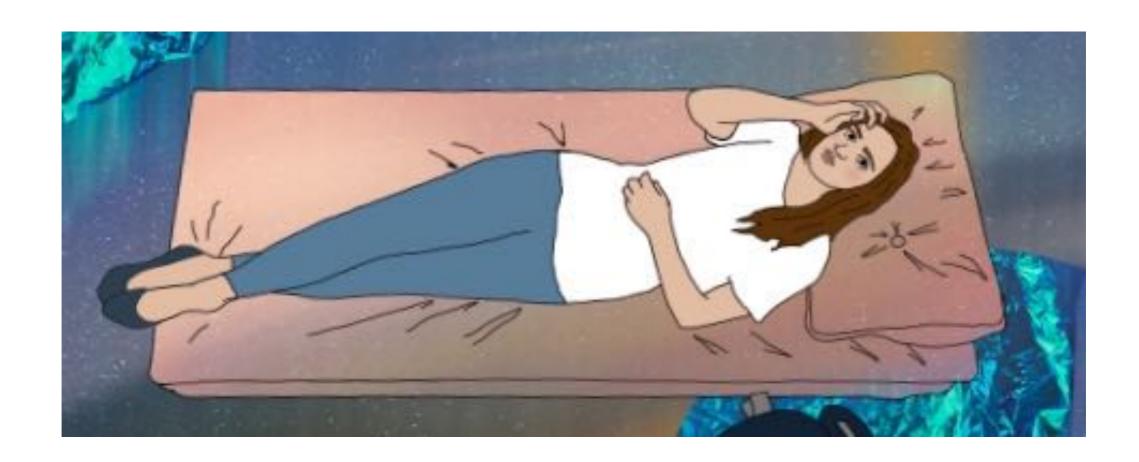
Compassion: The Second Wave in Buddhist Contemplative Science and Contemplative Psychotherapy

Joseph Loizzo, M.D., Ph.D.

Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science Contemplative Psychotherapy Program September 20, 2018



Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? As a contemplative psychotherapist and Buddhist teacher, increasingly I hear people share a groundswell of dread over our future...





The transition my clients and students are feeling isn't just personal— I see us all going through a collective transition in human consciousness









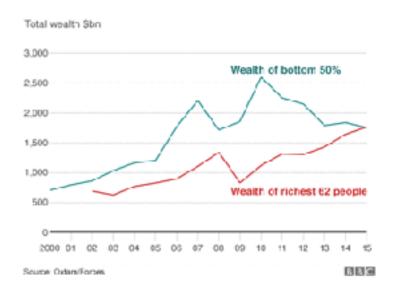


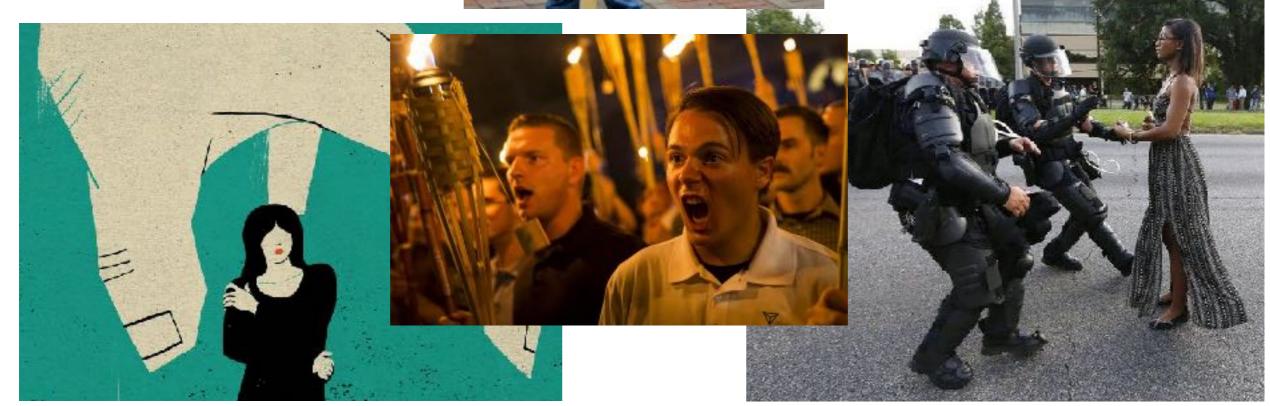
The evidence is all around us— Converging from every news outlet On every social media platform And live from our colleagues And clients, family and friends....













- Economic inequity is spiraling out of control
- Police brutality and hate crimes are spiking
- There's a global tide of anti-immigrant nationalism
- Racism and hate speech have poisoned our politics
- A patriarchy of sexual predation is being unmasked
- Human greed is threatening all life on our planet



The growing mood of dread recalls the famous World War I poem by WB Yeats:

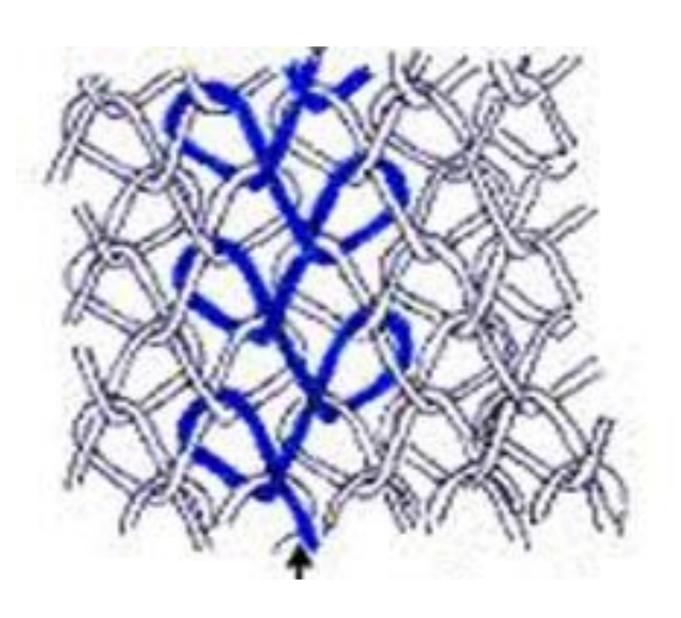


"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world..."



But is it really anarchy we're facing? Or is there a beastly thread running through all the troubling trends we feel converging

on us now?





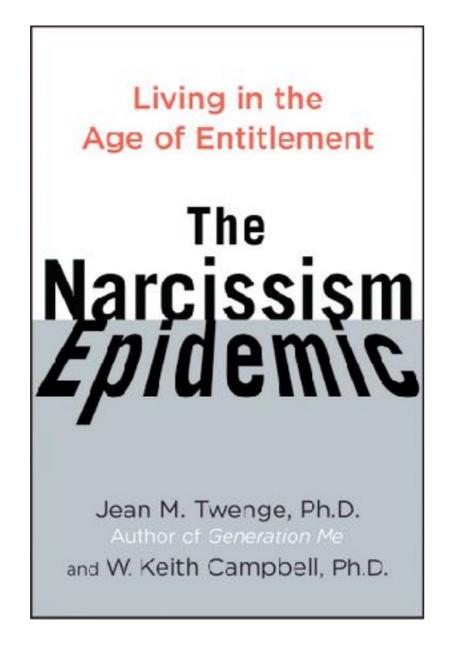
In this program we use two distinct streams of human know-how—psychotherapy and Buddhism—to explain why the transition we're in is neither accidental nor new—but can be traced to an inner divide that has been haunting our minds, brains and lives since the dawn of humanity...

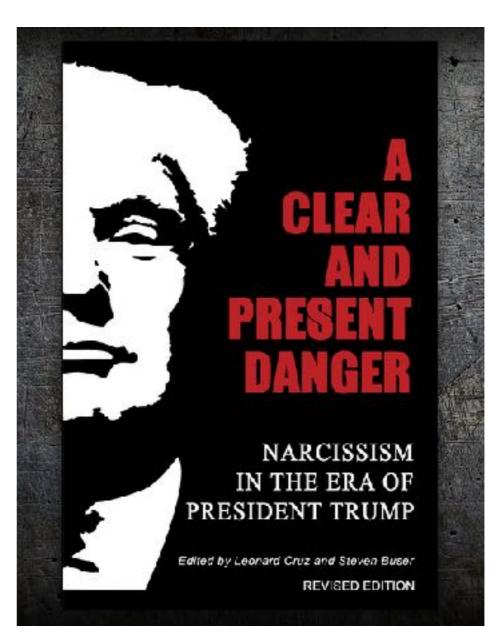






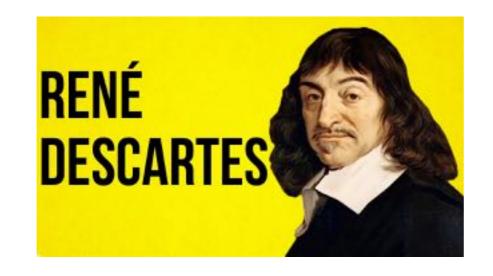
Our transition and the inner divide driving it are marked by two interlocking trends—the epidemic rise of narcissism and a historic low in compassion







Our two human healing traditions—from opposite ends of history and the planet—agree on one insight that challenges the egocentric stance underlying both deadly trends—



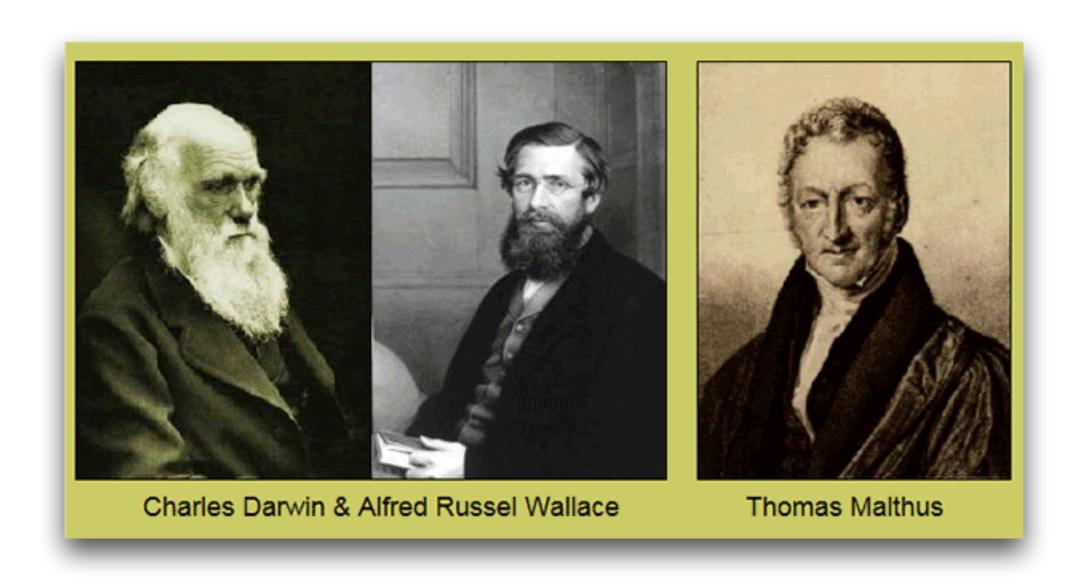
"I think, therefore I am"—

"I cannot be sure others are not automatons"—





And they also challenge the peculiarly modern Western view—misattributed to Darwin—that each of us is a separate atom—locked in a struggle for survival against all others and nature itself



The Roots of Narcissism and Blocks to Compassion: The Shared Diagnosis of Buddha and Freud





What is narcissism? In the simplest terms, narcissism is an exaggerated sense of our own ego as a fixed entity or identity, separate from all others and from everything else

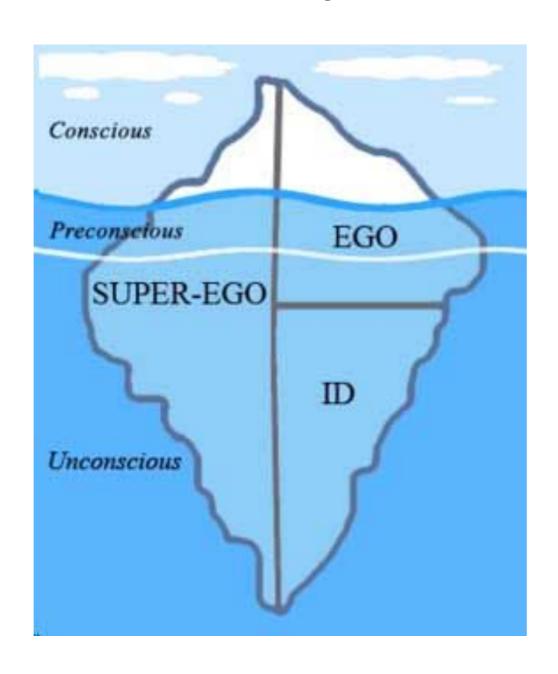


We can see why we might want to draw on modern psychology to understand narcissism and our current world transition from alienated egos to more compassionate humans—





Freud claimed the main contribution of psychoanalysis was his insight that the ego, the self, is not unitary, fixed, or independent—



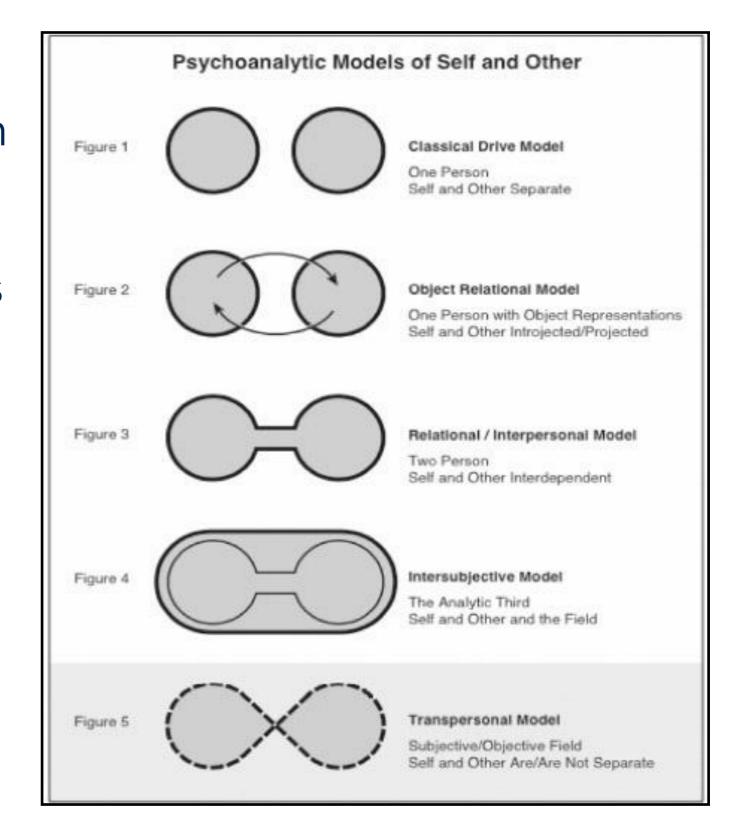


"Normally there is nothing we are more certain of than the feeling of our self, our own ego. It seems to be an independent and unitary thing, apart from everything else. That this is a deceptive appearance, that on the contrary, the ego...serves as a kind of facade...was first discovered by psychoanalysis. The universal narcissism of men... has suffered three blows from science...and this (after Copernicus' and Darwin's) was probably the most wounding."

—Freud, Civilization and its Discontents, 1.12-13



Just as modern physics split the atom to find a relativistic field of unseen forces and energies, so psychoanalysis split the psyche to find a relational field of unconscious forces and energies





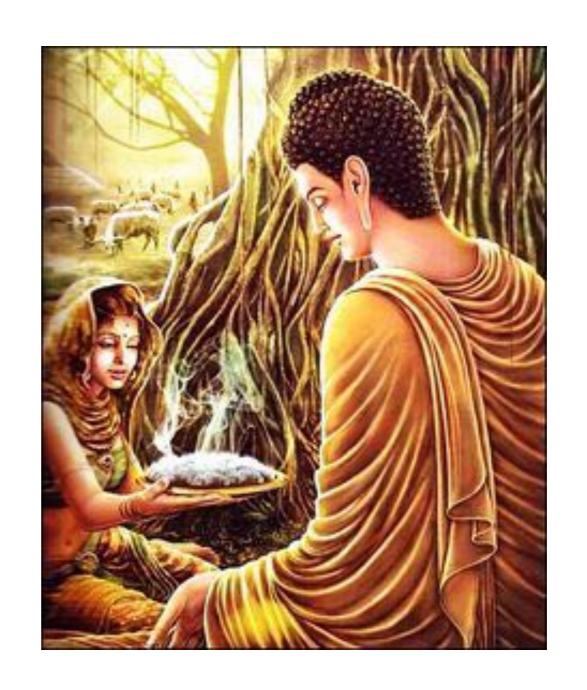


Citing Empedocles, Freud
linked the self-protective
"ego" instincts with
Thanatos—the death
drive—and warned they were
at odds with health and

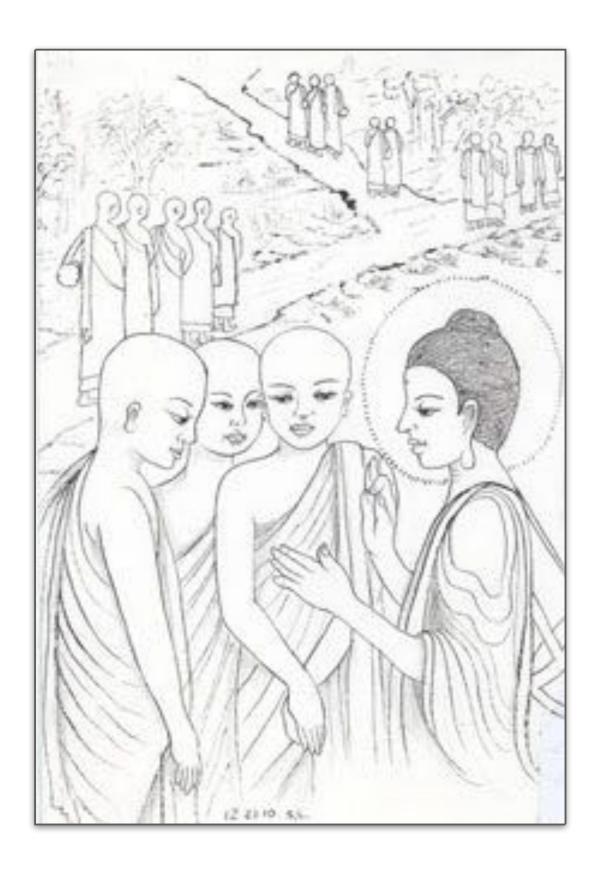
happiness in civilized life. He saw the future of civilization depending on our learning to grow out of ego's death drive and into the life-giving, socially creative energy of love or *Eros*



What did the Buddha have to add to this diagnosis? It turns out the answer is—a lot.



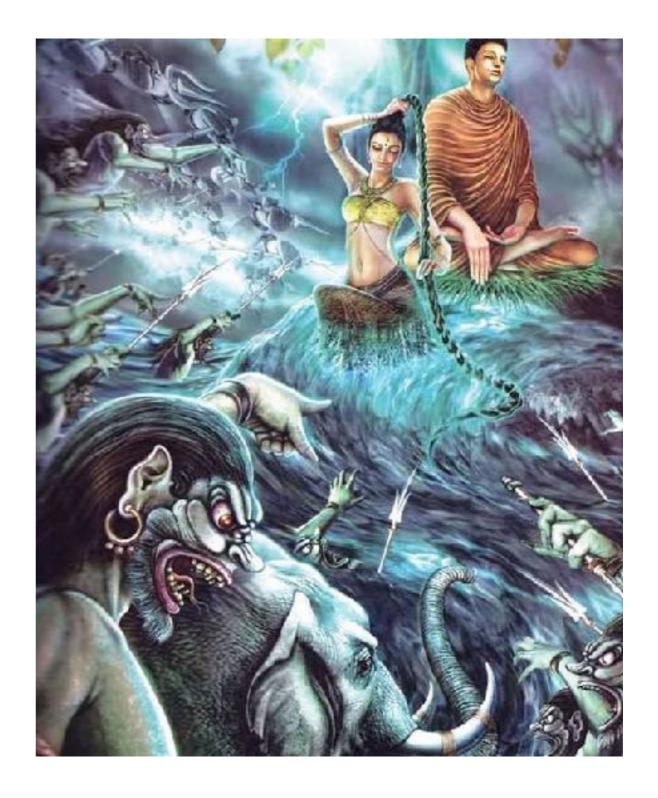




The most basic way the Buddha's teaching came to be known was as "the philosophy of selflessness" (anatma-vada).



Buddha taught that all our suffering comes from a misguided evolutionary instinct for self-enclosure which drives our development towards self-defeating obsession with our own identity, worldview, and desires, to the exclusion of others and the world



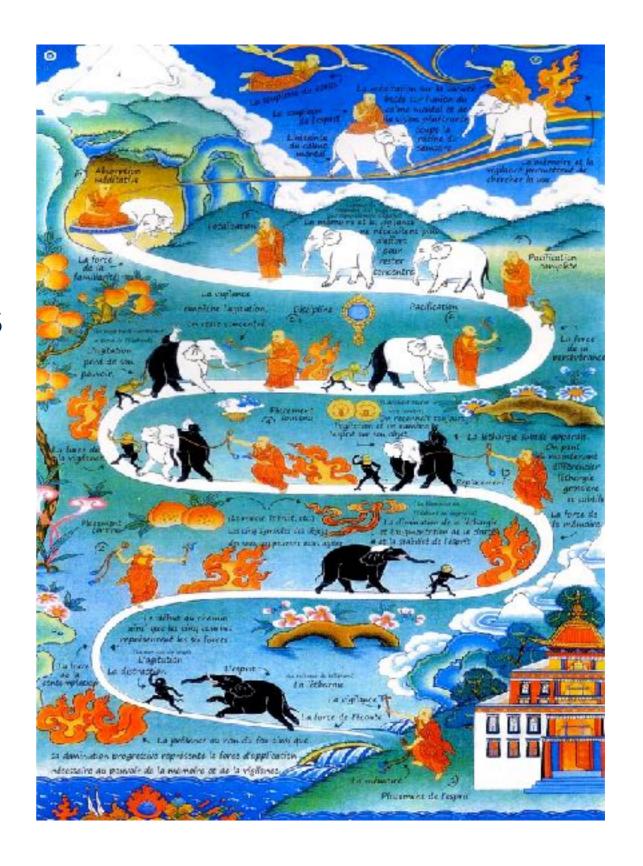


He called the drive for narcissistic self-enclosure innate "delusion" (avidya) or "self-grasping" (atmagraha), and personified it as "Mara," a figure like our Satan, but seen as an inborn psychological demon haunting all minds...





The Buddha taught a path to tame our narcissism and to free our minds to awaken our natural social genius for love, compassion, and altruism, through a communal contemplative education integrating wisdom, meditation, and ethics...



The New Science, Psychotherapy, and Buddhism: Turning Self-Enclosure into Social Engagement





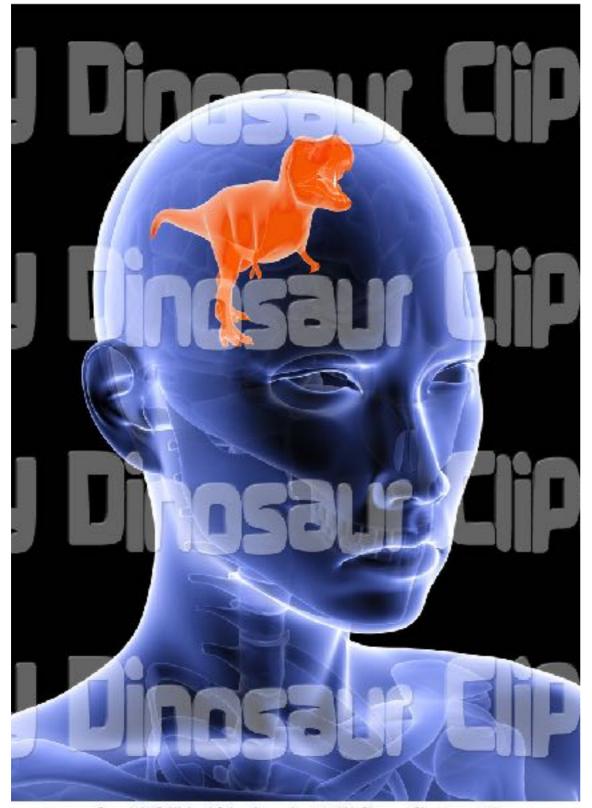
A 360 degree about face in science in recent years has made it perfectly clear that both psychoanalysis and Buddhism were right about human nature—



Over the last decades, the new science has abandoned the social Darwinist view of evolution and history as a "war of all against all"







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Likewise, science has moved away from the modern view of our nature and brains as hard wired with egocentric drives that permanently limit our capacity for empathy, social emotions and cultural cooperation

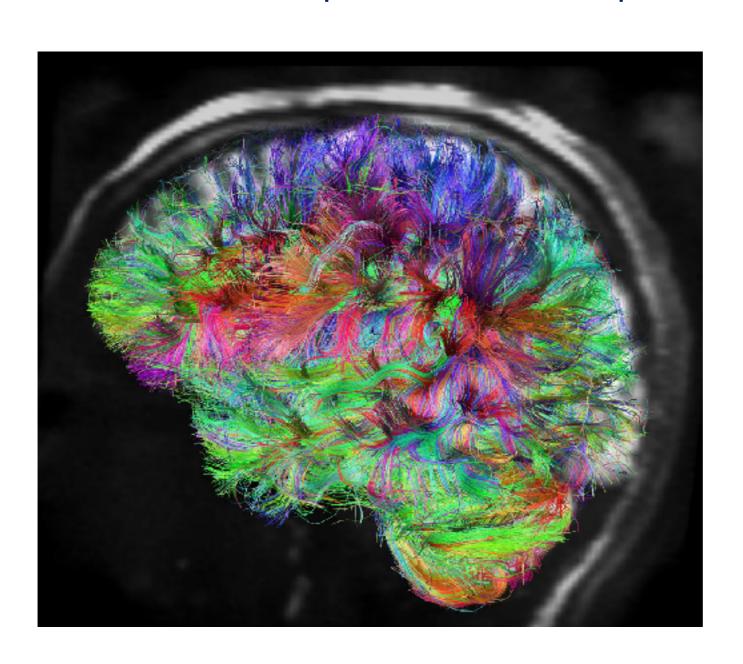


Biologists now see the evolution of mammals as driven by the advantages of increasing social capacity—redefining natural selection as "the survival of the most cooperative"



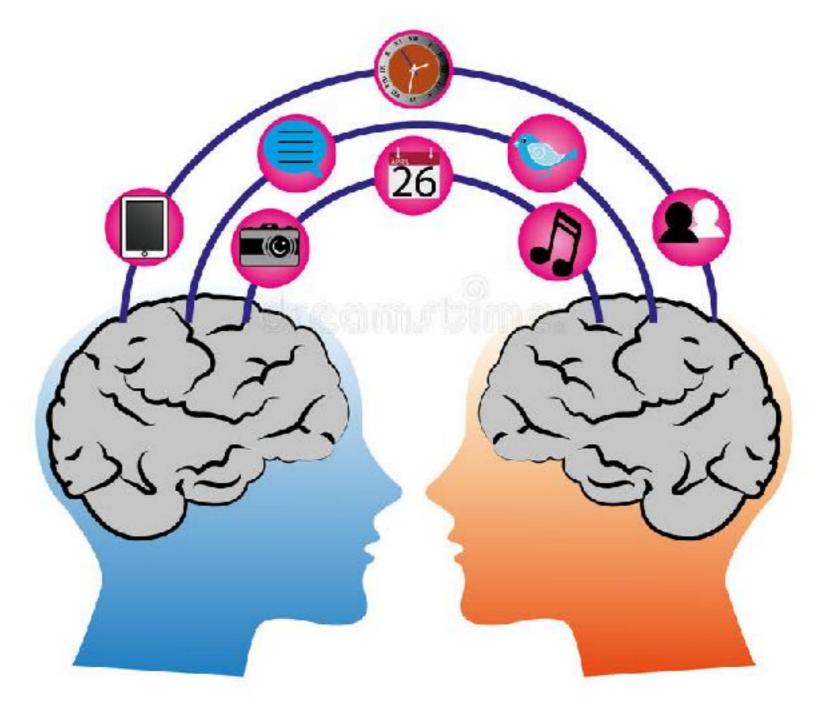


Neuroscientists have come to realize that our neurons are not hard wired but plastic—shaped by our daily experience and practice—





And that our brains are mainly wired for social living, to support basic trust, mature empathy, and cultural cooperation



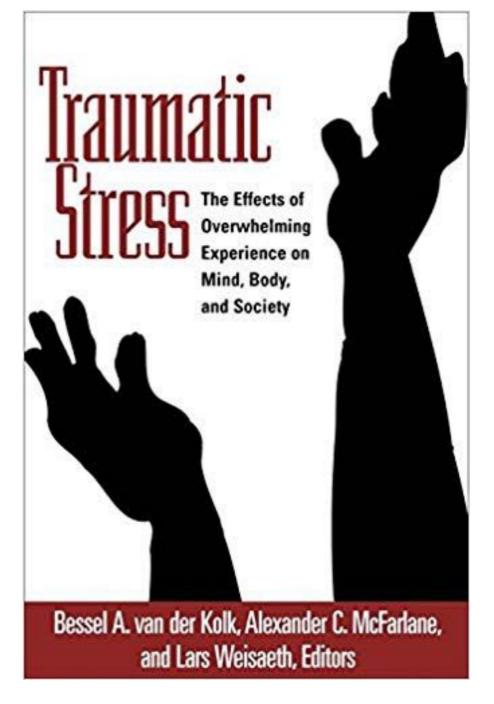




So if it's true—that we're basically loving and social —how is it that the culture of narcissism and isolation maintain such a grip on our minds and lives?



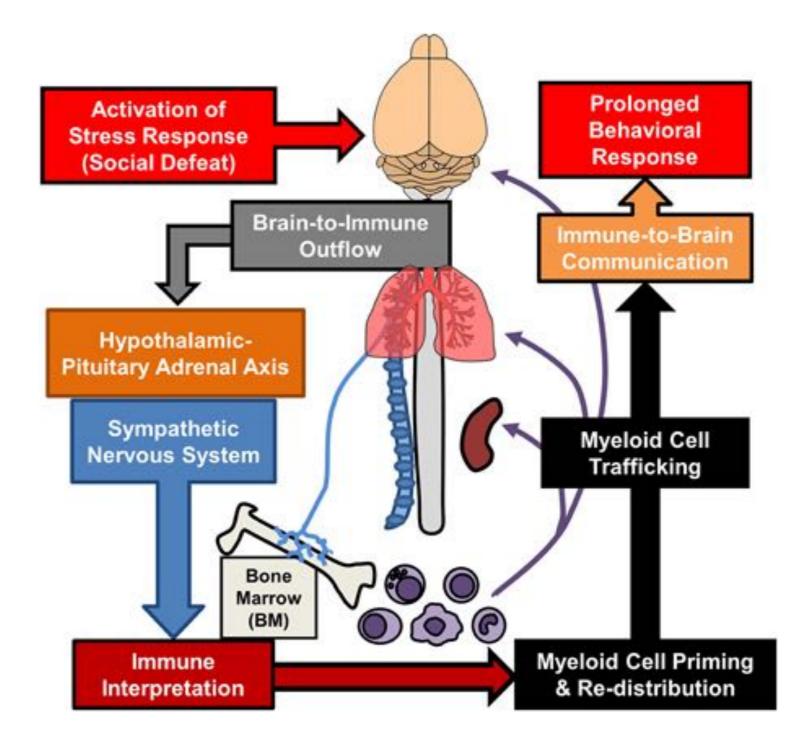
The answer lies in another key revolution in science—the groundbreaking new research on stress and trauma



The Brain Under Stress: How Stress Reactive Circuits Drive Self-Enclosure and Block Engagement

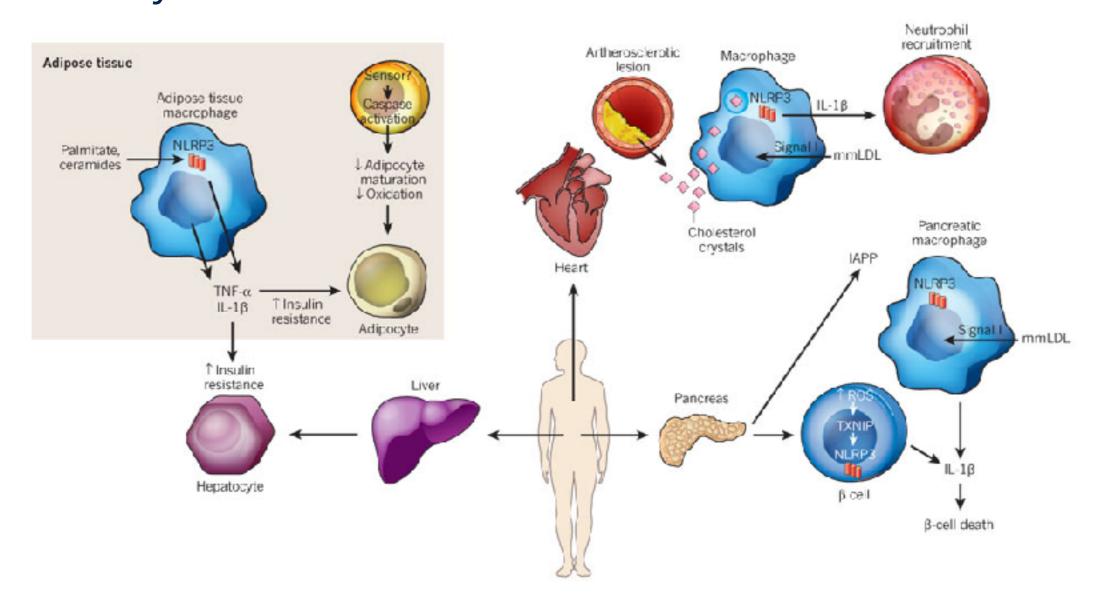


Decades of research have mapped every step of the many pathways by which stress and trauma inflict wear and tear on our brains, bodies & minds



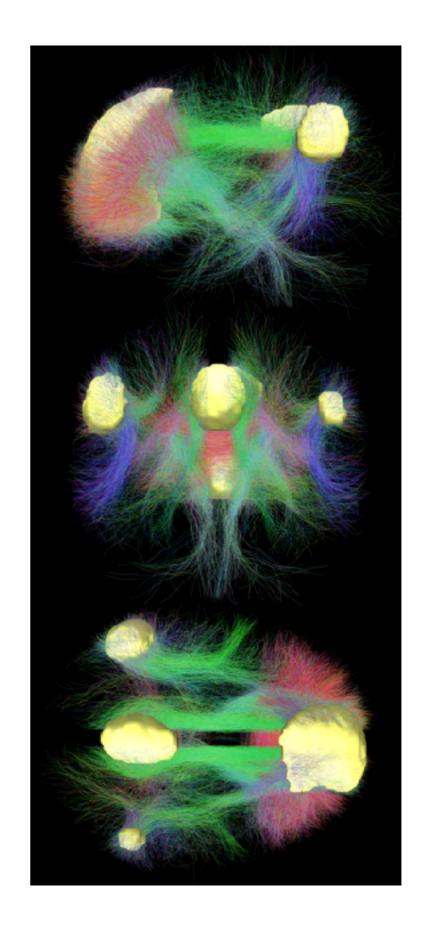


We know chronic stress causes brain atrophy, erodes immunity, undermines performance, fuels mind/body health problems like anxiety, depression, addictions, PTSD, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and cancer





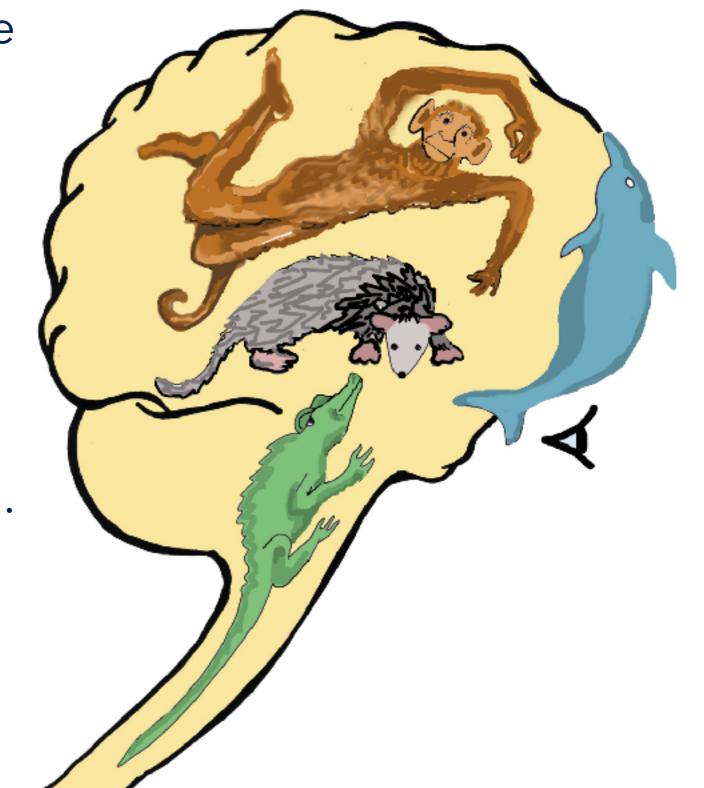
But the new research also explains why stress and trauma shift our complex brains into the selfenclosed processing that drives narcissism blocking our social capacities for mindful presence, empathic engagement, and playful embodiment





The Human Brain in Evolution

Neurobiology maps the human brain as an aggregate of three neural systems—. neocortex, limbic system, brainstem of primate, mammalian. and reptilian origin





Not Hierarchy, but Heterarchy

The brain's three broad operating systems are

linked in a structural/functional

heterarchy—networks in

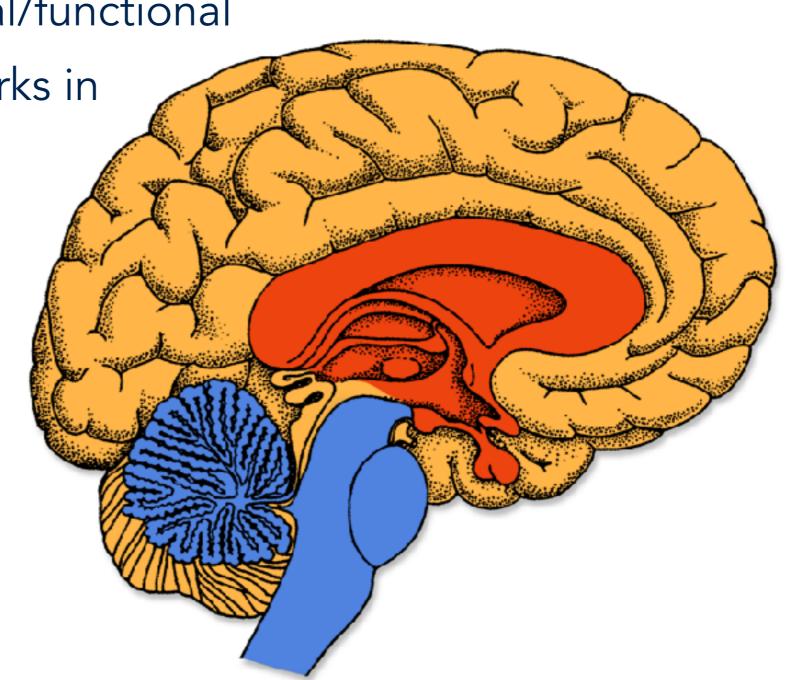
each system come

online in response

to perceived

tasks and

conditions

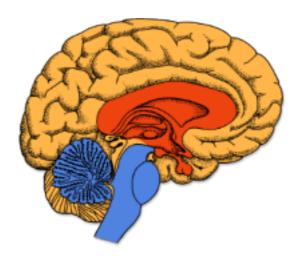




The Human Brain's Adaptive Modes

Each system runs the brainstem's basic life support network in response to distinct adaptive challenges:

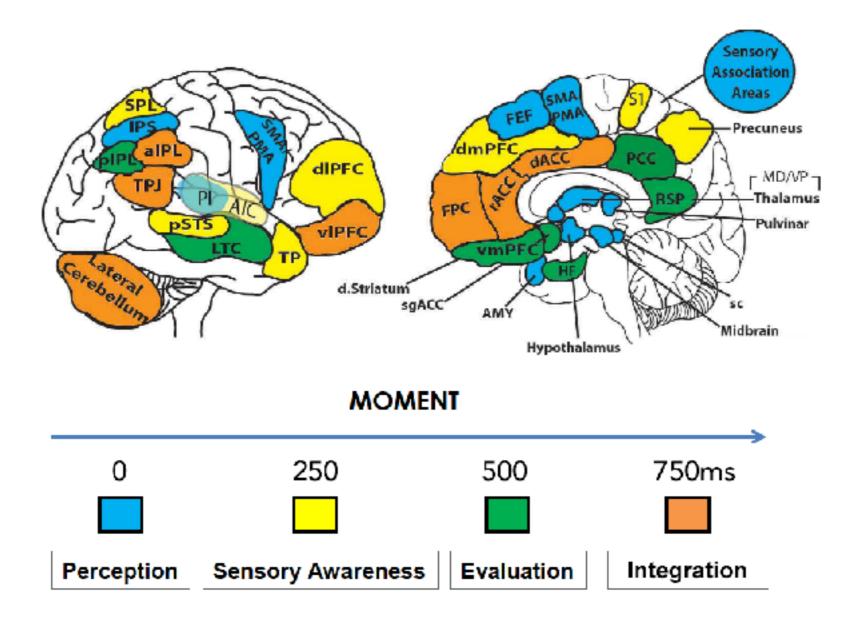
neocortex	role engagement
limbic system	social interaction
brainstem	embodied balance





The Science of Neural Networks

Specific neural functions are not run broadly by our brain systems but by specialized networks that link key regions within and between systems together

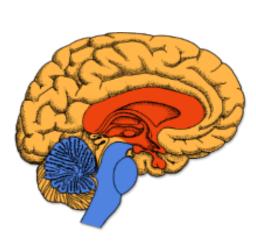




The Perceived Safety Hierarchy

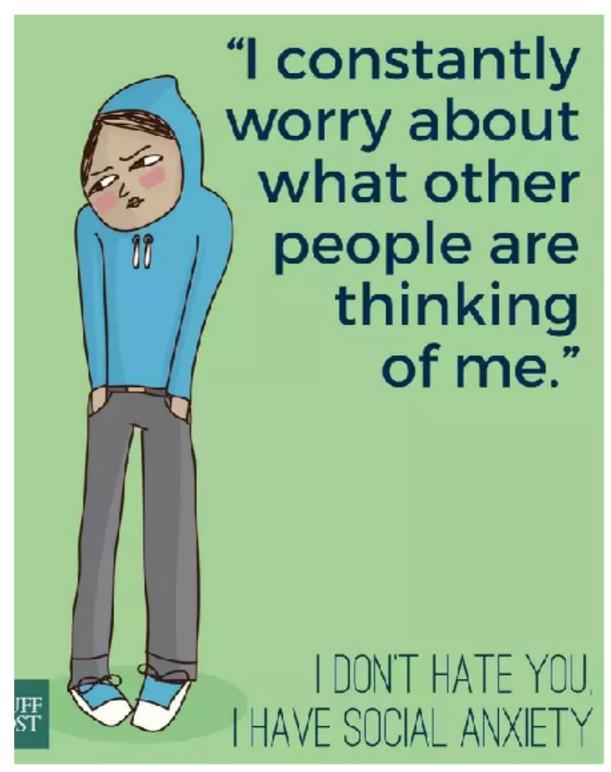
Newer social systems and networks set the brain's default mode in safety, but under threat, it defaults to older self-protective systems and networks

- In role stress, the neocortex shifts from role engagement to default self-enclosure
- In social stress, the limbic system shifts from social engagement to aversive mode
- In physical stress, the brainstem shifts from social resilience to reflex survival mode





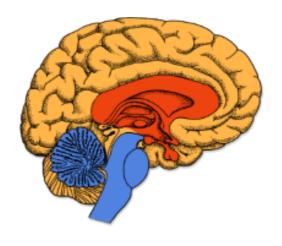
Within our brains, each main system holds opposing networks that shift processing from social engagement to selfenclosure, based on whether we feel safely connected or precariously alone





The Neurobiology of Narcissism: Social Engagement Networks versus Self-Enclosing Networks in the Brain

structure	engaged mode	enclosed mode
neocortex	presence network	default network
limbic brain	empathy system	aversion system
brainstem	social resilience	survival reflexes



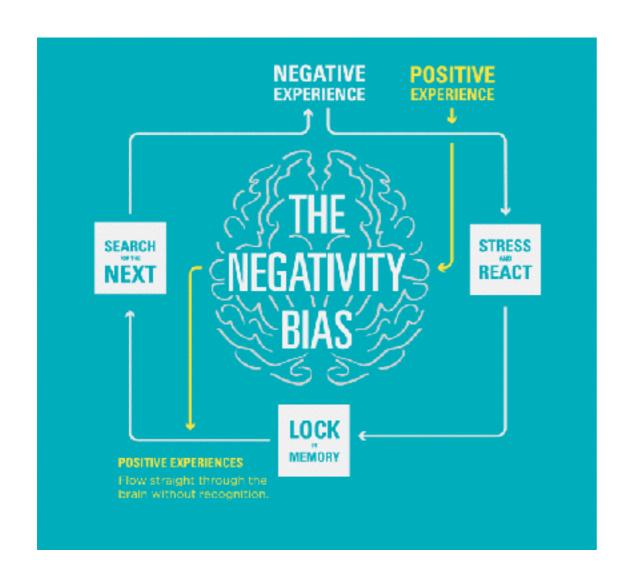


By nature we're born on the fence—prepared to survive in the wild, and equally prepared to thrive in community. Given neural plasticity, the question is: what side of our nature do we practice? As the Cherokee proverb says, which wolf will we feed?





Here's the rub, evolution has pre-wired our whole brains with negativity bias—to lean into the worst case, towards fearful reactivity and self-enclosure



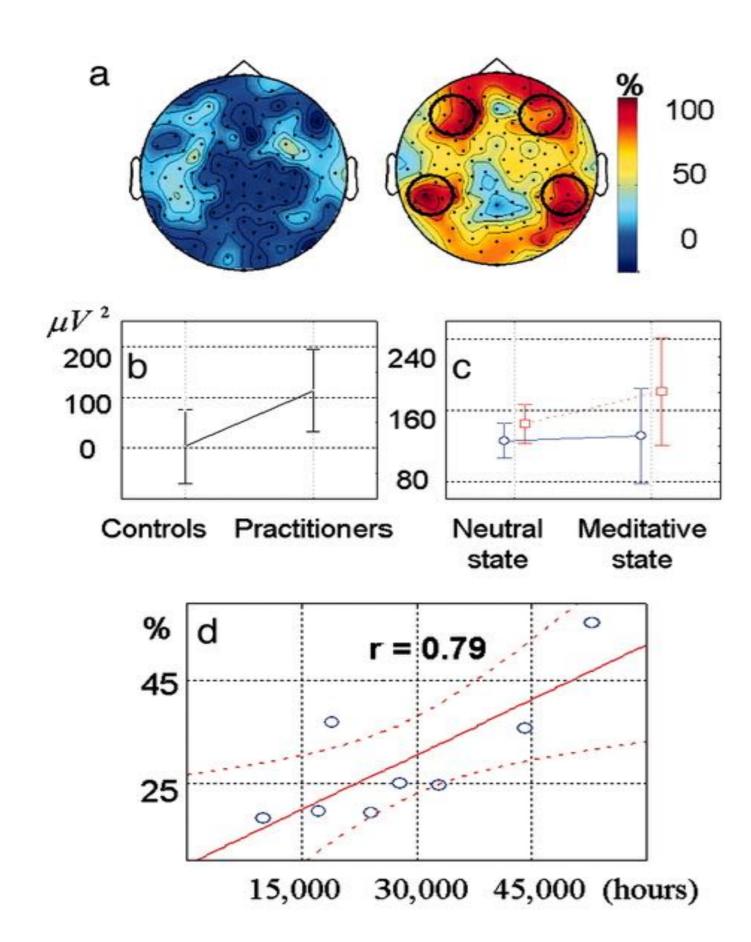
"Survival Has
Wired Our Brains
to be like *Velcro*for Suffering but
like *Teflon* for
Happiness"



Contemplative Practices: Training Integrative Structures that Fully Engage the Social Brain

- Plasticity and integration linked with mindfulness (Davidson, 2003)
- Meditators self-generate hi-frequency gamma wave synchrony (Lutz et al, 2004)
- Gamma synchrony linked with plasticity, learning, and cortical coherence
- 2004 Lutz et al article in PNAS puts meditation at crossroads of neuroscience





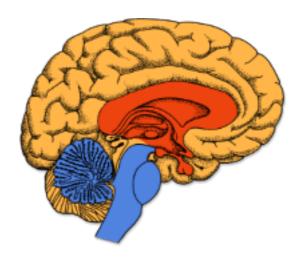
Gamma wave activity near zero in controls (left-blue) but exceptionally high and synchronous over the cortices of meditators (right-orange/red)



Linking Practices with the Triune Brain

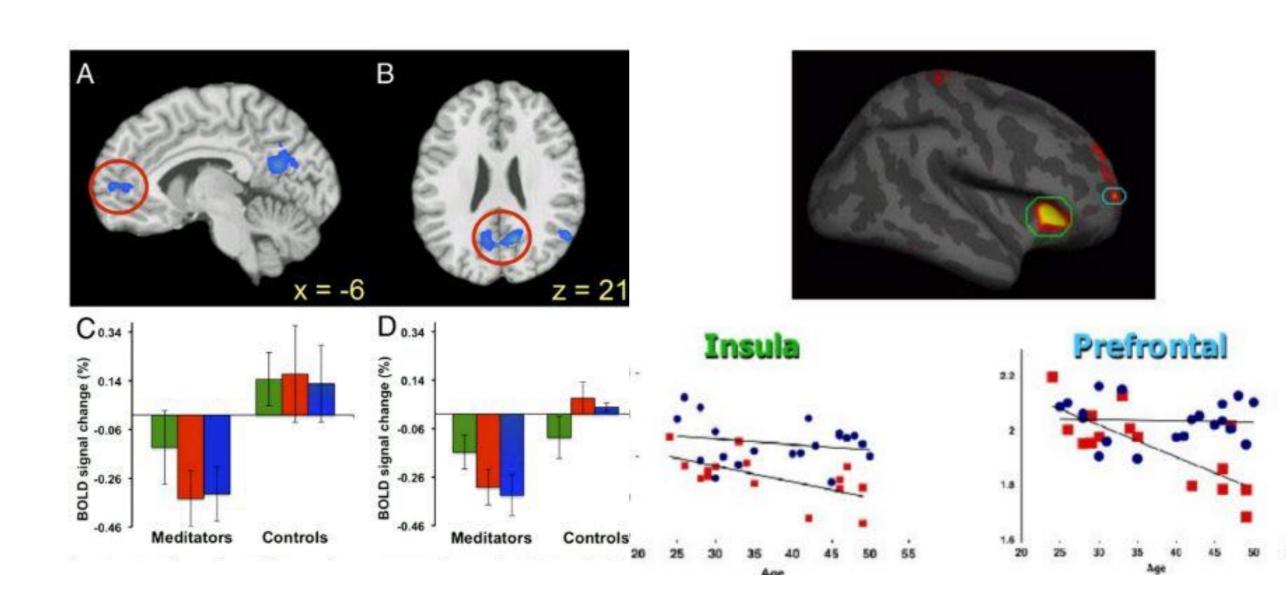
Each main practice type helps shift one level of the brain from reactive self-enclosure to proactive social engagement:

neocortex	mindfulness training
limbic system	compassion training
brainstem	embodied practices





Training Neocortical Engagement: Mindfulness Shifts Default Self-Enclosure to Cultural Engagement





Compassion Training Shifts Aversive Self-Enclosure to Proactive Compassion

Basic Empathy





Reactive Aversion

- Self-related emotion
- Negative feelings: e.g., stress
- Poor health, burnout
- Withdrawal & non-social behavior

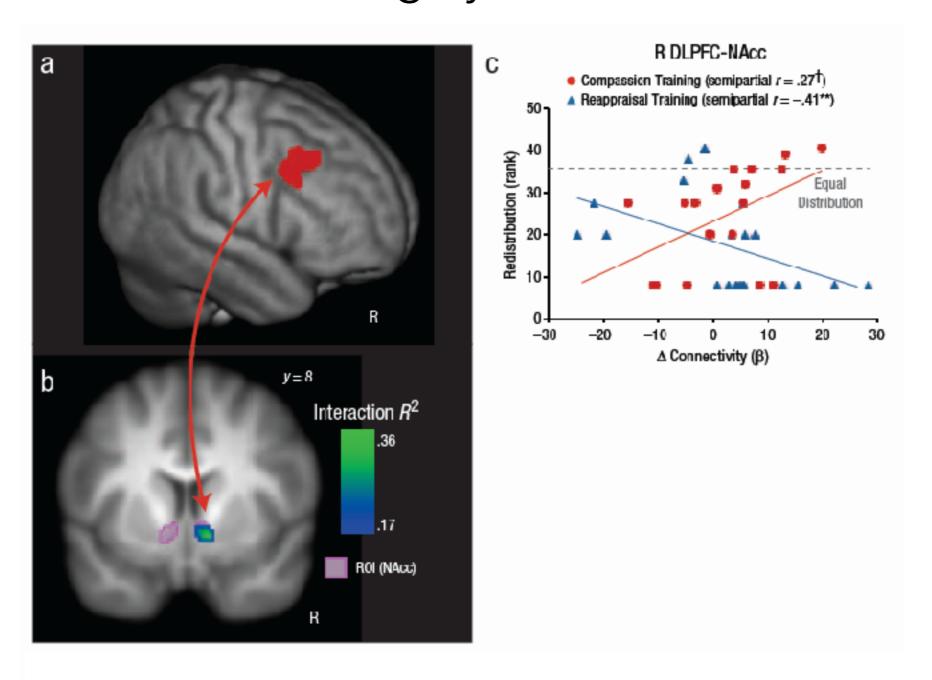
Proactive Compassion

- Other-related emotion
- Positive feelings: e.g., love
- Good health & well-being
- Approach & prosocial motivation

Current Biology

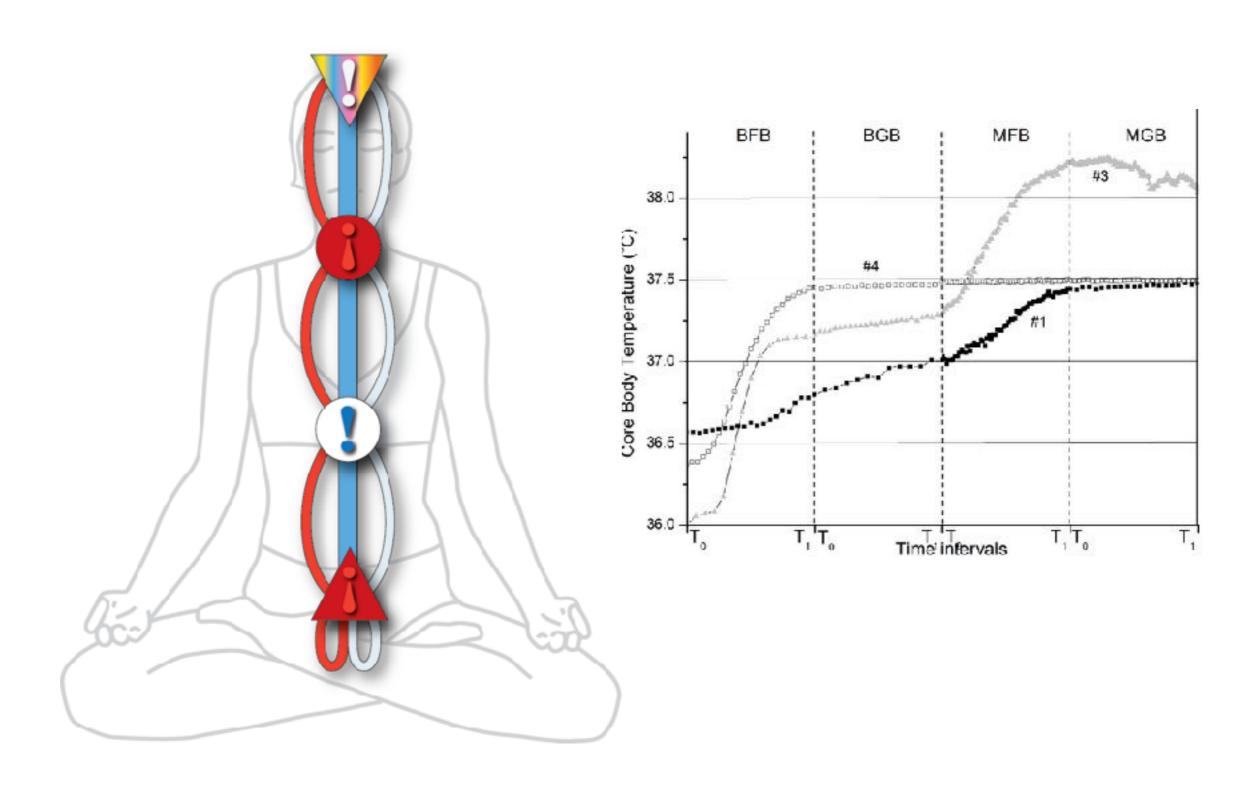


Compassion Training Links Prefrontal Executive with Social Well-Being System



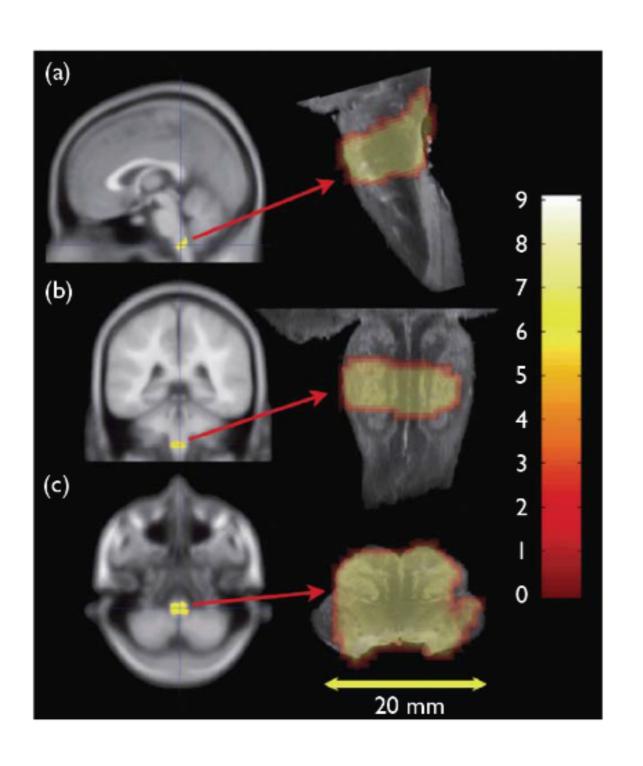


Embodied Practices Shift Brainstem Stress to Social Integration of the Autonomic Nervous System





Embodied Awareness Practice Grows The Brainstem Social Engagement System



Mindfulness and Compassion Based Therapies: The Latest Advances in Mental Health



Buddhism and Psychotherapy: Family Resemblances and Differences

	Similarities	Differences
Buddhism	 Karmic Causality Evolutionary Cycle of Development Mentoring Art 	 Spiritual Context More Lamarkian Contemplative Group Learning
Psychotherapy	 Mental Determinism Evolutionary Psychology Re-Parenting Art 	 Medical Context More Darwinian Reflective Dyadic Learning



Multidisciplinary, Intersectional Context of Contemplative Psychotherapy

DISCIPLINES	MIND	HEART	BODY
Psychology	Personal Self-	Social	Embodied
	Healing	Transformation	Integration
Buddhist	Individual/	Universal/	Process/
Tradition	Theravada	Mahayana	Vajrayana
Contemplative Practice	Mindfulness	Compassion	Embodiment
Neuroscience	Neocortex	Limbic System	Brainstem
Psychotherapy	Dynamic/	Interpersonal/	Transformational
Approach	Behavioral	Relational	/Integral



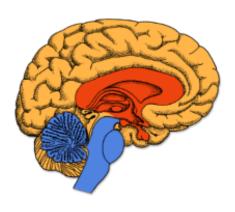
Mindfulness and Compassion Based Methods: A Revolution in Mental Health and Well-Being

- Stress based self-enclosure is a potent, preventable driver of mind/body suffering and limitation
- Self-regulation and brain integration are natural mammalian stress-protective strategies
- They require cultivation by social learning and teachable mind/brain-training practices
- Contemplative practices are best practices for wiring brain integration, optimal health and well-being



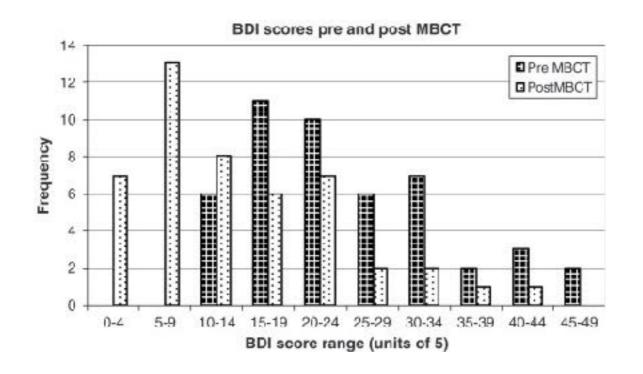
Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: MBCT Helps Prevent Depression Relapse

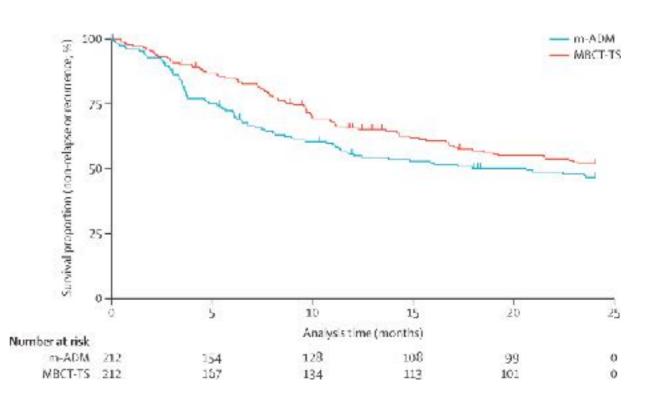
- John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, and Mark Williams in early 1990's enhance CBT with Mindfulness (MBSR)
- Increased metacognition due to mindfulness mediates improved relapse prevention (Teasdale, Segal & Williams, 1995)
- Treatment-resistant depression cohort responds well to MBCT (Kenny & Williams, 2006)
- Meta-analysis of 6 RC trials shows MBCT effective in preventing MDD relapse (Piet & Hougard, 2011).
- MBCT more effective than antidepressants for relapse prevention (Kukyen et al, 2015)





MBCT Effective in Treatment Resistant Depression and Compared with Antidepressants







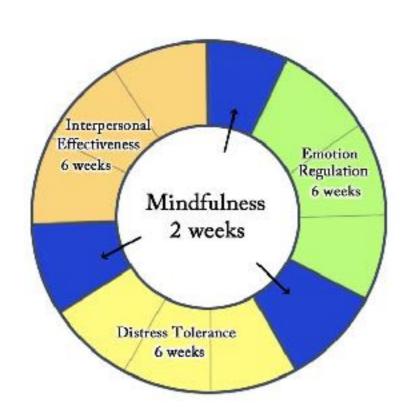
Dialectical Behavior Therapy:

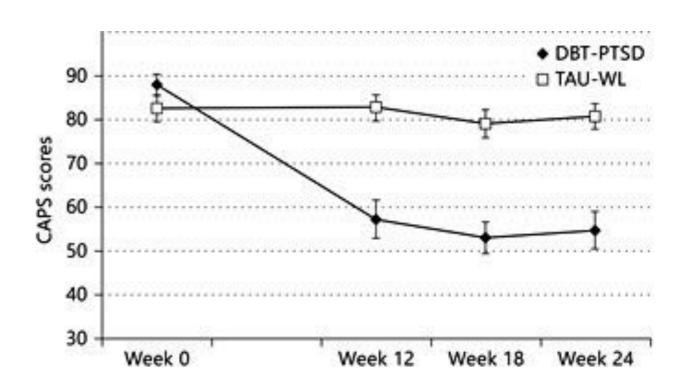
DBT Reduces Self-Injury in Borderline Patients

- DBT significantly reduces SIB in borderline patients compared with standard treatment (Linehan et al, 1991)
- DBT more effective in treating addictions than standard treatment in borderline patients (Linehan et al, 1999, 2006)
- DBT effective adjunct to medication for reducing depression in older adults (Lynch et al, 2003)
- Benefits of DBT on SIB and addiction sustained after end of treatment (Van Den Bosch et al, 2005)
- DBT plus trauma education lessened PTSD severity in patients with childhood sexual abuse (Bohus et al, 1999)



DBT More Effective than Standard Treatment for SIB, Addiction, Geriatric Depression, and PTSD

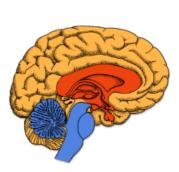






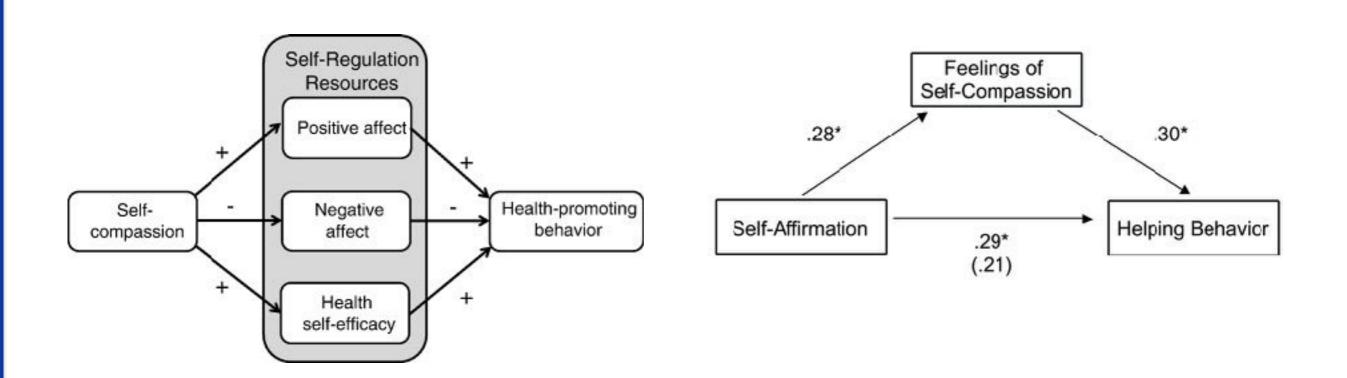
Self-Compassion Reduces Negative Affect, PTSD Symptoms, Improves Resilience and Well-Being

- SC predicts reduced negative affect and neuroticism, and increased positive psychological traits (Neff et al, 2006)
- SC predicts decreased flashbacks and hypervigilance in PTSD (Thompson & Walz, 2008)
- SC improves resilience and well-being in college students (Smeets et al, 2014)
- SC decreases stress, depression, and emotional dysregulation in psychology trainees (Finlay-Jones et al, 2016)
- MSC reduces depression, distress, and HBa1c in diabetics (Friis et al, 2016)





Self-Compassion Increases Prosocial Behavior and Positive Health Behavior



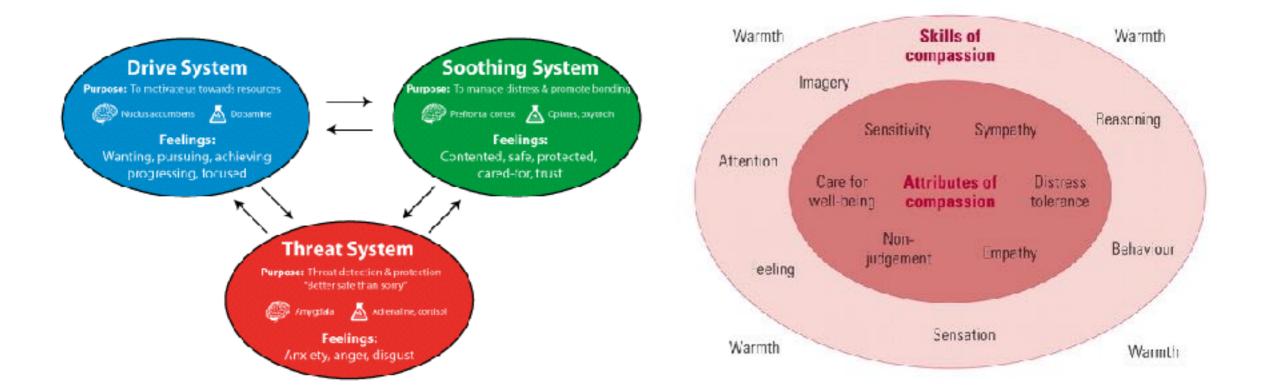


Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT): Lowers Self-Attack and Increases Security

- CMT reduces anxiety, self-attack, shame, and submissiveness in highly self-critical patients (Gilbert & Proctor, 2006)
- CMT reduces anxiety, paranoia, psychotisim and reactivity in patients who hear malevolent voices (Mathew & Gilbert, 2008)
- CFT shows sustained effectiveness in treating personality disorder (Lucre & Corten, 2013)
- CFT speeds recovery, enhances compassion, decreases depression and isolation after psychosis (Braehler et al, 2013)
- CFT effective in treating both anorectic and bulemic eating disorder (Gale et al 2014)



Compassion Focused Therapy (CFT): Lowers Self-Attack and Increases Security





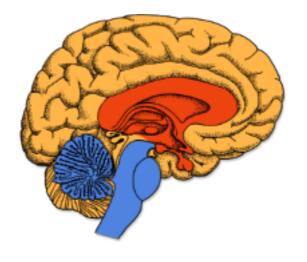
Mindfulness and Compassion Based Therapies: The Next Generation in Mental Health Treatment

- Default self-enclosure, social reactivity, and embodied stress promote mind-brain dysfunction and illness
- Plasticity, self-regulation and brain integration are natural protective, healing, and well-being strategies
- Contemplative skills are best practices for regulating stress, wiring integration & sustaining well-being
- Mindfulness and compassion therapies MBCT, DBT,
 MSC, CFT show promise in a wide range of conditions



The Brain Basis, Practice, and Benefits of Contemplative Psychotherapies

brain basis	practice	benefits
neocortex	mindfulness	presence
limbic system	compassion	resonance
brainstem	embodiment	balance



Compassion: The Second Wave in the History of Asian Buddhism



The World's First University

Ruins of the Monastic University at Nalanda

- •Flourished from 250 B.C.E. to 1250 C.E.
- Refined and Spread Indic
 Contemplative Arts & Sciences
- Source of All Four Schools of Tibetan Buddhism





Nalanda Transplanted: Samye Monastery



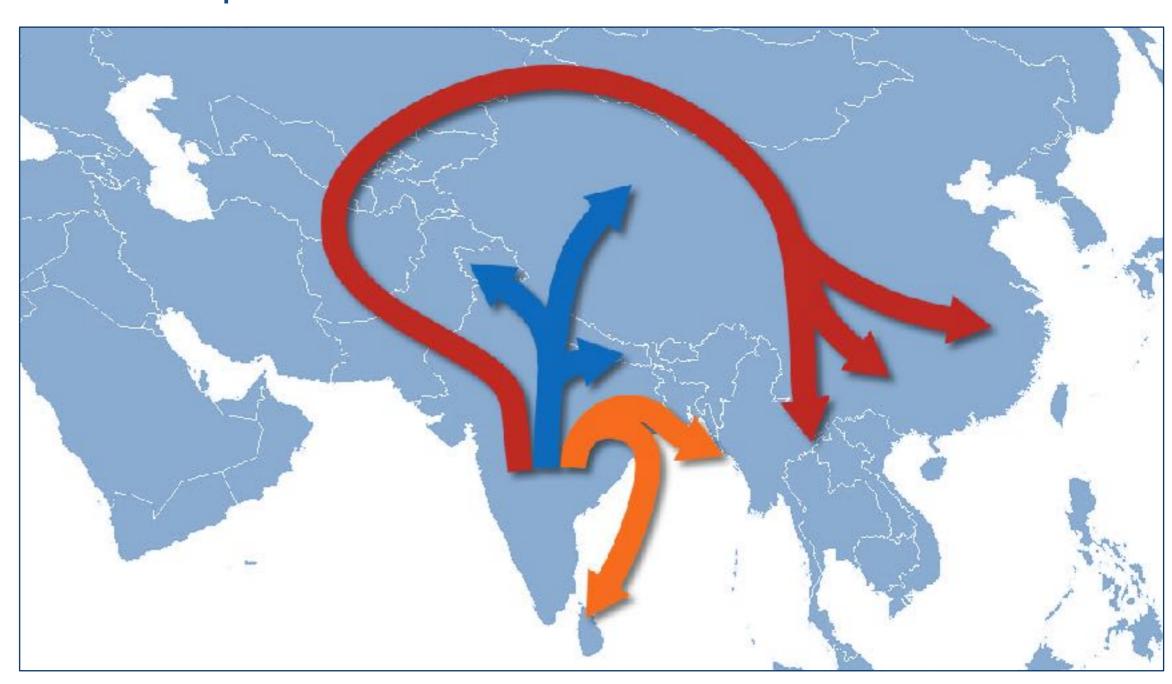
The first Tibetan
Buddhist Monastic
College at Samye

- •Constructed around 850 C.E.
- •Transplanted the Nalanda scientific tradition into Tibet.



Historic Tree of Asian Contemplative Traditions

The Three Phases of Asian Buddhist Thought and Practice





Historic Tree of Asian Contemplative Traditions



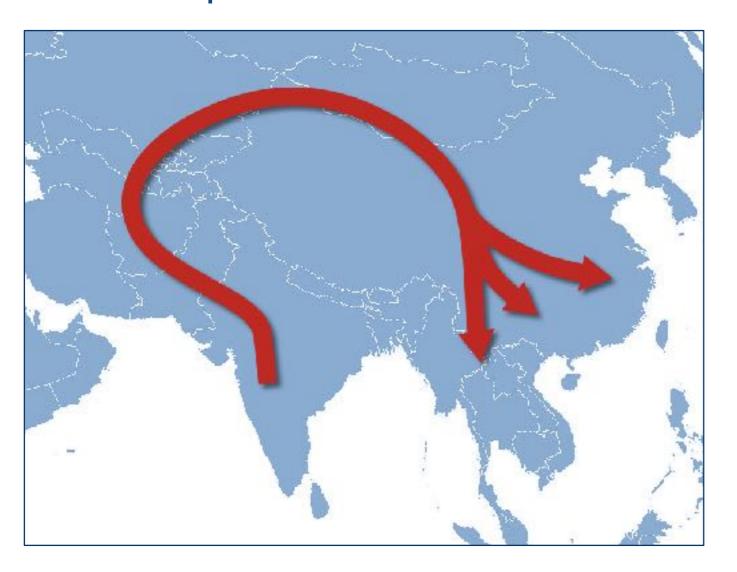
The Three Phases of Asian Buddhist Thought & Practice

•The Individual Vehicle (*Theravada*) of Monastic Buddhism

Preserved in Sri-Lanka, Burma and Thailand



Historic Tree of Asian Contemplative Traditions



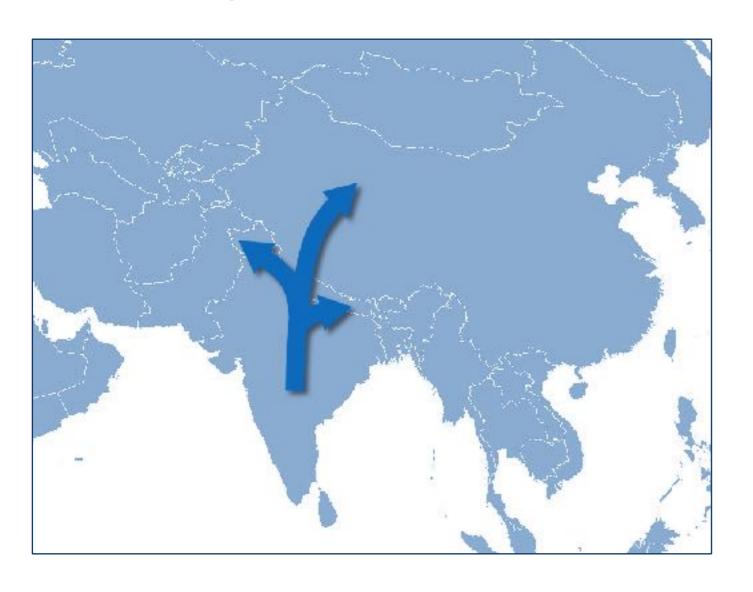
The Three Phases of Asian Buddhist Thought & Practice

•The Universal Vehicle (*Mahayana*) of Lay Buddhism

Preserved in China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam



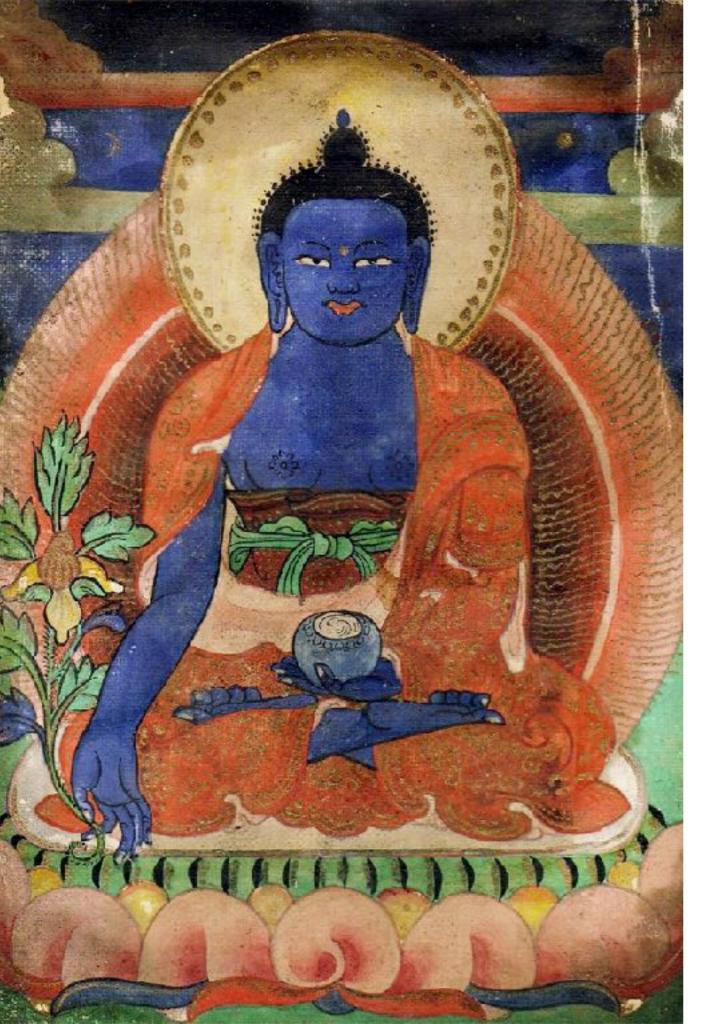
Historic Tree of Asian Contemplative Traditions



The Three Phases of Asian Buddhist Thought & Practice

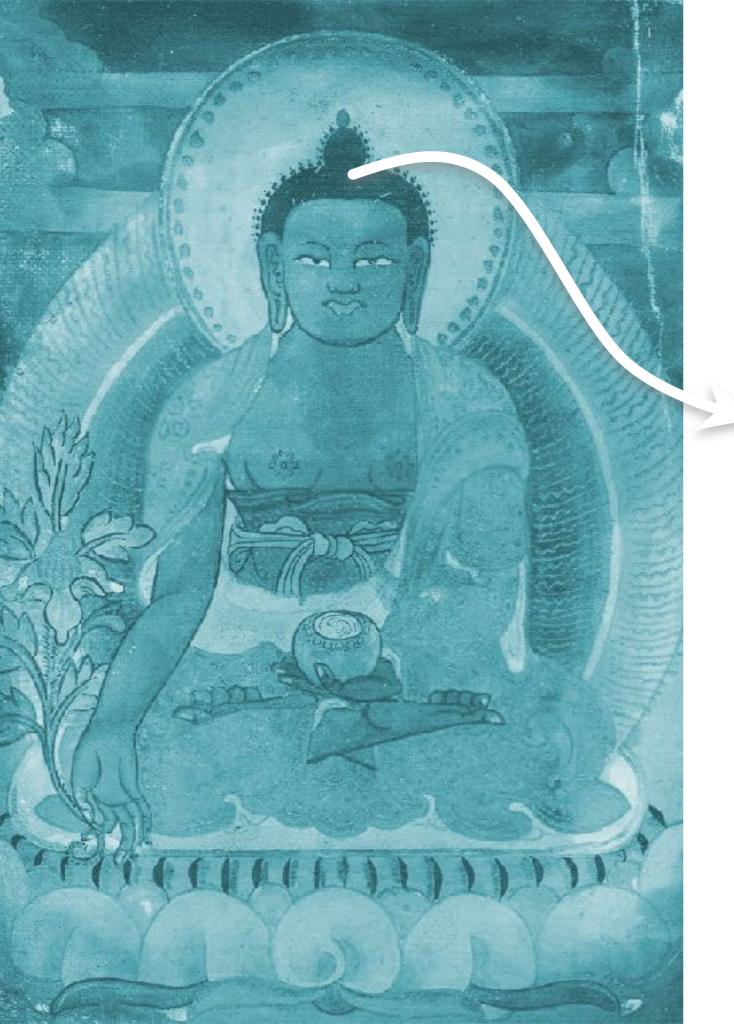
•The Process Vehicle (*Tantrayana*) of Esoteric Buddhism

Preserved in Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia and Bhutan





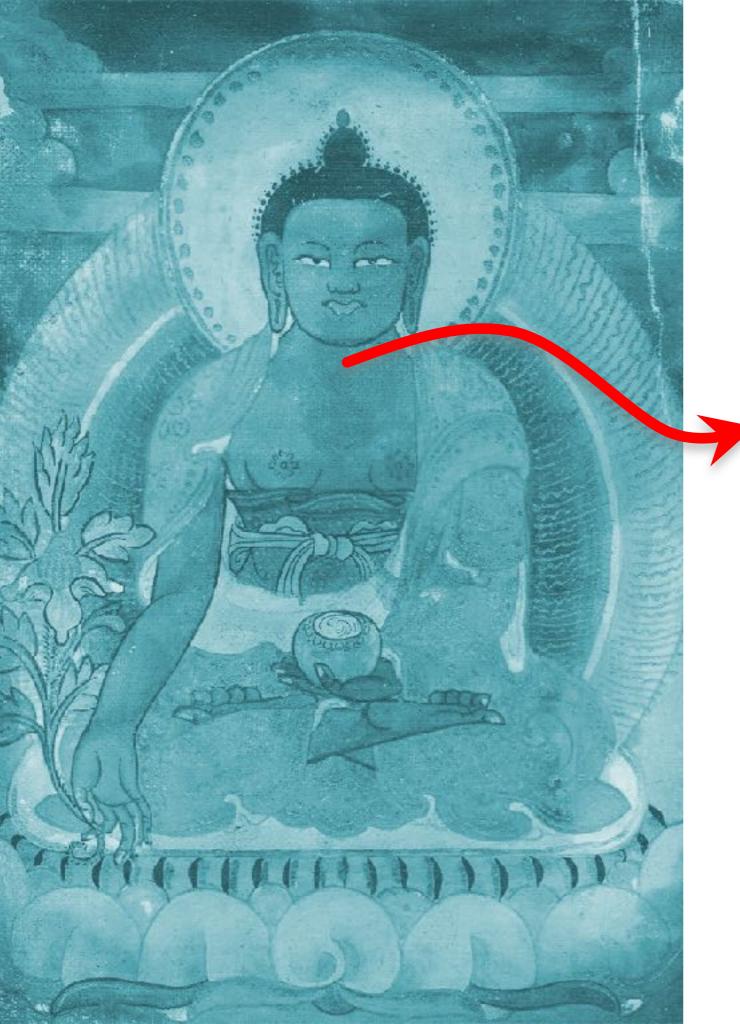
- Individual Vehicle
- Universal Vehicle
- Process Vehicle





Individual Vehicle

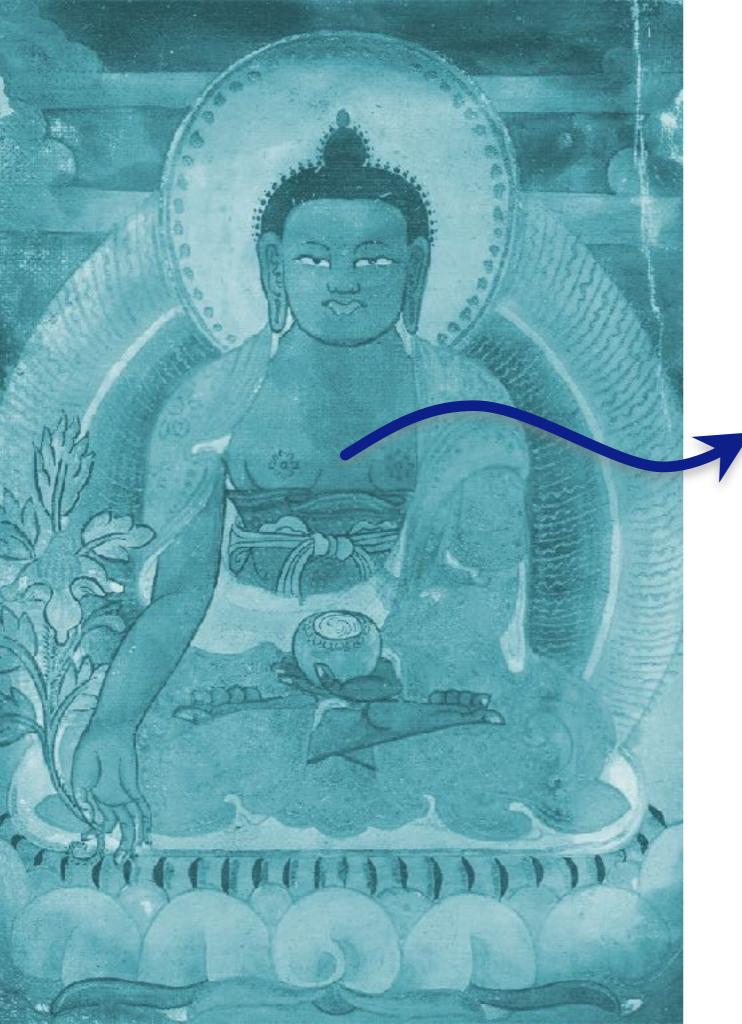
- Science of Self-Analysis
- Art of Mindfulness
- Ethic of Dispassion





Universal Vehicle

- Science of Interdependence
- Art of Emotional Intelligence
- Ethic of Compassion





Integral Process Vehicle

- Science of Self-Regulation
- Art of Role-Modeling
- Ethic of Pure Passion

Nalanda Tradition Preserved in Tibet

- Integrated Three Vehicles into One
- One Gradual Path of Contemplative Healing
- Tailored to Life in the Stress-Driven World



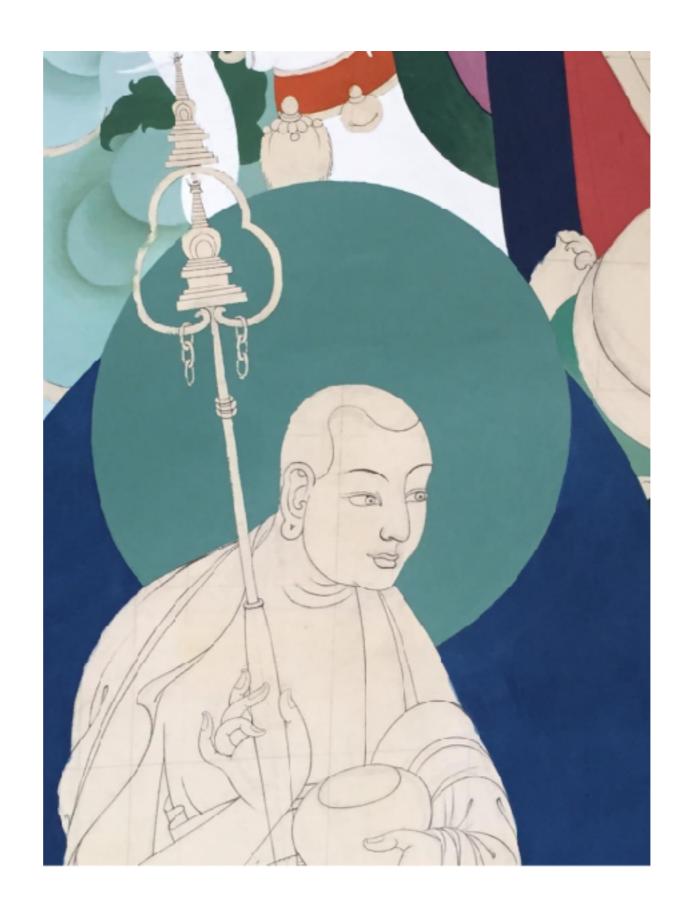


Three Paradigms of Buddhist Psychology

- Analytic Psychology (Sarvastivada/Sautantrika) from Shariputa (400 BCE) to Vasubandhu (400 CE)
- Relational Psychology (Madhyamika) formulated from Nagarjuna (150 CE) to Chandrakirti (600 CE)
- Depth Psychology (Yogacara) formulated from Asanga (400 CE) to Shantaraksita (800 CE)



Shariputra,
Original
Curator of
Buddhist
Mind
Science



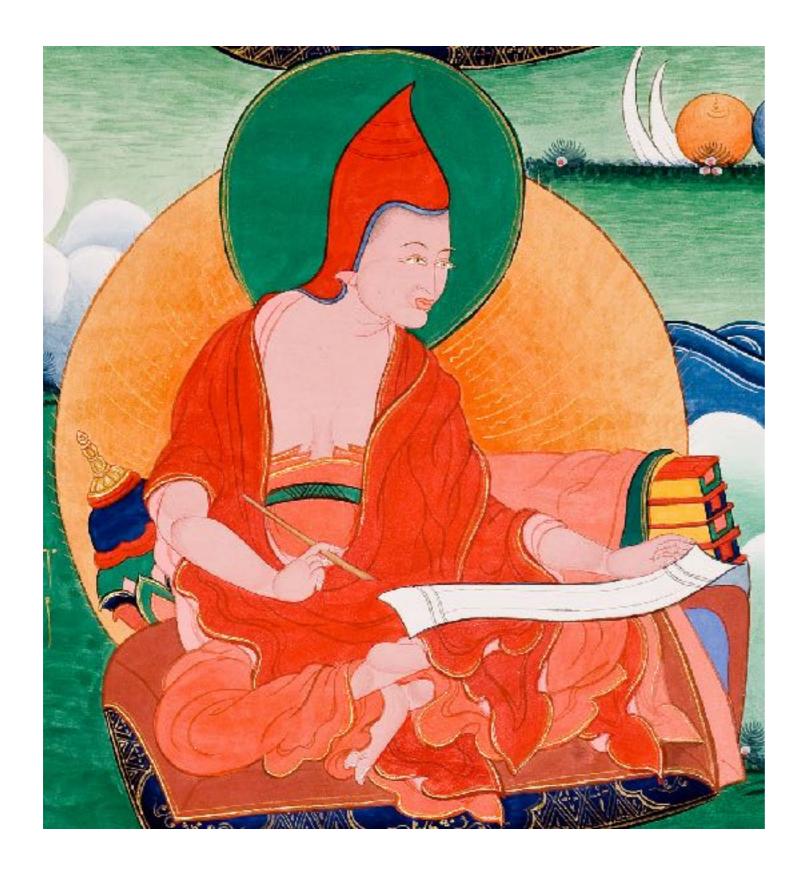


The First Wave: The Analytic Psychology of Mindfulness from Shariputa to Vasubandhu

"The scientific teaching is impeccable wisdom and that (detoxified mind-body process) which corresponds to it, along with the texts and methods that cultivate them. Wisdom is the analytic discernment of the causal elements (of experience), without which there is no way to end the afflictions that set beings adrift on the sea of (compulsive) existence."

—Vasubandhu, Treasury of Scientific Teaching, I, 1-3.





Vasubandhu,
Master of
Depth
Psychology



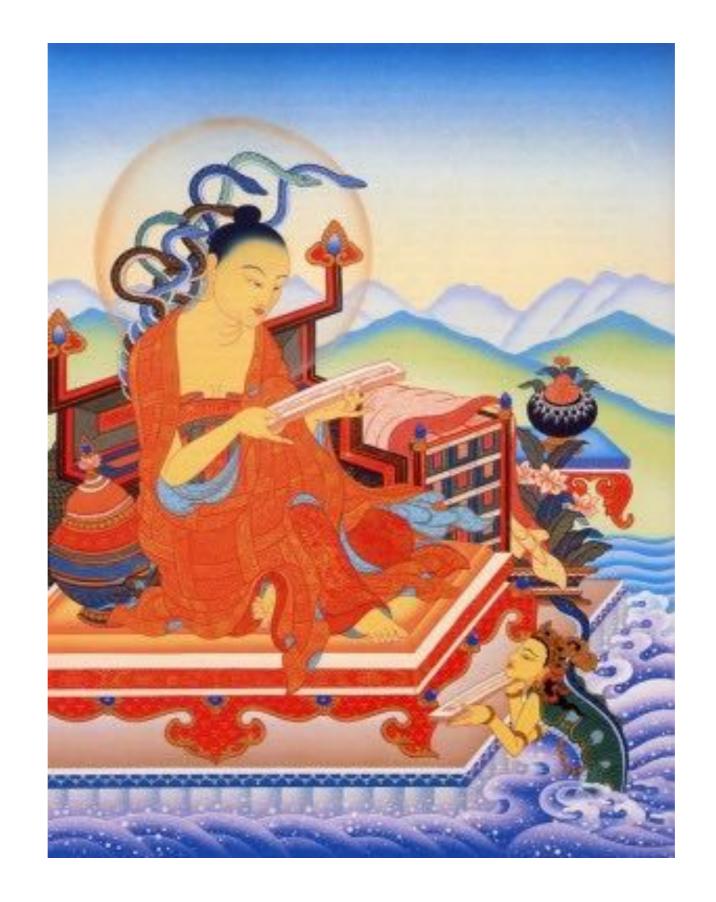
The Second Wave: The Relational Psychology of Non-Dual Wisdom and Compassion

"Just as the grammarian teaches grammar,
Buddhas give teachings appropriate to the needs
of their students. To some they teach abstaining
from vice; to some cultivation of virtues; to some
teachings based on dualism; and finally to some,
teachings based on non-dualism—the profound,
awe-inspiring practice of enlightenment—the
openness that is the womb of compassion."

—Nagarjuna, Jewel Rosary IV, 98-100



Nagarjuna, Master of Profound Wisdom





De-Reifying Wisdom: Curing Self-Enclosed Views

Those who insist on a non-relative "Self" or "world" --- Alas! They are deprived by views, Such as absolutism and nihilism. Once they commit to (reifying) things, They are trapped in painful, malignant views, Which produce attachment and aversion And the conflicts that spring from them. That (reifying habit) is the cause of all views; Without it compulsions do not develop. So when its (falsity) is fully understood, Views and compulsions are fully cured. —Nagarjuna, Reason Sixty, 43-47





Chandrakirti,
Master of
Therapeutic
Philosophy



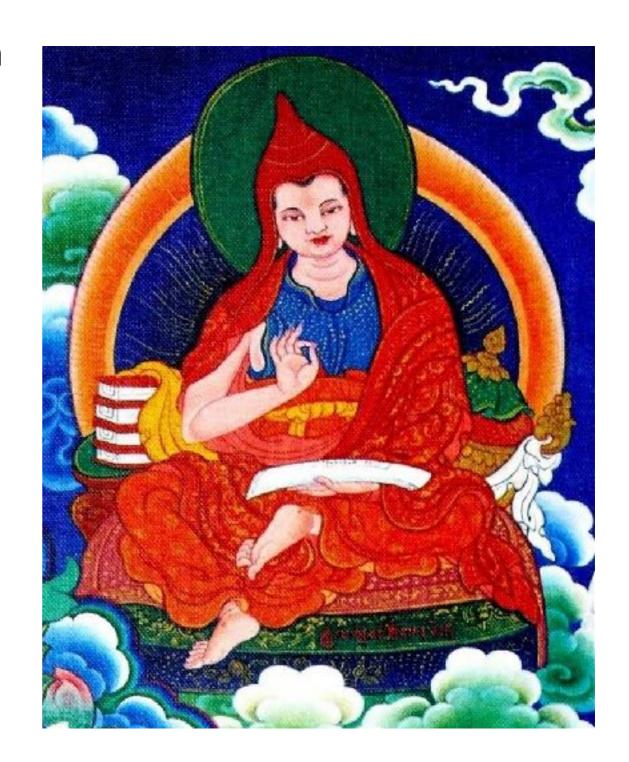
"Honoring love which alone serves as the seed For the bountiful harvest of victors, As the water that nurtures it, and as The endurance which brings the crop to fruition, First of all gratefully I bow to compassion. I honor those who develop compassion for beings That revolve helpless as buckets in a waterwheel, Coming to insist on a self, once they say, "I," Growing addicted to things, saying, "This is mine."

-- Chandrakirti, Introduction 1, 2-3



"Those who love with wisdom completely cut through selfenclosure. Because they cherish living beings with love, they do not aim for solitary peace. Relying on the (twin) means of enlightenment—wisdom and compassion—such realized ones dwell neither in the world nor beyond."

—Asanga, Sublime Continuum, 38





"As for "self," it is something that does not relate to anything else. Since it does not exist, there is selflessness. This is twofold because of the division between persons and things, namely: personal selflessness, and phenomenal selflessness (=emptiness)."

—Chandrakirti, Four Hundred Commentary XII,13

"While that self will never be established [analytically], either in the ultimate or in the world, in any one of seven [logical] modes, nonetheless, it is designated in dependence on its constituents on the strength of unexamined social consensus."

—Candrakirti, Introduction VI, 158

Become the Change We Need: Nalanda Institute's Contemplative Psychotherapy Program



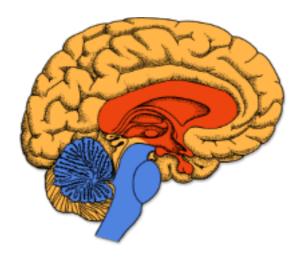
Taming Narcissism and Cultivating Engagement: Contemplative Psychotherapy

- Stress is a potent, preventable driver of mind/body ailments including narcissism
- Self-awareness and mind/brain integration are natural mammalian strategies for social engagement
- They require cultivation through healing contemplative education, community, and practice
- Contemplative psychotherapy, coaching, and education are key to our transforming self-enclosure into altruism



The Basis, Practice and Competence We Need To Tame Narcissism and Embody Social Engagement

structure	practice	competence
neocortex	mindfulness	presence
limbic brain	compassion	engagement
brainstem	embodied	resilience







Participants at the Nalanda Institute Contemplative Psychotherapy Program, Opening Retreat, 2015



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