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Inside this issue:

Envisioning the Courage to Change Logo

Addiction during the Holidays

C2C's 180 Club—Give a Gift that Keeps on Giving

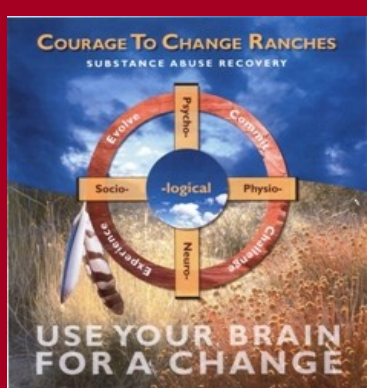
The Genetic Basis of Brain Diseases

Cultivating a Buddha Brain for Holiday Happiness

Monitoring Substance Abuse Recovery with Urinary Neurotransmitter Analysis



Envisioning the Courage to Change Logo by Judith Ann Miller, Ph.D.



Combining Science with Holistic Modalities in Addiction Recovery
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Awakened one morning at 3:00 a.m. by coyotes howling close to the house, I jumped out of bed and onto the deck to frighten them away. Under the full moon I watched the coyotes scurry through the barnyard on onto the neighbor's hayfield. It was then I realized I was standing ankle deep in fresh snow and the winter wind was chilling me to the bone. I snuggled back in bed between the snoozing Ross and the Tuxedo cats – who were unaware I had been chasing coyotes in the cold.



Now wide awake, I began to ponder what to do about an exhibit display for an upcoming international conference. I heard my inner voice say: "Judith, we need a new logo for the ranch." I wondered: "What's wrong with the one we have?" The voice replied: "It's like a sign on a gatepost; it doesn't say anything about the ranch." I thought: "Well that's logical." Then it came to me: "Logical – it has to be logical: "Physiological, Neurological, Psychological, and Sociological."

By this time I was warm and the vision started to unfold. "It has to be a Medicine Wheel or a Dream Catcher – at least a circle." The circle formed and it looked to be a combination of a Medicine Wheel and a Dream Circle with the word "Logical" in the center and the four spokes of the wheel representing each of the recovery domains. Around the circle were four words: "Commit, Challenge, Experience, and Evolve." And then the statement "Use Your Brain for a Change" came to mind.

By morning I had the whole picture in my mind's eye and sketched it out on paper. I wondered about staff reaction. One by one, they overwhelmingly approved and one said: "I know an artist who can create this." Within two days, the C2C Ranch had a new logo.

Addiction during the Holidays

All About Addiction



Recovered or not, its important to be prepared

The holidays are a stressful time for everyone. Between gift-giving, travel, and keeping up with all parts of the ever-complicated modern family unit, nearly anyone can find themselves driven towards the nearest coping mechanism, whatever that may be. before, not after, they become bigger problems (like a relapse).

Why Are The Holidays So Difficult For Addicts?

Obviously, as just mentioned, the pressures of the holidays are difficult for everyone. But for addicts, these same issues of money, family and general stress are amplified, often because they are the same age-old issues that lie at the root of the addiction and the beginning of drug use and abuse in the first place. If the recovering addict has not had the opportunity to openly confront family issues in the past, either with the family itself or with a therapist or counselor, the potential for relapse can be great. A vast amount of research shows how stress can bring even long-dormant behavior back to the surface, which should serve as a warning to substance and behavioral addicts alike (like sex addicts or compulsive gamblers). On the other end of the spectrum, addicts without a stable family or group of friends are often left feeling alone and isolated during the holidays, another powerful source of the shame and boredom that can drive addictive behavior.

What Are Some Of The Hidden Struggles That Can Intensify Addiction/Trigger A Relapse?

Most often, these struggles emerge from one of two likely scenarios. In the event of a still active addiction, attempts to hide the problem from friends and family and the resulting stress can, paradoxically, intensify the addictive behavior. And whether the addiction has been treated or not, gathering with family in a familiar place can frequently cause someone to face many of the underlying issues that can be the root causes of a drug addiction or compulsive behavior. To paraphrase Tolstoy, all unhappy families are unhappy in their own unique way, and whether one's particular family is overly judgmental, enabling, angry, or whatever else, it can serve to restart self-destructive patterns of behavior. For some recovering addicts, there may be a family-imposed secrecy around the recovery itself, which can be trying at a time when the whole family is gathering, ostensibly to celebrate one another. Even the house (including the room where an addict used to act out) and certain family members (like that cousin they used to smoke weed with) can be important cues that may re-trigger cravings and old behavioral patterns. Additionally and importantly, if there is a family history of any kind of past abuse, this can obviously serve as a particularly powerful and insidious trigger for addicts, whether recovering or not. In fact, recent research suggests that these old, root stimuli may be much more powerful for drug addicts than re-experiencing the drug itself. [Read Full Article...](#)



C2C
180 Club

Give a Gift that Keeps on Giving

Courage to Change has established a 180 Club which is a scholarship fund to assist an addict without financial resources get into recovery and turn his/her life around 180 degrees. C2C receives at least 10 calls a week from addicts seeking recovery who want to come to the ranch but have no financial resources or family support.

The Club 180 Program is a **membership** donation program and an opportunity for you to assist C2C in the work of addiction recovery by pledging a dollar amount on a monthly giving plan. Or you can gift one year end donation. Your donation is tax deductible.

The 180 concept represents a **turnaround**, a 180 degree turn, an about face which is a metaphor for an individual changing the direction C2C offers.

Your contribution would be most helpful. Please call today. Or send your donation to:

Courage to Change
41250 Alford Rd.
Simla, CO 80835

The staff at Courage to Change wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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The Genetic Basis of Brain Diseases

A set of brain proteins is found to play a role in over 100 brain diseases and provides a new insight into evolution of behavior

December 19, 2010
Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute

In research published today, scientists have studied human brain samples to isolate a set of proteins that accounts for over 130 brain diseases. The paper also shows an intriguing link between diseases and the evolution of the human brain.

Brain diseases are the leading cause of medical disability in the developed world according to the World Health Organisation and the economic costs in the USA exceeds \$300 billion.

The brain is the most complex organ in the body with millions of nerve cells connected by billions of synapses. Within each synapse is a set of proteins, which, like the components of an engine, bind together to build a molecular machine called the postsynaptic density – also known as the PSD. Although studies of animal synapses have indicated that the PSD could be important in human diseases and behaviour, surprisingly little was known about it in humans.

A team of scientists, led by Professor Seth Grant at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute and Edinburgh University, have extracted the PSDs from synapses of patients undergoing brain surgery and discovered their molecular components using a method known as proteomics. This revealed that 1461 proteins, each one encoded by a different gene, are found in human synapses. This has made it possible, for the first time, to systematically identify the diseases that affect human synapses and provides a new way to study the evolution of the brain and behaviour.

"We found that over 130 brain diseases involve the PSD – far more than expected," says Professor Grant. "These diseases include common debilitating diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders as well as epilepsies and childhood developmental diseases including forms of autism and learning disability."

"Our findings have shown that the human PSD is at centre stage of a large range of human diseases affecting many millions of people," says Professor Grant.

"Rather than 'rounding up the usual suspects', we now have a comprehensive molecular playlist of 1000 suspects," says Professor Jeffrey L Noebels, Professor of Neurology, Neuroscience and Human Genetics at Baylor College of Medicine. "Every seventh protein in this line-up is involved in a known clinical disorder, and over half of them are repeat offenders. Mining the postsynaptic proteome now gives researchers a strategic entry point, and the rest of us a front row seat to witness neuroscience unravel the complexity of human brain disorders."

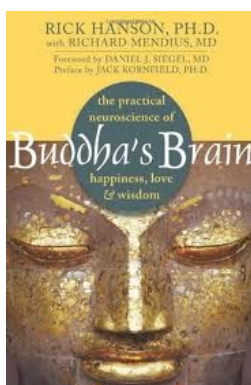
The findings open several new paths toward tackling these diseases.

The scientists were able to use their study of diseases to identify the biological roots of human behaviour. They found that proteins in the PSD are especially important for cognitive behaviours such as learning and memory, emotion and mood, as well as social behaviours and addiction or drug abuse. The findings provide deep insights into how a DNA mutation can impact on fundamental aspects of our behaviour.

[Read Full Article....](#)

Cultivating a Buddha Brain for Holiday Happiness

The Huffington Post—by Kari Henley



Well, there's less than a week til Christmas -- how's everyone doing out there? The United States is Christmas-crazy, and whether you celebrate or not, it is impossible to escape the effects. Holiday music blares on the radio 24/7, the weather in much of the country is freezing, it is pitch black at 5 p.m., the malls are jam-packed with crazed people racing around, parking lots are jammed, budgets are tight and tempers short.

A friend of mine has an old family motto: "It isn't Christmas until somebody cries." So sad, but it is often true. We fill our minds with expectations of elevated family gatherings, anticipate receiving a special gift, become attached to how others will react to our gifts and anxiously try to create an idyllic atmosphere that often takes more energy, time and money than we have.

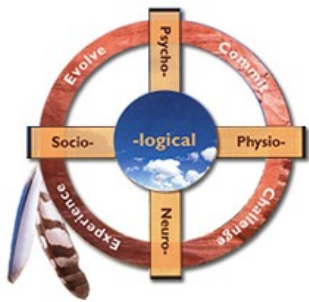
On a bright note, this (past) Tuesday marked the winter solstice, the longest night of the year. The solstice represents a time for contemplation, lighting candles and rejoicing for the return of light. Auspiciously, the evening of the solstice is also marked by a full lunar eclipse, another great darkening and re-emergence of light.

The year 2010 has felt very dark for so many. The contrast of modern holiday mania with the soft beckoning of the solstice is palpable in my own body. I simultaneously feel the longing to sink into myself, yet I also feel sucked into the frantic pace of the season.

This week I read a wonderful book called "[Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love and Wisdom](#)" by Dr. Rick Hanson. I wondered: how would the Buddha handle modern holiday stress?

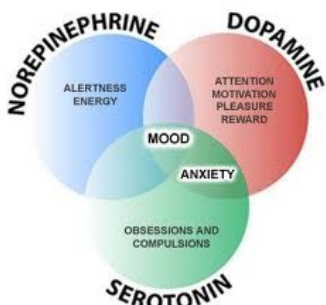
Dr. Hanson's research shows that our mind can literally affect the brain, meaning the thoughts we cultivate actually change the physical makeup of the brain in the same way physical exercise builds particular muscles. While many of us think of the holiday season as a happy time, our mind is trained to focus on negative memories, to "suffer" or amplify negative experiences rather than positive ones -- hence why it is not really Christmas until somebody cries.

[Read Full Article...](#)



Monitoring Substance Abuse Recovery with Urinary Neurotransmitter Analysis

By Judith Miller, David Marc, Corena McMannus, Mike Bull, Kelly Olson, Gottfried Kellerman



Evidence-Based practices are becoming more prevalent for the treatment of substance abuse disorders. Substance abuse causes a substantial burden to society due to certain substances causing potential adverse health effects and leading to increases in crime.

Traditional treatment for substance abuse relies on pharmacological and spiritual guidance, yet new strategies are being explored. Of interest is the use of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) approaches that target neurological functioning.

Amino acid supplements is one modality that may show promise as an adjunctive therapy in substance abuse programs. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of amino acid supplementation in substance abuse patients and also introduce a novel method that may aid in detecting responders and non responders prior to beginning to monitor neurotransmitter levels. The amino acids were shown to increase serotonin, taurine and decrease phenyl ethylamine (PEA) following three weeks of treatment.

This study demonstrated also significantly higher baseline nor epinephrine, serotonin, and PEA levels in the patients that remained sober following amino acid supplementation. Overall results demonstrated that amino acid supplementation may be a promising addition to current substance abuse programs and that urinary neurotransmitters may serve as biomarkers to predict treatment responses to substance abuse patients.

[Read the Full Study](#)