

The Goals of Mindfulness: Life-Cultivation and Mind-body Practices in Asia and the West

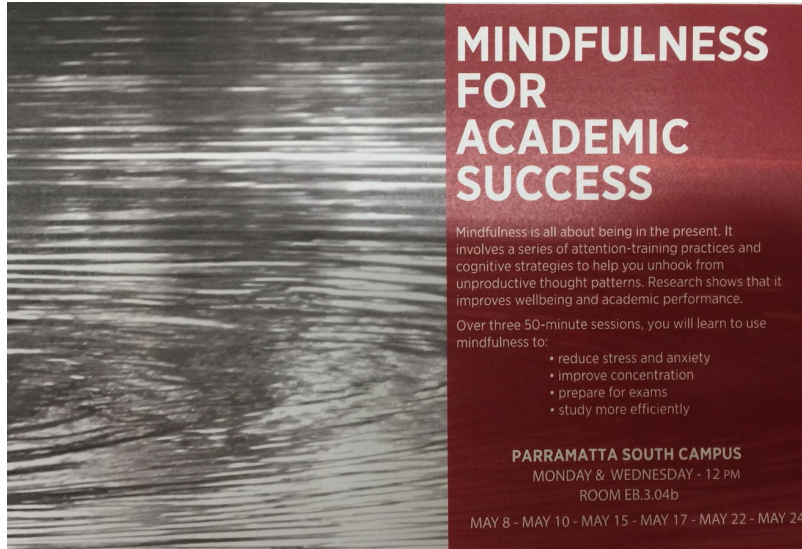
Davidson Lecture, Carleton University,
16 Nov 2017

Geoffrey Samuel (University of Sydney and
Cardiff University)

Mindfulness-Based Interventions and the Mindfulness Movement



More Mindfulness

A poster with a dark red background on the right and a black and white image of water ripples on the left. The title 'MINDFULNESS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS' is in white capital letters. Below it, a paragraph explains mindfulness as being in the present. Then, it lists three 50-minute sessions and their benefits: reducing stress, improving concentration, and preparing for exams. The location and dates are listed at the bottom.

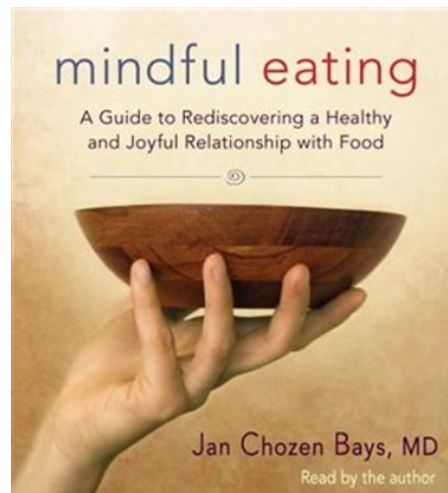
MINDFULNESS FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Mindfulness is all about being in the present. It involves a series of attention-training practices and cognitive strategies to help you unhook from unproductive thought patterns. Research shows that it improves wellbeing and academic performance.

Over three 50-minute sessions, you will learn to use mindfulness to:

- reduce stress and anxiety
- improve concentration
- prepare for exams
- study more efficiently

PARRAMATTA SOUTH CAMPUS
MONDAY & WEDNESDAY - 12 PM
ROOM EB.3.04b
MAY 8 - MAY 10 - MAY 15 - MAY 17 - MAY 22 - MAY 24

A book cover with a light beige background. The title 'mindful eating' is in a sans-serif font, with 'mindful' in dark blue and 'eating' in red. Below it is a subtitle in a smaller font. A small icon of a bowl is centered. The main image is a close-up of a hand holding a wooden bowl. The author's name is at the bottom.

mindful eating

A Guide to Rediscovering a Healthy and Joyful Relationship with Food

Jan Chozen Bays, MD
Read by the author

A brochure for Habitat Abbotsford. The top half features a large, stylized illustration of a blue building with white windows and a red door, set against a green hill and a blue sky. The title 'Habitat Abbotsford.' is in a large, bold, serif font. Below it, the subtitle 'Mindful apartments' is in a smaller, sans-serif font. A paragraph of text describes the project as a limited release of apartments designed with liveability in mind. The bottom half of the brochure is divided into four columns, each with a heading and a paragraph of text. The headings are 'Ways We Live Green', 'Harness The Sun', 'Mindful Materials', 'Power In Numbers', 'Harvest Rainwater', 'Pedal On', and 'Charge Your Ride'. The text describes various sustainable features of the project, such as solar panels, bamboo flooring, and a power network.

Habitat Abbotsford.

Mindful apartments

Habitat Abbotsford is a limited release of apartments designed with liveability in mind. Nestled in the convent precinct and only 10 minutes from the city.

Ways We Live Green

Register at habitatabbotsford.com to read our guide to good living, or call 1300 858 078.

tripet **TOP CAPITAL GROUP**

Harness The Sun

Solar panels will be installed on the rooftop feeding into the embedded network, allowing each resident to access green power at no extra cost.

Mindful Materials

Sustainable, renewable and pesticide-free bamboo flooring is used in all living spaces. Low-VOC paint and recyclable materials will help to improve air quality and lower material wastage.

Power In Numbers

An embedded power network will reduce power costs for each resident and the owners corporation, connecting residents to a free monitoring portal to help track energy use on a daily basis.

Harvest Rainwater

The rooftop and courtyard gardens will be irrigated with underground rainwater tanks.

Pedal On

There will be dedicated bike storage for each apartment as well as spots for visitors.

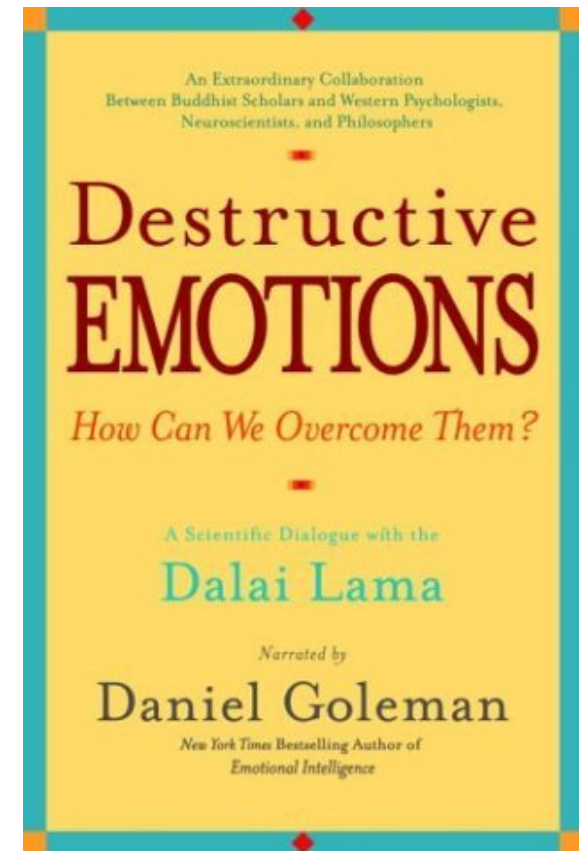
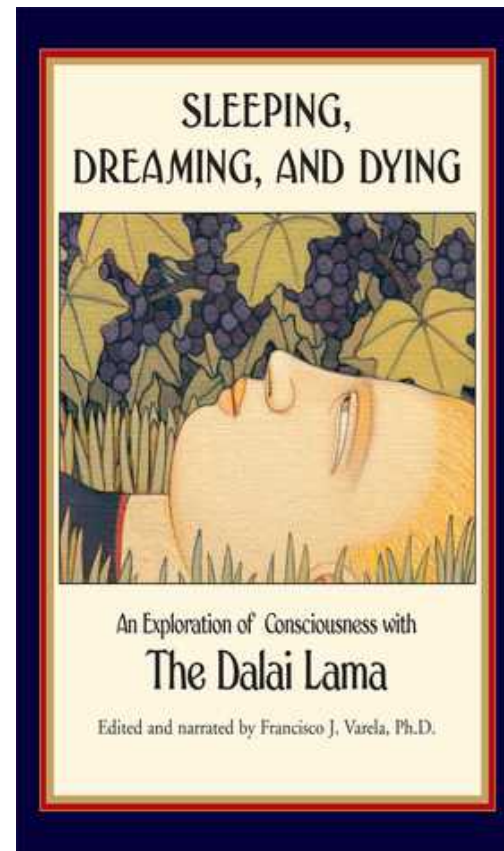
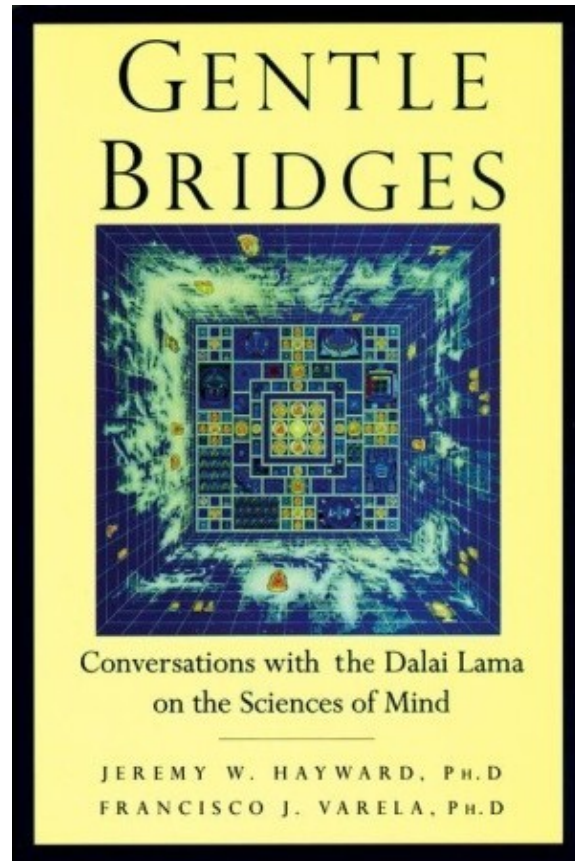
Charge Your Ride

Vehicle charging stations will be available in the carpark for electric cars.

Dialogue between Buddhism and Science



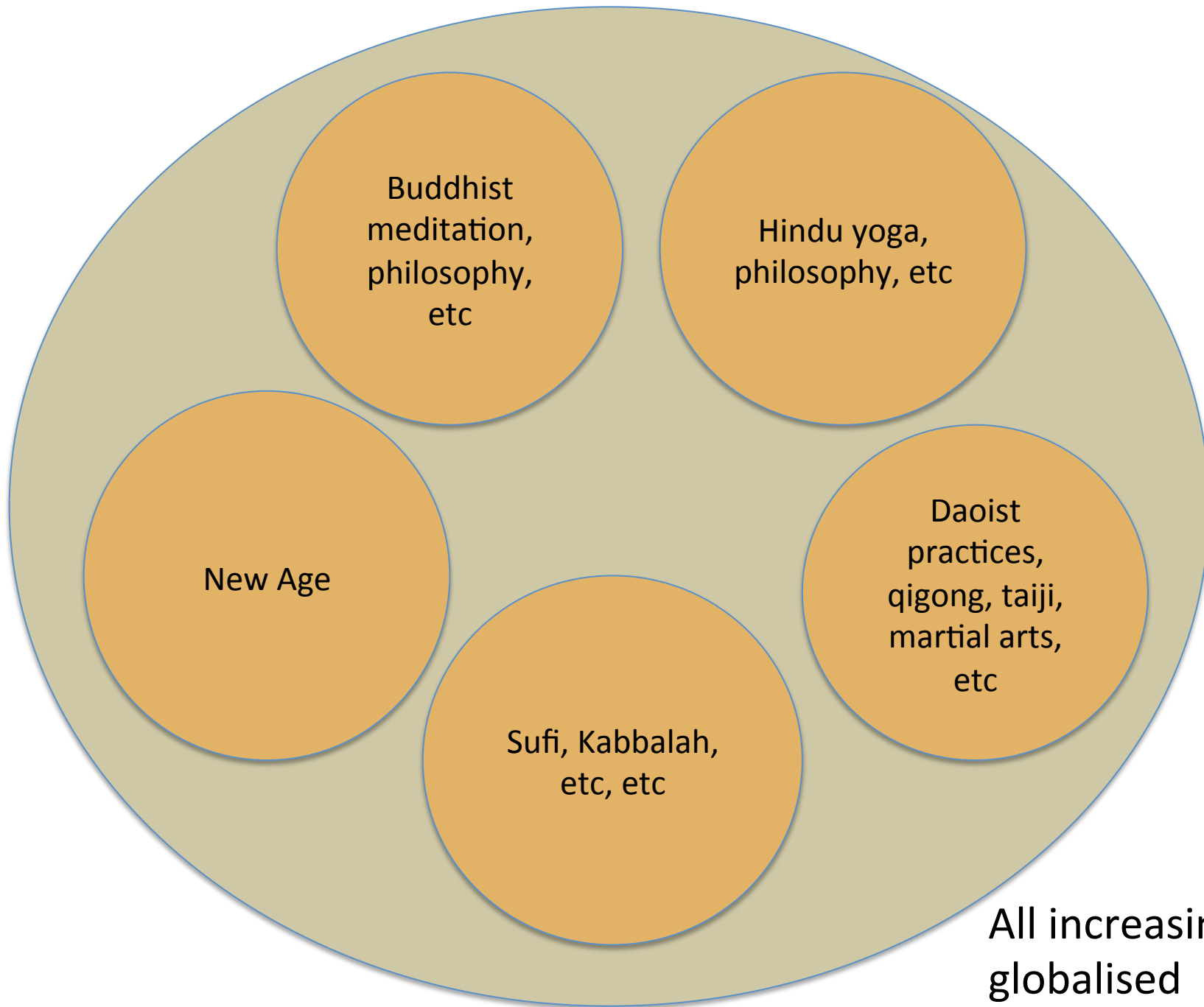
Mind & Life Institute Books



Neuroscientific Research on Meditation





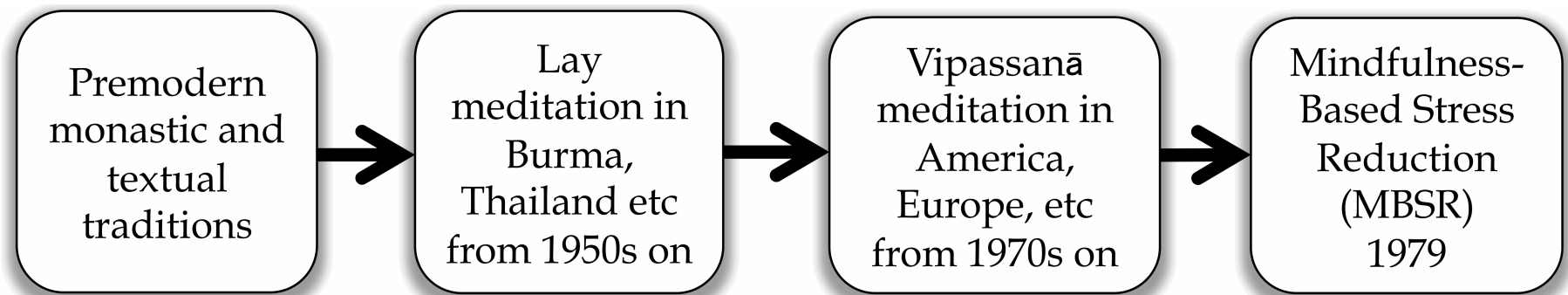


The Mindfulness-Based Interventions

- The interest in mindfulness as a therapeutic modality within Western medicine got going in 1979, with Jon Kabat-Zinn's introduction of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program (MBSR) at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)
- The core techniques of MBSR were drawn for the most part from traditions of lay Buddhist meditation practice developed in the Theravāda Buddhist countries of Burma and Thailand in the early to mid-20th century, though early teachers such as Kabat-Zinn were also aware of and influenced by other Buddhist practices, such as Zen

Sources of the MBIs

The techniques on which MBSR drew, particularly the Vipassanā practices associated with U Ba Khin, S.N. Goenka, Ajahn Cha and others, had been taught widely in Western Buddhist contexts, in North America and elsewhere, from the 1960s and 1970s onwards



Sources of the MBIs

- These SE Asian and North American approaches already represent what can be called a Buddhist modernism, or modernist Buddhism, particularly in their presentation of Buddhism as a philosophy or scientific teaching rather than a religion
- This ‘modernist Buddhist’ background provided the basis for a further secularisation of Buddhism in the form of MBSR itself and the various associated and derivative techniques, such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) developed in the UK by Mark Williams and others

Jon Kabat-Zinn 2003

[Buddhism is] neither a belief, an ideology, nor a philosophy. Rather, it is a coherent phenomenological description of the nature of mind, emotion, and suffering and its potential release, based on highly refined practices aimed at systematically training and cultivating various aspects of mind and heart via the faculty of mindful attention. [. . .] Mindfulness, being about attention, is also of necessity universal. There is nothing particularly Buddhist about it.

Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003), Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, vol.10(2), p.145.

Jon Kabat-Zinn 2017

MBSR was meant to be a potentially skillful and potent glide path into the heart and essence of dharma wisdom, a first exposure at least, and a direct firstperson one at that, based entirely on practice and empirical investigation of one's direct experience. But it was not, nor was it ever meant to be a vehicle for teaching Buddhism per se, disguised, "stealth," or of any other variety. Still, it bears keeping in mind that Buddhism itself was and continues to be an evolutionary and historical development, and that the Buddha himself was, arguably, not a Buddhist.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, 'Too Early to Tell: The Potential Impact and Challenges – Ethical and Otherwise- Inherent in the Mainstreaming of Dharma in an Increasingly Dystopian World.' *Mindfulness*, 8 (2017), 1125-1135..

‘Mind the Hype,’ Oct 2017

Van Dam, Nicholas T.; van Vugt, Marieke K.; Vago, David R.; Schmalzl, Laura; Saron, Clifford D.; Olendzki, Andrew; Meissner, Ted; Lazar, Sara W. Lazar; Kerr, Catherine E.; Gorchov, Jolie; Fox, Kieran C. R.; Field, Brent A.; Britton, Willoughby B.; Brefczynski-Lewis, Julie A.; and Meyer, David E. 2017. Mind the Hype: A Critical Evaluation and Prescriptive Agenda for Research on Mindfulness and Meditation. *Perspectives on Biological Science* Published in Online First, Oct 2017

Van Dam et al 2017

Given current confusion surrounding ‘mindfulness,’ we urge scientists, practitioners, instructors, and the public news media to move away from relying on the broad, umbrella rubric of “mindfulness” and toward more explicit, differentiated denotations of exactly what mental states, processes, and functions are being taught, practiced, and investigated. (p.6)

Van Dam et al 2017

- imprecision in measuring mindfulness in a coherent and consistent way
- misperceptions about the therapeutic efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions
- lack of attention to adverse effects of mindfulness and meditation
- questionable interpretations of data from contemplative neuroscience concerning the mental processes and brain mechanisms underlying mindfulness

Loving-Kindness meditation (LKM)

- Derives from the Buddhist practice of *metta*, the first of a classical set of four practices known as the *brahmavihara*
- This practice, in which one directs compassion and wishes for well-being toward real or imagined others, is designed to create changes in emotion, motivation, and behavior in order to promote positive feelings and kindness toward the self and others.

(Cendri A. Hutcherson, Emma M. Seppala, and James J. Gross, Loving-Kindness Meditation Increases Social Connectedness, *Emotion* 8(5), 720-724, 2008)

Cognitively-Based Compassion Training (CBCT): Eight Steps

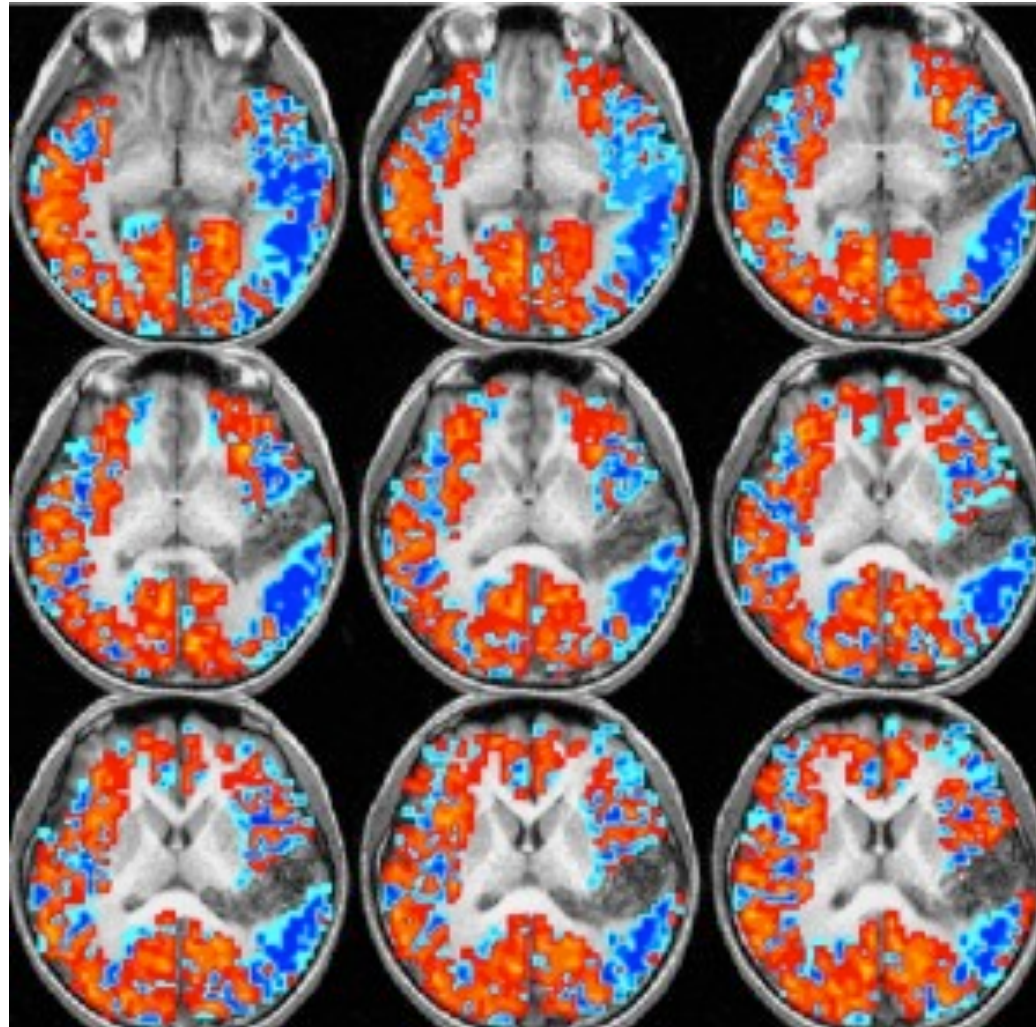
1. **Developing Attention and Stability of Mind.** Focusing on the breath to reduce distractions and enhance the ability to concentrate.
2. **Cultivating Insight into the Nature of Mental Experiences.** Becoming aware of thoughts and feelings without overreacting to them.
3. **Cultivating Self-Compassion.** Being kind and considerate to ourselves first.
4. **Cultivating Equanimity and Mental Balance.** Being calm and balanced without getting over reactive.
5. **Developing Appreciation and Gratitude for Others.** Appreciating all people who contribute to our well-being.
6. **Developing Affection and Empathy.** Being warm and kind to the needs and concerns of other people.
7. **Aspiring to Compassion.** Wanting to help others who are unhappy or in a difficult situation.
8. **Active Compassion for Others.** Putting compassion into action to help benefit others.

Naikan

In a typical weeklong Naikan session, clients stay at the center, which is usually the house of the Naikan practitioner. Each day, from early morning until night, they review their lives from the perspective of a significant person in their lives, usually starting and ending the week with their mothers. This is punctuated every two hours by a *mensetsu*, or interview, during which they report on their self-examination thus far to the practitioner. The method of recollection is clearly delineated: clients must keep to Naikan's "three themes": (1) what the client received from that person, (2) what he or she gave back to that person, and (3) what trouble he or she caused that person

Understanding Meditation in Scientific Terms

Neuro-Hype



Empirical neuroenchantment: from reading minds to thinking critically

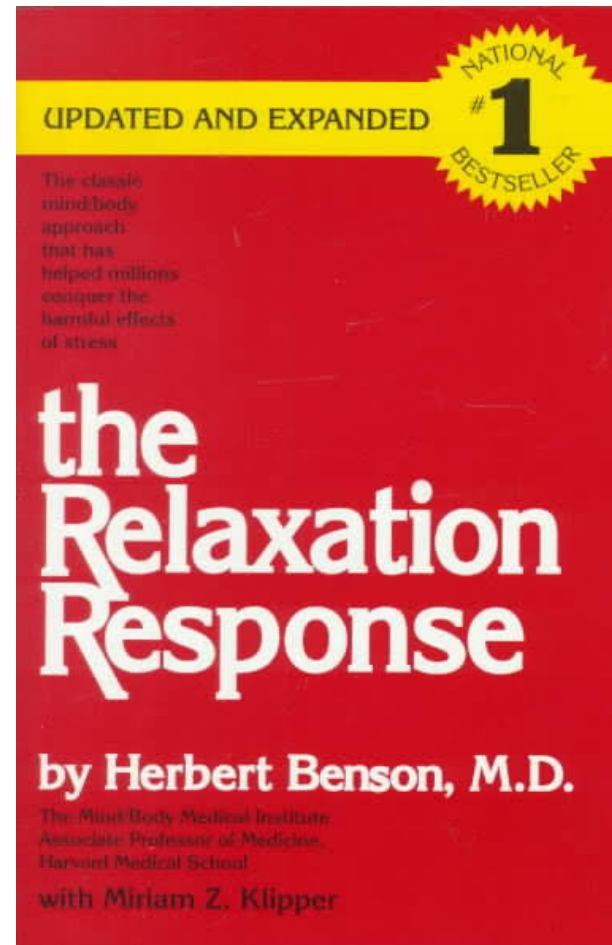
“We introduced participants to a crudely-built mock brain scanner, explaining that the machine would measure neural activity, analyze the data, and then infer the content of complex thoughts. Using a classic magic trick, we crafted an illusion whereby the imaging technology seemed to decipher the internal thoughts of participants. We found that most students—even undergraduates with advanced standing in neuroscience and psychology, who have been taught the shortcomings of neuroimaging—deemed such unlikely technology highly plausible. Our findings highlight the influence neuro-hype wields over critical thinking.”

(Sabrina S. Ali, Michael Lifshitz and Amir Raz, *Frontiers in Neuroscience* 8, article 357, May 2014)

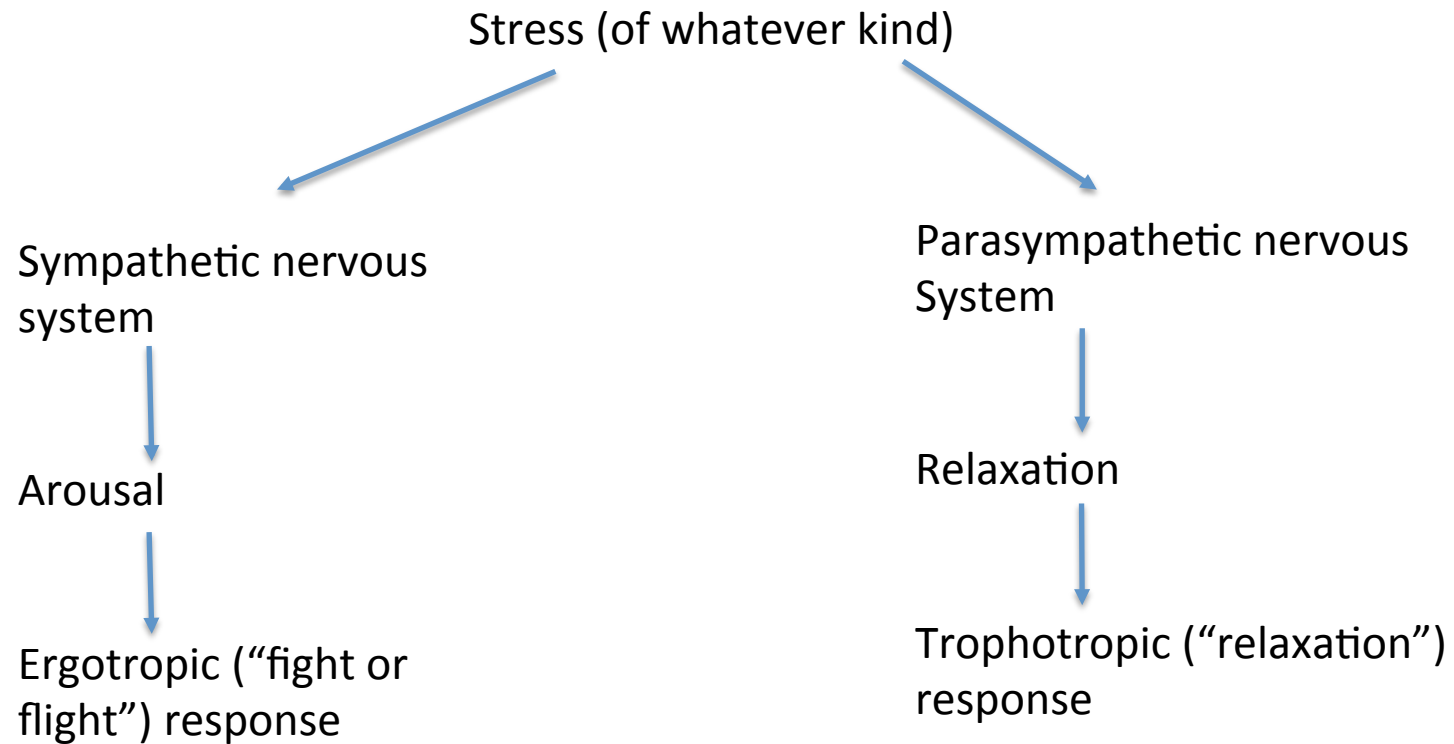
Herbert Benson



Harvard cardiologist and populariser of the 'relaxation response'



Two pathways



The Autonomic Nervous System

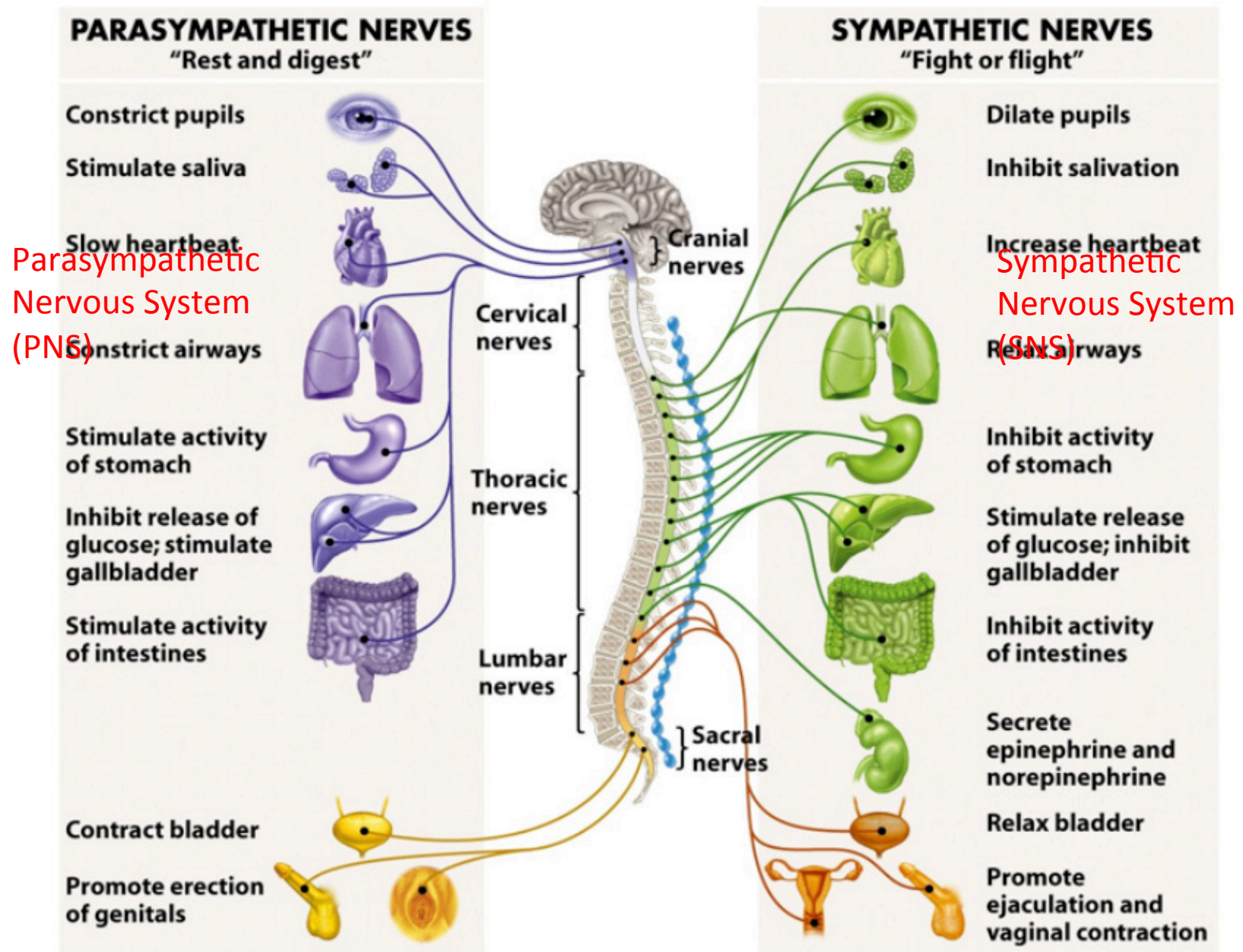


Figure 45-20 Biological Science, 2/e
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Beyond the relaxation model

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Developments in Neuroscience

- Increased interest in relating emotional states and psychiatric disorders with the functioning of the central nervous system (e.g. work on autism spectrum disorders, 'polyvagal' theory, etc)
- Growing interest in 'predictive processing,' in which perception (exteroception and interoception) is seen as directly structured by neurally-encoded patterns and structures in the brain

Conclusions

The End

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www.bodyhealthreligion.org.uk