

Join Us! The Center for Contemplative Studies

Distinguished Speaker Series Presents:

Save the Date:

Thursday, November 1, 2018

Spirituality and Mental Health: Just How Crazy is 'Crazy' ?



Is God a delusion? Is a mystical experience just the brain having a seizure? Is a near death experience just the brain dying? Over the past 20 years, a great deal of research has explored the relationship between spirituality, mental health, and the brain. This data provides new insights into what religious and spiritual experiences mean, how they may or may not be related to brain pathology, and how they may contribute or diminish mental health. By reviewing the current research on neurotheology -- the field linking the brain with spiritual experiences -- we will consider how the brain and brain health is related to spirituality. This information will be relevant on multiple levels including

clinical, psychological, neurological, and theological. We will consider all of these issues and try to determine how crazy religious and spiritual experiences and beliefs actually are.

Andrew B. Newberg, M.D. is currently the Director of Research at the Myrna Brind Center of Integrative Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University and Hospital in Philadelphia. He is also a Professor in the Departments of Emergency Medicine and Radiology at Thomas Jefferson University and he is adjunct professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Newberg has been particularly involved in the study of mystical and religious experiences, a field referred to as "neurotheology". He has published over 200 peer reviewed articles and chapters on brain function, brain imaging, and the study of religious and mystical experiences. He is the author of the new book entitled, "How Enlightenment Changes Your Brain: The New Science of Transformation," and co-author of the best-selling books, "How God Changes Your Brain" (Ballantine), "Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief" (Ballantine), "Words Can Change Your Brain" (Hudson Street Press), and "Born to Believe: God, Science, and the Origin of Ordinary and Extraordinary Beliefs" (Free Press).