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Volume 1: Issue IV

ocean newsletter
Overcoming Corruption Encouraging All Nations

In this 4th issue of the ocean newsletter we will show how the gulag was never designed to reintegrate anyone back into society. Then we will explain how the miracle of neuroscience has benefited one of the men at the gulag. We will then explain why Minnesotan's should be concerned about the "civil commitment" scheme in Minnesota. Touching on neuroscience again, we will show the importance of mindfulness.

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msop was Never Designed for Reintegrating Clients back into Society

Any clinician who thinks msop was ever designed to actually treat and release sex offenders is not paying attention to the evidence in front of them.

Mr. Grzybek, who was at the 1994 Legislative Hearings on the Minnesota Sex Offender Commitment Bill, admitted blatantly:

No one has, I think, really been honest as to what we're trying to do here. I've heard arguments before the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court by prosecutors, the county prosecutor and the Attorney General's Office, saying that what we want to do and why we can withhold these individuals, these sex offenders, for life is because we want to treat them, we want to make them better. I don't think so. I don't think that's the intent here at all. I think the intent is to use the psychopathic personalities statute to get a second bite at the apple. After an individual has been subjected to the criminal justice system, and maybe we don't like the deals that were cut by the prosecutors, or the length of sentences by the courts, but the fact of the matter is through the sex offender statutes, the criminal statutes, we as a society have determined that if you commit a crime, a sex offense, you will serve it behind bars, and after you serve that time, society deems that you have paid your debt to society, and you shall be let free. Under the psychopathic personality statute, county prosecutors are taking a second bite of the apple, saying, 'that plea agreement that we entered into, the sentence that the judge gave, isn't good enough; we want to get you life!' How many people who have been committed to St. Peter under the psychopathic personality statute have been freed? Two? ... It is essentially a life sentence...¹

Footnotes

1. The Third Segment of the First Installment of Transcribed Excerpts from the 1994 Legislative Hearings on the Minnesota Sex Offender Commitment Bill Disk 3 at 39:33

Client Interview

Neuroscience work with rats, demonstrated neuroplasticity in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Neuroscientists Mark Rosenzweig's scientific paper "*Effects of Environmental Complexity and Training on Brain Chemistry and Anatomy*," recapitulated his findings, which clearly showed that rats housed in cages with toys, ladders, running wheels, and tunnels – what he called an "enriched" environment – performed better on maze tests than those in sterile cages, or "impoverished" environments.

I consider the msop to be an impoverished environment to cognitive neurogenesis. What I have come to acknowledge through observation and a keen sense of awareness is this, men's - MSOP client - behaviors when new staff are hired. More prominently, female staff, and when a female staff enters a cellblock, regardless of profession. "Tough" egotistical, and even misogynistic men almost always impulsively react with adoration. Most do so passive-aggressively, while others are passive and few are enticed to approach a female staff and exhibit inappropriate boundary-testing behaviors. Why is this?

I would assume that it is due to being involuntarily detained in an impoverished environment with little to zero interaction with the opposite sex in a natural way. The sound of a woman's voice causes men in msop to suffer "whiplash" when heard. msop is a strange, cold, impersonal and detached environment, deliberately cut off from family, friends, society and nature.

Neuropsychologist would agree that the need for such natural, normal human interaction is beneficial to all of society and any degree of confinement leading to an ongoing limitation of access to common human interaction is detrimental to any human psyche. It would only be logical to interpret that indeterminate involuntary civil commitment (punitive preventative detention) of a person in an artificial environment until institutionalization has instilled learned-helplessness and perceptions of hopelessness. Furthermore, the creation of unhealthy, sterile and apathetical co-dependency relationships. Co-dependency relationship where the men learn to exhibit ingratiating behaviors rather than a healthy mutual connection.

Foremost, when the act is intentional and designed in a fashion to create such abnormal learned-behaviors. The intent comes due significantly to the IMPOVERISHED ENVIRONMENT where the msop population is deliberately isolated, segregated and cut-off from the rest of society through ill-written policies. A stress-induced environment most definitely must lead to a dramatic decrease in the birth of new neurons in the adult hippocampus over an extended period of time.

Damage or *apoptosis* from detainment in an IMPOVERISHED ENVIRONMENT affects the frontal lobe which generates movement commands, contains the area that produces speech, and is responsible for selecting appropriate behavior which is dependent on goals and environment. Our brains are our greatest strength as critical thinkers. But they can also be a source of many weaknesses and impairments in critical thought. msop must change its policies to genuinely want to safely integrate men back into society. Create a policy that acknowledges the importance of conjugal visits to build healthy relationships.

rjh

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our founding fathers built this government in response to a corrupt government. One day, the government will have the ability to lock up whomever they please based on the interfacing of crime and mental illness. Sex crimes have been the model because they are hated so much by the public already. However, it could just as well be drug offenders for instance, who are already facing death by the authorities in the Philippines—why not America? But it likely would not be drug offenders here. Instead it will be those with “mental illness.” With all of the mass shootings, and the uproar of the public to treat “mental illness” who's to say that that particular demograph is not threatened with mass incarceration?

Executive Order No. 9066 that incarcerated thousands of Japanese-American people, despite harsh backlash, was never overturned and could be used to justify the incarceration of different sub-groups of people for whatever the government feels is serious enough. This law, coupled with the merging of crime and mental illness, has the potential to lock anyone up.⁹ I know this all sounds ridiculous, but Justice Antonin Scalia warned that internment could be upheld in the future: “[Y]ou are kidding yourself if you think the same thing will not happen again...”¹⁰ These are strong words from a very influential person that only a fool would ignore. Melissa Hamilton from Pace University sums up the concern:

Fear of sexual predators has lead society to adopt a law-psychiatry interface in which sexual offending is merged into disease based philosophy to justify various forms of punishment and preventative control... The widespread acceptance of mental disorders for sexual deviance, despite [the] substantial scientific problems, ignores significant issues of due process and equity considering they help dictate infringements on fundamental interests of defendants... The collaboration threatens not only the liberty and privacy interests of those who commit sex-based offenses. The potential exists for a contagion effect whereby interest groups might be encouraged to qualify all manner of criminal behaviors as distinct mental disorders. Accordingly, if the interaction between law and psychiatry continues in this manner, all criminals may be deemed to have mental disorders. This outcome makes no logical sense, undermines the core tenets of the law, infringes upon fundamental rights, and methodically destroys trust in the science of psychiatry.

Footnotes

1. Melisa Hamilton. “Adjudicating Sex Crimes as Mental Disease.” 33 Pace L. Rev. 536, Spring Is. 2013, © 2013 Pace University School of Law: p 7
2. Montaldi, Daniel PhD, A Study of the Efficacy of the Sexually Violent Predator Act in Florida, William Mitchell Law Review, 2015, Vol. 43:1 pp 804, 853
3. Ibid. at p 842
4. Ruban Rosario. “This Judge Believes Even Sex Offenders Have Rights” Pioneer Press, rrosario@pioneerpress.com
5. David Feige. “When Junk Science About Sex Offenders Infects the Supreme Court.” The New York Times, 12 Sept. 2017
6. Tamara Rice Lave & Franklin E. Zimring. “Assessing the Real Risk of Sexually Violent Predators” Doctor Padilla’s Dangerous Date.” Berkeley Law, 2018 pp 709, 710 <https://scholarship/.law.berkeley.edu/facpubs>
7. James R. Nobles, Evaluation Report, Civil Commitment of Sex Offenders, Mar. 2011, OLA auditor@state.mn.us www.auditor.legstate.mn.us. (651) 296-4708 p 7
8. Ibid. pp 24-26
9. Sunstein, Cass R. Can it Happen Here? HarperCollins Publishers, © 2018 p 313
10. Ibid. at p 321

“The right to be free from confinement is of the very essence of a scheme of ordered liberty.” -*Palko v. Connecticut*, 302 U.S. 319, 325 (1937)

The Importance of Mindfulness

Dr. Ronald D. Siegel, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, says, “Mindfulness, like many forms of therapy, loosens the repression barrier... We become more sensitized to what’s happening in the mind and less distracted by our constant activity. Also, our impulses become clearer...” (Siegel 35)

According to an article in YOGAJOURNAL.COM Rebecca Gladding, MD, a psychiatrist and co-author of *You Are Not Your Brain*, sheds some light on what’s going on in your gray matter of your brain when you meditate.

In the first few minutes of meditation, your ventromedial prefrontal cortex lights up. When you start to meditate, your brain jumps from one thought to the next. One of the reasons for this “monkey mind” is that this part of the brain is always active – unless we learn to activate other areas (which is what a regular meditation practice does). “Interestingly, this part of the brain runs everything through a lens of ‘me,’” Gladding says. And it can prompt you to catastrophize. You might remember something you said at work and then think, “I’m going to get fired,” she says. Or rather than brushing off a pain in your hip, you might jump to the (unlikely) possibility that you need a hip replacement.

Once you start to focus your attention... your lateral prefrontal cortex activates – and overrides the “me” thoughts in favor of a more rational, logical, balanced position. “This part of the brain helps you see things neutrally,” Gladding says. Which helps you settle into your meditation. Even better, the more you meditate, the more active your lateral prefrontal cortex becomes – and the quieter your ventromedial cortex (the “me” center that has a tendency to catastrophize) gets.

After 8 to 12 weeks of meditating daily, your dorsomedial prefrontal cortex gets activated. This is a part of the brain that helps us develop empathy. “It’s why the more we meditate, the more compassionate we become in life,” says Gladding. “This part of the brain becomes more active, more of the time.” (Gladding, Rebecca).

It was once believed that by age 21, our brains were done growing and that the only change is for the worse: atrophy, damage, etc. However, neuroplasticity, the brain’s capacity to grow and change, has been clearly confirmed in human adults. By noticing and making more mindful choices about our thoughts, feelings, and reactions, we can actually change the structure, activity, and connections in our brain. Such changes are associated with increased and more balanced empathy, faster recovery after an argument, and decreased negativity bias. (Marsh, Lucas) It doesn’t matter how old you are. You can still encourage neurological changes in your brain. Personality can change throughout life, to the oldest ages we can test. We change in gradual ways as we learn to adapt to life’s challenges, a process that continues for as long as we do. (Whitbourne, Susan Krauss)

Every experience in our life alters our brain forever afterward. Therefore, it is constantly changing, although mostly in minute ways. MRI studies provide examples that practicing meditation, and even exercise lead to functional changes in the brain that correspond to changes in behavior. (Gowin, Joshua) We will focus primarily on meditation in this course. However, we encourage you to also start an exercise program.

In this course we will use mindfulness practices, like meditation. Meditation is simply the process of becoming intentionally aware of something specific. Mindfulness is about turning up our attention volume and staying present. Staying present helps us learn to stay with discomfort which is important for developing empathy. Dr. Ronald D. Siegel, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School, says:

[A]... way [mindfulness] helps is by seeing emotional events as impersonal uprisings or phenomena. This helps us to develop affect tolerance, the ability to really be with feelings. When we start to notice feelings simply as neurobiological events, they are transformed, and we’re able to tolerate them at much higher levels.

...we find that other people can only really be close with us if we can tolerate both our feeling and their feeling simultaneously... (Siegel 41)

...what we’re trying to develop in our relationships is a kind of radical acceptance of all contents, and being able to tolerate emotions in this way is necessary for developing empathy.

Empathy is a particular kind of attention. As far as neurobiologists now understand it, empathy works through

the action of mirror neurons. For example, when we watch a scary movie, we're not involved in the action, yet our bodies react very much as though we are in the midst of it.

...the greater our inner attunement and our tolerance of this, the greater our capacity is to be empathetic.

When we can feel what's happening inside of us, we can understand others. It helps us develop what modern psychologists call theory of mind, which is simply the awareness that other people don't live in your head – that they actually have different experiences from you. But you can get a resonating feeling about their experience by turning into some of your own... (Siegel 42, 43)

...Mindfulness practice helps cultivate acceptance by simply seeing the judgments about ourselves and others like other thoughts – like itches or aches simply coming and going... when we can accept our own imperfections, difficulties, joy, and sorrows, we become more accepting of others, and they feel our trust and acceptance. (Siegel 43)

Recently, there has been a lot of interesting research on the effects of loving-kindness practices... They actually change the brain in ways that correlate with developing empathy and generosity. And it shifts us away from fault finding in ourselves and others...

For people who have experience in prayer traditions, loving-kindness practice can feel familiar because both prayer and loving-kindness practice generate similar feelings... (Siegel 45)

We can break free from being enslaved by our habits, but first we have to be willing to give up some of what we might think of as our freedom. With mindfulness practice we see that we are actually all addicts..." (Siegel, lecture 16, 0:02:35)

The focus of meditation may change, but the process is the same. It one thing to meditate, however, what we choose to meditate on is going to dictate our personal growth. Dr. Timothy Jennings, author of the book *God Shaped Game* said:

Recent brain research by Dr. Newberg at the University of Pennsylvania has documented that all forms of contemplative meditation were associated with positive brain changes – but the greatest improvements occurred when participants meditated specifically on a God of love. Such meditation was associated with growth in the prefrontal cortex (the part of the brain right behind our forehead where we reason, make judgments and experience Godlike love) and subsequent increased capacity for empathy, sympathy, compassion and altruism. But here's the most astonishing part. Not only does other-centered love increase when we worship a God of love, but sharp thinking and memory improve as well. In other words, worshipping a God of love actually stimulates the brain to heal and grow. (Timothy R. Jennings, 27)

The Bible uses the word "meditation" or "meditate" in the books of Genesis, Joshua, Psalms, and 1 Timothy. The words used in scripture for meditation is *hāgâ*, *śîah*, and *śîhâ*. Meaning, to murmur, ponder, or reflect, respectively (Strong, James 1489, 1581). One of the first places we find the word meditation in the Bible, is in Genesis 24:63. Although it is only mentioned briefly, and does not tell us what Isaac focused on during his meditation, it does give us insight on when and where he meditated: "...Isaac had gone out into a field at evening time..." So keep this in mind as you go through this course: you can meditate anytime and anywhere. What we are to meditate on is what matters most. Sometimes the Patriarchs focused on God's laws (Exodus 20:3-17 The Ten Commandments) and at other times, God Himself. We will look both topics of meditation in this course.

Throughout this course there will occasionally be "Scripture Meditation" icons within the text. Use these to learn more about what the Bible says concerning meditation to help guide you in this course.

In 1 Timothy 4:7-15 we see another example of God's Word in association to neuroplasticity, and its direct dependence on meditation: "...train yourself for godliness, for, while the training of the body has a limited benefit, but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come."

The saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. In fact, we labor and strive for this, because we have put our hope in the living God... Command and teach these things...set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity... Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress (HCSB)

In this passage, the word practice is translated from the Greek word *meletaō*. The Strong's Concordance tells us that this word means to, "revolve in the mind." This is the same as meditation (Strong 1647).

In summary, the above passage tells us to labor and strive for godliness while we let love, faith, and purity revolve in the mind. This kind of persistent striving will change the structure of our brains and make God's ways second nature to us. This is neuroplasticity.

As you can see, there is plenty of extra space in the margins to note your experiences with meditation, and personal reflection.

After week 12 of this course – once you have created a consistent routine, we encourage you to read this book: *The God Shaped Brain* and then follow the Study Guide at the end of the book.

Paul did not dispute the significant medical benefits of physical exercise. "Limited" means "for a little while" (the benefits of exercise are only temporary). Spiritual training that produces godly character is more important since its results endure throughout the present life and in the life to come. (Apologetics Study Bible, commentary, p.1804 1 Tim. 4:8)

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is similar to meditation in that it involves focusing your mind intentionally. We agree with Christian author and speaker Jay Payleitner, who said:

Every day of your life has 1,440 minutes, and God deserves a few of them. And, you deserve the experience of spending a few quiet minutes every morning with your Creator. So, if you haven't already done so, establish the habit of spending time with God every day of the week. It's a habit that will change your day and revolutionize your life. When you give the LORD your undivided attention, everything changes, including you. (Payleitner, Jay 98)

Jesus taught us how to pray with the LORD'S prayer. This prayer is often vainly repeated with little attention to its deeper meaning. It is important to look at what Jesus was telling us when He directed this specific prayer. Context is important when we read the Bible. Therefore, let's consider what Jesus said right before He taught us this prayer. He said, "...your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Pray then like this:" this prayer is not intended to manipulate God into giving us anything. It serves another purpose completely. Let's take a look at the LORD'S prayer from Matthew 6:9-13, and examine its meaning:

...Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
(ESV)

This prayer is meant to:

Keep God's name holy

The word "hallowed" in Greek means, "To make holy...purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate..." (Strong 1599) Man has a tendency to distort what is good, and exalt what is bad. Jesus' command to keep God's name holy, reflects the 3rd commandment, which is to not take the LORD'S name in vain. This commandment seems petty at first, but think about it. If we never put value on God's name, and we have only associated it with negative things, then how could we turn to Him with a sincere heart?

Ask God for His will to be done here on earth.

Jesus' knew that although God's ultimate plan will prevail, it's not an automatic expectation that God's will is always being done by humans. Humans who live by the flesh, are hostile to God and must turn to Christ to know the right way to live (Romans 8:7). It is the Christian's duty do God's will and to

"... become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire." (2 Peter 1:4 ESV)

Give us our daily bread.

This symbolizes God's provision in our lives. We know this because of what Jesus said earlier, to Satan in the wilderness, in Matthew 4:4, ... "Man shall not live be bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (ESV)

Ask God for forgiveness and to remind us to forgive others. Jesus follows up this prayer with an explanation that further clarifies the importance of forgiving others, "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14, 15) (ESV)

The Prefrontal Cortex

The Prefrontal Network plays an important role in behaviors that require multitasking and the integration of thought with emotion. Its integrity appears important for the simultaneous awareness of context, options, consequences, relevance, and emotional impact that allows the formulation of adaptive interpretations, decisions, and actions. Damage to this part of the brain (*accidental or drug use*) impairs mental flexibility, reasoning, assumption formation, abstract thinking, foresight, judgment, the online (attentive) holding of information, and the ability to inhibit inappropriate responses and behaviors.