

From Awakening to Transformation

3rd Annual Spirituality & Science Forum
13-21 October 2020

A Virtual Retreat
hosted by

KRUEGER & LEE



SYNERGOS

Taking up the themes of “waking up” & “transformation”...

This year, the coronavirus situation has made us ever more aware of the fragility of life and the need for humility in our relationship with nature. Although our common crisis has made us recognize the interconnectedness of our world, at the same time, it has also brought to light the political, social and economic realities in many parts of the world that underlie and exacerbate the state of suffering. The current state is a sober reminder to "wake up" and to reflect on the intentions and actions that have given rise to the natural and man-made crises that we are facing today. It is time to think about the inner and outer changes necessary for a different future.

We are taking up the theme of "waking up" and "transformation" in this year's Spirituality & Science Forum. Due to the difficulties of in-person gatherings, *“From Awakening to Transformation”* will take place as a four-part virtual series. We will discuss with leading experts about what it means to "awaken" spiritually, what happens during this process, and the experience of transformation that follows afterwards that can lead to deeply meaningful change.

Session 1: Awakening Experiences: Spiritual Transformation in Everyday Life

with Dr. Steven Taylor, Leeds Beckett University and British Psychological Society

13 October ● 17:00 – 19:00 CET

Awakening experiences occur when our awareness becomes more intense and expansive. We feel a sense of elation and connection to our surroundings, a sense of harmony and meaning, and everything around us becomes more vivid and beautiful. We may even seem to be lifted out of ourselves, into oneness with all things. Sometimes called spiritual experiences, or higher states of consciousness, these experiences suggest that our normal awareness is limited and that a different view of reality is possible.

Based on his years of research into awakening experiences, Dr. Steve Taylor will explain their characteristics and the situations and activities that generate them. Most importantly, Dr. Taylor will suggest that awakening experiences can become permanent, as a stable state of 'spiritual wakefulness.' A shift into permanent wakefulness can sometimes occur following a period of intense turmoil in a person's life, or be gradually cultivated through spiritual practice. Dr. Taylor will argue that spiritual awakening is an urgent need for our times, and that many of today's problems cannot be effectively solved without it.

This session will be interactive, including discussion and questions.

Session 2: Awakening and Beyond from the Perspective of Great Completion Meditation in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Western Neuroscience

with Dr. Daniel P. Brown, Harvard Medical School

15 October • 17:00 – 18:30 CET

Although there are numerous spiritual paths within Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, according to the interest and capacity of the practitioner, this presentation will focus the path for those of the highest capacity, namely *rDzogs Chen*, or Great Completion Meditation, in the indigenous Bon and Indo-Tibetan tradition.

As the name implies, Great Completion completes the path to enlightenment. There are three stages or ‘maps’ in this path of spiritual development. The first set of practices starts from the very beginning of the path, through the preliminary practices, concentration training to stabilize focus, emptiness meditation to go beyond getting caught up in thought, sense of self, time, duality, and the localization of consciousness, and to set up the field of timeless, limitless, non-dual, non-localized awareness as your basis of operation, and cultivating the stability of the natural state, as a way of shifting from ordinary mind to awakened mind.

The second ‘map’ are the specific practices to shift from ordinary mind to awakened mind frequently, for longer duration, and more immediately, both in formal meditation and in everyday life, until operating out of awakening at all times and all situations.

The third ‘map’ referred to as “the path of liberation” are advanced practices, in which the practitioner takes the view of the vast expanse

and the continuous unfolding of all content as the liveliness of awakened awareness, and takes that view free of all mental engagement, such that whatever arises no longer forms karmic memory traces. The end result of this path of liberation is the exhaustion of all negative states of mind and the karmic memory traces that support them, and also the flourishing of 80 positive qualities of a spiritually evolved practitioner.

This complete purification process also purifies ordinary perception, the outcome of which is the continuous automatic self-arising and self-liberation of all negative states and seeing the external world and the internal body as primordially sacred. At some point seeing the world from the outside-in shifts to seeing the world from the inside-out. This sets the stage of the threefold embodiment of enlightenment—the infinitely vast limitless field of lucid, awakened awareness/love, the sacred world of the body, the Buddha fields within that expanse, and the countless manifestation of enlightened intentions guiding sentient beings along the path, as the way out of being caught up in cyclic existence.

From the perspective of neuroscience we will review the neurocircuitry of: concentration meditation, emptiness of self meditation, awakened awareness, and of the complete purification of negative states and the flourishing of positive states.

Session 3: Consciousness – A Scientific Perspective

with Dr. Julia Mossbridge, Institute for Noetic Sciences and
California Institute of Integral Studies

20 October • 17:00 – 19:00 CET

When scientists say they study consciousness, are they talking about the same thing that mystics and meditators mean when they speak of awakening consciousness?

The answer can be yes or no, depending on the scientist, and these two highly divergent answers emerge from distinct worldviews that, within the next decade, are likely to determine much about what it means to survive and thrive on this planet. Either worldview can be supported by scientific evidence. Thus at this time, humanity is at a crossroads – we can pursue one worldview or another with the support of science. But what is the impact of supporting each of these worldviews? In this session, cognitive neuroscientist and consciousness and technology researcher, Dr. Julia Mossbridge, will take us from theory to experiment to practice within both of these worldviews, so we can understand their implications first-hand and make strategic decisions about which worldview to engage with and invest in over the next decade.

Session 4: With a Little Help...All about Psychedelics

with Matthew W. Johnson, Ph.D., Johns Hopkins University
School of Medicine

21 October • 17:00 – 19:00 CET

This presentation will overview the science of psilocybin and other psychedelic drugs, and will include discussion of risks and corresponding safety guidelines, mystical experience, effects in healthy individuals, and therapeutic effects for psychiatric disorders.

Research at Johns Hopkins and other institutions has repeatedly found that under conditions of substantial preparation, interpersonal support, and instructions for introspection, psilocybin administration causes, with reasonable reliability, acute subjective effects that are well described by the psychological construct of mystical experience. Mystical experience is defined by strong endorsement of the following domains: sense of unity, noetic quality, sacredness, sense of transcending of time and space, and ineffability. Compared to psilocybin sessions in which full mystical experience criteria are not endorsed, psilocybin-occasioned mystical experiences are associated with positive long-term (≥ 6 months) outcomes, including increased personality openness in healthy participants, decreased depression and anxiety in cancer patients, and increased biologically-confirmed quit rates in treatment-resistant tobacco cigarette smokers. These findings are consistent with the notion that psychedelic therapy is best thought of as medication-assisted psychotherapy, wherein the drug provides an opportunity for an experience, and that experience may hold therapeutic value. This research also suggests that psychedelics may constitute powerful experimental tools for determining the long-term effects of distinctive subjective states on behavior.

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Participation Fee: CHF 320.00 per person

The participation fee is for the entire forum of four webinars.

All cancellations for a full refund must be notified by email before **October 6, 2020**. Beyond this date, refund will not be possible.

If you are interested in participating but find the fee is a barrier, please contact us at info@kruegerandlee.com.

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