

# Clinical and Medical Case Reports

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#### Contemplative revelations: Higher faculties in global nervous system integration

Contemplative meditation reveals a latent capacity for personal integration that enhances mental and physical health through relational and transcendent ordering. Studies of a related meditative practice, mindfulness, reveal, for example, not only positive phenomenological benefits but also substantive physical changes in underlying neural and bodily factors, which are correlated with the duration and frequency of meditative practice. The extended intentional focus of contemplative meditation acquired from the Christian legacy, and then evolved in its later development, implicates an even greater breadth of neural deployment that assists personal integration. They suggest, thereby, a scope of disciplinary consolidation that exceeds that of mindfulness and so likely activates a broader and corresponding range of integrative processes that are latent for implementation as needed. The role played by the brain and nervous system in the self-integration of higher faculties, however, is neglected in current philosophy of science models that guide empirical neuroscientific praxis; this latter, rather, are premised on the brain's mediation of coherent and coordinative operation instead of the systemically mediated, mutually constraining influences of peripheral and central neural networks. Indeed, results from contemplative meditation suggest that body and brain are unified through their ordering to higher systemic and ontological ends. Bodily performance in and through intentional actions, for example, shapes the brain and body's neural architecture to yield an integral performance unit. In like manner, higher faculties, like personal identity and intention, emerge from the extended peripheral network throughout the body to unify the whole individual in actions, such as those promoted in contemplative meditation. This paper will pursue an evidence-based presentation, discussing the underlying neural events through which self-autonomous actions promote and assist personal integration.

#### Biography

Denis Larrivee is a Visiting Scholar at Loyola University Chicago and has held professorships at the Weill Cornell University Medical College in New York City and Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana. A former fellow at Yale University's Medical School and Department of Biology he received the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology's first place award for studies on photoreceptor degenerative and developmental mechanisms. He is the current editor of a text entitled Brain-Computer Interfacing and Brain Dynamics with InTech Publishing and an editorial board member of the journals Annals of Neurology and Neurological Sciences (USA) and EC Neurology (UK). An International Neuroethics Society Expert he is the author of more than 50 papers and book chapters in such varied journals/venues as Neurology and Neurological Sciences (USA), EC Neurology (UK), Journal of Neuroscience, Journal of Religion and Mental Health, and IEEE Explore.

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