

September Conference Call

As you know, we have a rather unusual topic for this talk with God, the Brain, and the Stock Market. These are three topics that have been within everybody's awareness these last few days. So we're going to begin with the brain.

The human brain took a tremendous quantum leap about 150,000 years ago, in which within the space of about ten generations the human brain doubled in size with the addition of a new structure to the brain; the neo-cortex. This brain did not become a functional bio-computer for many, many thousands of years.

Before we look at this brain, which is the brain of the new human, the brain of Einstein and Mozart and Bach, I want to look at the earlier brains that developed in the course of human evolution that marked three distinct evolutionary eras that are embedded anatomically in the structure of our brain.

The first of our brains and the most primitive and ancient brain that we have is the reptilian brain, which is the brainstem and is associated with all of our autonomic functions. We share this brain with the reptiles. This is the brain that the great reptiles survived and thrived with for hundreds of millions of years; this is the dinosaur brain. It still thinks in the way the dinosaurs do, and I'm sure you know people who still think and behave in the reptilian ways. The reptilian brain is in charge of all the autonomic functions of the body. It's charged with regulating the temperature in the body, with heart rate, with respiration, because we don't want to have to think about breathing. Breathing is autonomic for us and we don't have to think about regulating our body temperature.

So Nature relegated all of these functions to this extraordinary bio-computer that evolved millions of years ago. Sitting on top of the reptilian brain is the mammalian brain, is the brain that we share with all of the mammals. It's also known as the limbic brain. So the reptilian brain is concerned with survival.

The mammalian brain has a new set of programs, the operating system of the mammalian brain runs on what is known as the four F's, what neuroscientists actually describe as the four core programs of this brain, and they are fear, feeding, fighting, and fornicating. The four F's. Now you can already see the relationship with the stock market here, because this is the brain that runs on fear, that runs on feeding, which is scarcity; the sense of lack, and it's opposite, which is greed. This is the brain that has run unbridled throughout the course of human history, that has been in the driver's seat of human experience for thousands and thousands of years.

Now, when we look at the ancient spiritual traditions, we see that spirituality encodes within the language of ceremony and ritual a set of principles that allow us to override the fundamental program of this limbic brain, of the mammalian brain. So we're able to override fear, we're able to override our sense of violence, of the need to create enemies. We're able to override our sense of scarcity.

For example, if you look at the tantric Buddhist principles, they say that tantra is founded on death and sex, and mastering these two disciplines which are, death of course, associating with the greatest fear that we have and sex turning fornicating into rapture and communion. So here you have distinct spiritual practice that addresses two of the four F's of our limbic brain. If you look at Tibetan Buddhist practices, they are founded on compassion and generosity, the practice of compassion and wisdom. Compassion is only possible when you override that primitive instinct of violence.

If you look at the shamanic practices, shamanic practices are also based on overriding the four primitive and toxic programs of the limbic brain, which are the shamanic practices where the laika, the wisdom keepers say the object of the shaman is to learn how to get out of this life alive. The way of the shaman is the way of the peaceful warrior.

Here you have, again, two practices, two modalities that take on these very primitive instincts that are programmed into our limbic brain. In fact, I'm a recovering Catholic, and I was raised in a very Catholic environment, going to Sunday school as a young boy. One of the first things that we had to learn were, of course, the Ten Commandments. If you look at the Ten Commandments closely, six of them are designed to override these instincts of the limbic brain. You shalt not murder, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, you shall not covet your neighbor's house or your neighbor's wife.

So here, six of the Ten Commandments, which are found in every culture in the world, are designed to regulate these impulses that are kept and managed within the limbic brain. But it's interesting that Christianity and with the coming of Christ, you have the first great spiritual tradition in the planet that is founded on the practice of compassion, on the practice of doing unto others as you would have others do unto you, on turning the other cheek.

So here you have a mass awakening, or the potential of an awakening of the faculties of the neocortex that include compassion and generosity and innovation and curiosity. You have the dawning of the faculties of the extraordinary new brain. But humanity always seems to lag behind it's great visionaries and it's prophets, so that even though Christ and Muhammed and the Buddha all came to teach us these same fundamental lessons; that it's possible to create a new neurological architecture in the new brain, to access capabilities that nature endowed us with 150,000 years ago.

It was very difficult to break out of the grip of the limbic brain itself. Here's the fascinating example, if you look at art during the Medieval, the dark ages, you find that the first time in European history that artists began to sign their paintings is around the year 1100. Before that, there wasn't the sense of the individual as such, the individual artists, art was something that we created, that belonged to a collective. But you have the notion of individuality beginning to appear around the year 1100 AD.

So here are the early signs of the awakening of this extraordinary brain, which is the neocortex; a brand new brain that sits right above the limbic brain, that is the brain of Einstein, of Mozart, of Bach, of creativity, of discovery, of spirituality, of bliss, of peace, of healing, of Communion, the awakening of this bio-computer that has lain dormant for the last 150,000 years.

The awakening of this brain, of course, it's associated also with the dawning of extraordinary concepts in the history of humanity, with the notion of democracy that appears in Greece for the first time, of equality. If you want to look at perhaps one of the most amazing descriptions of the attributes of this new brain, all that we have to do is look at the Constitution of the United States. Because here are the qualities of the new brain that are shared by a group of visionaries that say that we all have the right to live in a free state; that we have freedom of speech, that we have freedom of religion, and for the first time in history, you have a nation, the United States, that is founded on the principles of this extraordinary new brain.

But of course the limbic brain with its' four F's; fear, feeding, fighting, aggression and sex keeps keeping up. That's why you have such an extraordinary amount of violence in our media, it's a wonderful way of stimulating that limbic brain and keeping it firing, to bring us

down into a level of consciousness that gives us the notion that we're living in a world of scarcity, that makes us feel that terror is imminent and that we need eleven different kinds of insurance in order to be safe.

So even though the founding fathers of the United States which had the extraordinary vision of equality and freedom, at the same time you have the forces, the latent forces of our limbic brain becoming more and more sophisticated and devious in its ways and ending up turning the marketplace into the stock market. The marketplace was the place where real goods were exchanged, where you bartered potatoes for kale, for rice, for milk, for butter.

And then with the introduction of money, money became a very simple way of exchanging goods, because they all acquired a monetary value. And then we began to trade monetary instruments, financial instruments themselves that had no basis at all on any kind of real market economy, marketplace economy. So that the market, the street market, the farmers market, the flea market became the stock market and became populated by a bunch of products; financial derivatives that have absolutely no direct and sustainable connection with the elements of real life, and we're driven by the four fundamental programs of our limbic brain. To keep our population in fear, to keep our population thinking in scarcity, to keep us living in lack, to keep us in an ongoing struggle with ourselves and with enemies outside of us.

So the task of the spiritual traditions has always been to override the fundamental programs of the limbic brain. We cannot override these programs, it's very difficult to override these programs unless we heal ourselves, unless we heal a particular structure in the brain known as the hippocampus, which is located in the limbic system. Which is responsible for memory storage, for the recalling of trauma, but the problem is that the brain cannot tell the difference between a real danger or a real threat and a perceived threat or imagined threat or a threat that occurred two years or twenty years ago. All of these are bundled up together and they create neuro-pathways within the brain so that the minute that we perceive a supposed threat or danger, they activate these neuro-pathways and we begin to relive a traumatic event all over again. Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon is people that suffer post traumatic stress disorder, where a loud noise can trigger a recall of the memory of being in combat.

So what you have is structures particularly associated with the hippocampus in the brain that misread signals in the environment, that misinterpret non-dangerous situations for imaginary threats. I remember when I lived in New York City, I lived in New York many years ago in an area that has become very trendy right now, in SOHO, but back then it was full of lowlifes but it was the only affordable place that I could live at in New York. The first day I go to the apartment that I have rented, I look in people's faces and I'm seeing that this place is full of muggers and stabbers and rapists and robbers and really very frightening looking people.

A couple of weeks later I discovered that they were my neighbors and they were the nicest and friendliest people I ever met. They all had a look that you acquire, or used to acquire in New York. They develop a certain look that meant don't mess with me. But I was misreading all of these signals and thought that I was living in the middle of Hell's Kitchen. So what happens with the hippocampus is that it will misinterpret a signal, and it will trigger a fight or flight response. It will trigger a fight or flight response. It will ring, it will turn on all the alarms in the brain. It functions along what is known as the HPA axis- the hippocampus, pituitary, adrenal axis.

The hippocampus sends a signal to the pituitary that says 'hey, there's an imminent threat,' And the pituitary signals the pituitary to produce adrenaline and cortisol, to take blood

from our central organs, where blood is involved in nourishment, providing and transporting nourishment from our gut and it brings it into our extremities so that we can fight with our hands or run with our feet. It also takes blood flow from the forebrain, from the prefrontal lobes of the brain, from what some neuroscientists are referring to as the 'God Brain' and it brings circulation to the hind brain, which is a more reflexive, automatic functioning, non-reasoning, more impulsive region in the brain.

So when we go into fight or flight we get locked into the programming of our limbic brain and the four F's. Unfortunately today, we live in a society where most people, most of the clients that I see privately and that we see at the Four Winds Society and many of the students that come into our courses come for self healing and the very first thing that we do is we reset their fight or flight system and we teach them, and those of you who are involved in our Light Body Training know that right in our first meeting we learn how to decouple the fight or flight systems so we can bring our radar in from 300 yards away to 3 yards away, 3 meters away, so we don't have to be in this hyper-vigilant state and looking for signs that we can misinterpret, misread as signs of danger like I did when I first went to New York City. I remember a few months later I was walking past a store window and I saw my own reflection in the window, and it startled me because I had developed a similar look, a don't mess with me look typical of New York.

So the decoupling of the fight or flight response allows us to step out of the programming of our limbic brain. The programming of our limbic brain gets caught in fight or flight. When you turn on Fox Television and it shows you the level of alert that the country is on, when you turn on the news and see the violence, when you see that a gunman in Iceland killed a college student, killed ten other college students, these images of violence that repeat in American and European television and American cinema, they are continually triggering that HPA axis, they are continually stimulating that hippocampus, they are continually keeping us in a negative fantasy that shamans know will prove itself to be true.

These four F's of the limbic brain create neural networks where we live in our stories, stories within our psyche that then bear themselves out to be true in the real world. The neurology of this is really fascinating because neurons that fire together, wire together. So when you have neurons firing because you're at the edge of your seat you're adrenaline is pumping when you're watching a violent scene in a movie or a scary scene, you're actually reinforcing neural networks associated with that fear instinct, that fear program in the limbic brain. We cannot live in abundance, we cannot live in joy, we cannot live in peace until we break free of the dictates of the limbic brain.

And when we do, a fascinating thing begins to happen. We actually begin to re-grow the hippocampus, the hippocampus actually begins to grow new brain cells and to heal, and it's very difficult to heal from trauma, because trauma is, in effect, the recalling and repeating of a sensory modality, of a sensory signature that was installed in our hippocampus when a violent incident occurred to us, or a terrifying incident. That we continue to play in the world, it continues to be tapped, touched, tweaked, and until we're able to re-grow the hippocampus- and this is actually the subject of a book that I'm working on now with a dear friend, David Perlmutter, who is a neuroscientist, a neurologist in Naples, Florida, probably the most brilliant practical practicing neurologist I have ever met. He has a fabulous website as well as a vitamin company called iNutritionals.com where you can get a lot of the brain foods that can help you to re-grow the brain and to awaken latent capabilities of your brain.

But when you do, when you're able to break free of the circuitry of the limbic brain,

we access the brain of Einstein, of Bach and of Mozart, of spirituality and of bliss, and of communion, of understanding that we are all one, that we're all part of the single luminous matrix that enfolds all of us and that exists within us and without us, and that we can interact and interrelate with each other in ways other than the physical, where we began to awaken abilities that, in the past have been called telepathic and psychokinetic and extraordinary psychic abilities which, for the shamans are absolutely natural abilities. In fact, when you don't have these capabilities developed, the shamans will look at you and say that you are developmentally delayed, you are spiritually developmentally delayed because you're functioning at a very low level of needing to use words and grunts and gestures to communicate exclusively, of needing to move pianos and push physical objects instead of arranging to be in such an alignment that nature takes you to where you need to be and provides you with what you need to have.

We can't really break out of the mentality of greed until we break out of this programming of our limbic brain, and then we break into the capabilities of that new brain that appeared 150,000 years ago but that did not become an operating bio-computer except for extraordinary shamans, saints, and scientists of the past. And these individuals were able to tap into innovation, into curiosity, into compassion, to live in abundance regardless of what they had. And this reminds me of a story of a monk who lived by the river and who was a fisherman, and all of the fish that he would catch he would give to his students and he would only keep a fish head for himself.

He lived in a simple little hut, and one day one of his students announced that he was going to go to the great mountain on a business trip, he's a merchant. The monk says 'will you please visit my teacher and ask him why am I so stuck spiritually?' The student says 'It will be my pleasure, it will be an honor', and he sets out on this journey. Many, many days later he gets to an inn, and he asks the innkeeper 'Do you know where master Chou lives?' And the innkeeper points to the mountain, he says yes, he lives in that palace on top of that mountain, that's master Chou's palace, and those are his orchards, and those are his horses below the orchards. The merchant is very impressed, and he begins to make his way up the mountain, and as he gets to the orchard he stops and asks one of the gardeners 'Excuse me, is this the direction to Master Chou's House?'

The gardener says 'Yes, these are his orchards, and his horses, and his cattle, and his sheep, and he lives at the top of the mountain.' When he arrives at the top of the mountain he finds a great castle and he is received by the master's wife who says 'My husband is not here yet but he will be arriving shortly. Let me offer you something to eat.' And he's offered the finest banquet that he's ever seen, and a couple of hours later the master arrives in a chariot, dressed in silk and the door opens and he greets the merchant and says 'what can I do for you?' The merchant says 'One of your students, the monk, wants me to ask you why he is so stuck spiritually.'

The master closes his eyes for a moment and looks within and he says 'ah, tell your teacher that he is stuck because he is too materialistic.' And the merchant starts laughing and says there must be a mistake, he gives everything away. Master says 'tell your teacher he is too materialistic.' The merchant leaves, a little bit befuddled, and makes his way to the monk who asks him 'what did my master say?' The merchant says 'well, I think there is a mistake, but he said that you were stuck because you were too materialistic.' And the monk says 'Ah, of course, because when I give all the fish away and keep a fish head only for myself, all I can think about is the rest of the fish.'

The moral of the story is that it's not, of course, what you have or do not have, that

creates abundance. I remember one client, one personal client of mine many years ago was one of the poorest people I have ever met, even though he was worth close to 600 million dollars. He had a hard time paying my fees, and I would say to him “look, what you have to do is figure out how to give your money away.” And he said “but I can’t, I’ve worked my whole life.” I said ‘You’re 81 years old, you’ve got to make a difference in the world.’ But he lived in total poverty.

So we cannot break out of this mentality of feeding, of scarcity, of hoarding until we break out of the programming of the limbic brain. Today we have a wonderful opportunity to do that because of the financial bubble, the housing bubble that has just burst in the stock market. And the stock market has a long history of exuberance and of many, many people chasing after a limited number of slices of a pie and driving the price of that pie up.

I was reading up on bubbles for this talk, and one of the most amazing ones that I read about was the tulip bubble that happened in Holland. As you know, Holland is a big producer of tulips and in the year 1635 they begin breeding an extraordinary new kind of tulip that had beautiful markings on each one of its petals, which begin to drive the price of tulips through the roof. In fact, in the year 1637, a single tulip bulb of this variety fetched more money than an elegant house along one of Holland’s canals. But then one morning during that trading season, I guess someone must have realized that you can actually grow tulips in your back yard, because the tulip market collapsed and thousands of people were ruined because they kept speculating, driving up the price of tulips thinking well, I’ll buy in at this exorbitant price but I can sell it tomorrow at this outrageous price, and the tulip bubble, of course, occurred.

Another one was the South Sea Company, which was a shipping company in the early 1700s, and their charter read, which is the mission statement of the corporation, that it was founded to produce outrageous profits, or very generous profits, through trading with China in goods that we cannot fully describe and through routes and practices that are proprietary to them. So no one really knew what this company did, but everyone kept bidding up the price until not only did this company, but the entire market collapsed. Even Sir Isaac Newton, brilliant scientist as he was, lost 20,000 pounds during this great, great bubble.

And today we’re facing another bubble, another stock market bubble which is actually coinciding with the end of the fifth night of the Mayan calendar, of the period of darkness and the emergence into a new period of expression and novelty which will begin around the end of the first week of November. So look around 11/11, that’s going to be a very important date.

But as I try to understand what’s happening in the marketplace today, this isn’t simply another speculative bubble like the dot com bubble that we had or the nineteen eighties housing bubble or the bank crises, this is the end of an economic system that is based on fear and greed. Because western economics has been completely redefined, because in the last few months we lost every venerable banking house from Lehman Brothers to Bear Sterns to Merrill Lynch to Washington Mutual. This is the end of a model of economics, this is the bursting of the bubble of western economics, and like those tulip farmers that discovered in the 1630’s that they could actually grow in their own garden however many beautiful tulips they wanted, I think that we are in the process of reinventing the market.

Not the stock market, but the market. The market which is a place where people come to meet and exchange ideas and exchange products and exchange values and not speculate. I know people in Miami who were buying condos in Miami two or three or four of them at a time with the idea of selling them, of flipping them and selling them even before they were built, and it went very well for them for a couple of years until they were stuck with a half a

dozen condominiums that had not been built but they had agreed to purchase and they could find no buyers for.

So steam has been let out of the market, but I think that what we're looking at, when I look at this within the context of the shamanic prophecies of the end of time, of the end of our time and the beginning of a new time is that this is the dawn of a new marketplace, ideas, of creativity, of spirituality, of values. This is the time to make those choices and those lifestyle and career choices that we've been postponing making for such a long time, that now's not the time to be meek or timid or wait until the market bounces back or wait until there's a safety net below us again.

That's still operating within the constraints of those four F's of the limbic brain. Now is the time for bold but wise action, now is the time for stillness, for contemplation. Now is the time for making those changes, those personal and professional changes that we have been talking about for so long, because it's not going to get better, it's not going to go back to the old way. I think that what we're experiencing today is more than the stock market bubble. It's really the end of the paradigm that's founded on fear, on scarcity, on violence and aggression and foreign wars or domestic wars. This is the end of that paradigm, this is the end of the reign of terror of a primitive brain that has really become unsustainable and the dawning of a new kind of thinking. But to do that we have to be able to create new neural pathways, to wire together neurons, create an entirely new luminous architecture, neurological architecture, because we cannot change our minds, literally, unless we change our brains. We do that through the ancient spiritual practices of fearlessness, of not colluding with the consensual. The consensual today is that we're at the end of the world, that this is a time of terrible loss.

For the shamans, this is a time of tremendous opportunity, in the darkest of times they are the most optimistic because they see that there is unfettered possibility and that, in seeing that, they help to manifest that because they understand that the universe will mirror back to each one of us the condition of our brains, the condition of our love, of our intent. This is what the spiritual practice is of the shaman, and really, of all of the spiritual traditions were designed to do. They were designed to awaken extraordinary capabilities that we have programmed into our brain. To break free from fight or flight so we can stop looking at the glass as half empty and see that it's actually half full, and that we're surrounded by opportunity and really to hold firm to our values and to what we know to be true and to move courageously forward.

I like to tell in our classes that when I talk about what the shaman does is that imagine people living on an island and when a hurricane comes, waves start to get big, everybody runs to high ground whereas the shaman, when the storm comes and the waves start to get big they go and get their surfboards. So this is the time to go look for our boards and to ride the big waves, but to hold steadfast to what we know to be true. To go back to prayer, go back to meditation, go back to ceremony, to our fire ceremonies, to go back to our pre-occidental roots, to our aboriginal roots so that we can tap into these faculties of the neocortex.

Particularly the faculties of the prefrontal lobes of the neocortex, which are the attributes that some neuroscientists are calling the attributes of the God Brain. The more that we understand these attributes, the more we get to play with them. I was in Yoga class the other day and there was a new teacher teaching yoga, and I really wanted to do a couple of poses that are very good for me, and I just said to her mentally, not even mentally, speaking soul to soul 'please do these three poses for me.' And the next three poses are what she did. And you can find that if you connect to the network, if you extend and open the channels that connect us to this matrix that has already downloaded the information for who we are becoming as a species

and as a people that we can download that information personally, individually, and play with dreaming our world into being during this time of tremendous opportunity and tremendous challenge in the world.

So I'd like to welcome you all to the, this is we're now in the September 23rd, we had an equinox a couple of days ago and this is the beginning of the journey down into the earth in the Northern Hemisphere, of a journey back down to our sources, those rich, moist and fertile places. In the Southern Hemisphere, for those of you who are calling from Taiwan, from South America, from South Africa and Australia, the dawning of spring, this is the bursting forth of the fire and of the life that has been stored in the fruit for all of this time.

So thank you for joining us this evening, thank you and many, many blessings to you and look for the silver lining, this is a time of unprecedented opportunity. Thank you so much.