



ABSTRACTS

Note: Included alphabetically by author's last name.

From addiction to Agape, our brain in and on love: a neuroscience perspective

Judson A. Brewer, MD PhD

Love comes in many forms. It is not excess or coincidence that there are seven Greek words for love, all touching on different facets of the word. This presentation will highlight neurobiological findings from neuroimaging studies of the experience of love, ranging from infatuation and erotic love (e.g. *eros*) to universal love (e.g. *agape*), which may help to frame and inform our understanding and even refine how we experience love itself.

The Love Project: Preliminary Outcomes of a Survey Study among Psychedelic Users

Adele Lafrance, Ph.D., C. Psych.

This talk will introduce the rationale for a formal scientific inquiry on the topic of love – evolving from the concept of unconditional positive regard. Preliminary outcomes from The Love Project survey study among over 500 psychedelic users will be presented. Data will be shared relating to the features of profound experiences of love and their positive persisting effects, including the ways in which these psychedelic experiences of love can inform the advancement of the delivery of health and mental health interventions in dominant culture.

Leveraging Psychedelic Social Psychology to Study Love

Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D.

It's critical to study connectedness and love in the lab, but is it even possible for relationship scientists to experimentally induce a deep feeling of bonding, love, and warmth? I propose leveraging the psychoactive substance MDMA (Ecstasy/Molly), in light of its documented ability in experiments and clinical trials to promote intense social connection. I will discuss how MDMA can allow investigators to isolate the psychological mechanisms—as well as brain pathways—underlying felt social connection and thus reveal how to effectively and durably boost connectedness and well-being in future (non-drug) studies. Accordingly, I will introduce a conceptual model that presents the proximal psychological mechanisms stimulated by MDMA (lowered fear, increased sociability, more chemistry), as well as its potential long-term impacts (reduced loneliness, improved relationships, stronger therapeutic alliances). Finally, I will present new experimental data showing how MDMA and a comparison stimulant drug increase closeness and bonding during a semi-structured dyadic conversation.

Love & Kinship

Austin Serio

The contemporary world has left many feeling isolated and disconnected, leading to a broader search for meaning and connection. During this time together, we'll explore at a high level some of the root causes of the contemporary epidemic of loneliness and medicine of kinship as tools to heal and build a more loving world.

Union of Plant Medicine and Buddhist Wisdom

Spring Washam

In this captivating spiritual discourse, Spring Washam, a revered teacher and guide in both plant medicine and Buddhist practices, invites listeners on a transformative journey centered on the heart. Drawing from two decades of profound experience, she seamlessly weaves together the profound wisdom of plant medicine with the timeless teachings of Buddhism.

With an unwavering focus on the heart, Spring illuminates the profound significance of skillful plant medicine usage in expediting the awakening process. Through engaging narratives drawn from her adventures spanning the serene Himalayan Mountain monasteries to the lush jungles of Peru, she paints a vivid picture of the potency of these sacred medicines.

Central to her message is the exploration of true empathy and the intricate interconnectedness that threads through the fabric of existence. Spring eloquently articulates the notion of a unified web of life, urging her audience to recognize their place within this intricate tapestry.

With warmth, depth, and authenticity, Spring Washam's talk resonates with seekers of spiritual growth and enlightenment, offering invaluable insights into the profound union of plant medicine and Buddhist wisdom. It is a stirring call to embrace the boundless possibilities of the heart and embark on a journey towards profound awakening and interconnectedness with all beings.

Bodies are Love Processes

Andreas Weber, Ph.D.

To be a body – like we all are – means to have a direct, unmediated experience of reality. We know reality through felt understanding. We understand that being a body means to be of this material world, and it means to know that this material world is an existential-emotional experience, a yearning for existence, a desire for being. As desiring matter we grasp that reality is desiring matter. Reality desires life to be. It is giving life. It gives life through its material unfolding. Reality therefore can be understood as realizing love. Love is reality's active desire that life be. Like our own, each organism's body is the experience of these workings of love, and at the same time directly points out the way how they work. A body's activity is to give life to itself from the stream of world matter through itself. By transforming world matter into itself and passing on its own substance – by being edible – it gives life to other beings, too. Each organism's subjective experience is the perspective which the material continuum of reality has on itself in terms of its desire to give life.