

Consciousness of Connection: Awakening From Despair to Awe

International Forum on Consciousness
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PRESENTER BIOSKETCHES



[Heather Berlin, DPhil, MPH](#)

Dr. Heather Berlin is a neuroscientist, clinical psychologist, and Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in NY. She explores the neural basis of impulsive and compulsive psychiatric and neurological disorders with the aim of developing novel treatments. She is also interested in the brain basis of consciousness, dynamic unconscious processes, and creativity.

Passionate about science communication, destigmatizing mental illness, and promoting women in STEM, Berlin is a committee member of the National Academy of Sciences' Science and Entertainment Exchange and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)'s Committee on Science and Technology Engagement with the Public. She co-hosts StarTalk All-Stars with Neil DeGrasse Tyson, and hosted series on PBS and the Discovery Channel. Dr. Berlin received her doctorate from the University of Oxford, Master of Public Health from Harvard University, and trained in clinical neuropsychology at Weill Cornell Medicine in the Department of Neurological Surgery.



Baba Brinkman

Baba Brinkman is a rap artist, science communicator, and award-winning playwright based in New York, NY.

Best known for his “Rap Guide” series of science-themed plays and albums, Baba has toured the world and enjoyed successful runs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and off-Broadway. The series so far includes rap guides to Evolution, Human Nature, Medicine, Religion, Climate Change, and Consciousness.

Called “Astonishing and brilliant” by the New York Times, Baba is a Scotsman Fringe First Award winner for Exceptional New Writing, and a two-time Drama Desk Award Nominee, for “Outstanding Solo Performance” and “Unique Theatrical Experience”. He has performed live on MSNBC’s “The Rachel Maddow Show” and shared stages with science luminaries including Stephen Hawking and Neil deGrasse Tyson. Baba is also a winner of the National Center for Science Education’s “Friend of Darwin Award” for his efforts to popularize evolutionary biology.

In addition to his science rap, Baba is a pioneer in the genre of “lit-hop” or literary hip-hop, with rap adaptations of Beowulf, Gilgamesh, and Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. During the pandemic, Baba pivoted to virtual performances and started a new company, Event Rap Inc, the first rap creator marketplace with custom videos and performances delivered by more than a dozen artists who make original raps on commission.



[Sam Gandy, Ph.D.](#)

Sam is a lifelong nature lover and has been fortunate enough to conduct ecological field research in various parts of the world. He is a PhD ecologist, writer, and speaker and has experience working within the psychedelic field, as a past scientific assistant to the director of the Beckley Foundation, and working as an ecopsychology coordinator with the Synthesis Institute helping establish a nature-based programme for people undergoing psilocybin therapy for depression.

Sam currently works as a research assistant for Synthesis, contributing to their practitioner trainer programme, and is a senior science writer for Wavepaths. He is also a collaborator with the Centre for Psychedelic Research at Imperial College London, with a research interest in the capacity of psychedelics to influence our connection to nature.



[Michael J. Gelb](#)

Michael J. Gelb is a pioneering practitioner and thought leader in the fields of creative thinking, executive coaching and conscious leadership. He is the author of 17 books including *How to Think Like Leonardo Da Vinci*, *The Art of Connection* and *Mastering the Art of Public Speaking*. Michael's books have been translated into 25 languages and have sold more than one million copies.

In 2003 Michael received a Batten Fellowship in Innovation from The University of Virginia and co-directed the acclaimed Leading Innovation Seminar at the Darden Graduate School of Business for more than 10 years. In 2020 he was invited to become a Senior Fellow of the Center for Humanistic Management at Fordham's Gabelli School of Business. Michael is also a master teacher of the Alexander Technique, aikido and qigong and a professional juggler who performed with the Rolling Stones. Healingleader.com/ Michaelgelb.com



Bill Linton

Bill Linton founded Promega in 1978 and has served continuously as Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer. A global life science research company, Promega has grown employing 1,850 people worldwide. Today, Promega serves customers in over 100 countries, with direct sales and manufacturing branches in 16 countries. Initially supporting university researchers, Promega now serves scientists in basic research, drug discovery, forensics and clinical diagnostics. The company continues to be privately held with revenues over \$775 million.

Collaboration and partnering continue to be cornerstones of the Promega model. As one example in the early 1980s, Promega established through joint venture the first biotechnology company in the People's Republic of China. Promega continues to promote and support partnering worldwide in order to best serve customers and to facilitate scientific discovery and creativity.

That same philosophy extends to community support, both local and global. In 1991 Promega established Woods Hollow Children's Center (WHCC), providing infant through school-age childcare for the local community as well as Promega employees. In 1993 the BioPharmaceutical Technology Center Institute (BTC Institute), a non-profit educational, scientific and cultural institute, was established. Promega has long been a financial supporter of various arts and education pursuits as well. As an employer, Promega is recognized for creating an "employee as individual" workplace, acknowledging and supporting work-life balance and nurturing personal and professional creativity and innovation.

Bill has served as director or advisor for numerous industry, government and community organizations. He currently serves as Director for the following entities: Analytical, Life Science and Diagnostics Association (ALDA); BioPharmaceutical Technology Center Institute; Bruker Biosciences; Eppendorf GmbH; Heffter Research Institute and Usona Institute.

Bill received a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from the University of California, Berkeley in 1970 and conducted post-graduate work in Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He holds an honorary doctorate degree from Hannam University, Daejeon, South Korea and in 2015 received an honorary doctorate of science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Steve Paulson

Steve Paulson is the Executive Producer of Wisconsin Public Radio's Peabody Award-winning program *To the Best of Our Knowledge*. His radio reports have also been broadcast on NPR's *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*. He has moderated an annual series of public events at the New York Academy of Sciences, including *The Emerging Science of Consciousness*, *Beyond the Big Bang* and *The Power of Wonder*.

Steve has written for *Salon*, *Slate*, *The Atlantic*, *Nautilus*, *Huffington Post* and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. His book, *Atoms and Eden: Conversations on Religion and Science*, was published by Oxford University Press.



[Rachelle C. Sampson, Ph.D.](#)

Rachelle Sampson is a social scientist, educator, coach and consultant with training in the neuroscience of change, transformational coaching, law and business economics. Rachelle's research, coaching and teaching focuses on harnessing capital markets to encourage significant environmental and social change. She supports individuals, leaders and organizations on this path, whether through coaching, education or advisory services.

Rachelle teaches and conducts research in business economics, environmental sustainability, ESG integration (environment, social and governance) and strategy as a professor at the University of Maryland and Senior Policy Scholar at Georgetown University's Center for Business and Public Policy. She is the founder of [Blue Prism](#), a coaching practice focused on aligning action with values and purpose, for individuals and organizations. Rachelle holds a PhD in business economics from the Ross School at the University of Michigan, a law degree from Queensland University of Technology, Australia, and certification as a professional coach by the International Coaching Federation.

Rachelle's recent research exposes rising short-termism in US firms and capital markets, outlining implications for firm productivity and growth, the changing nature of R&D within firms, as well as environmental impact. She has a particular interest in the impact of sustainability practices and ESG performance on employee engagement and productivity, as well as how this translates into long-term financial performance. Her research has been published in several academic outlets, including *Management Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Journal* and *Case Western Law Review*, and has received press coverage, including Bloomberg and Vox.

Rachelle speaks regularly at both practitioner and academic events, linking strategy and finance with environmental and social change. She sits on corporate advisory boards supporting firms seeking to integrate ESG into firm strategy and create social change. Prior to her academic and coaching career, Rachelle practiced as a consultant for Ernst & Young and as an attorney in Australia. For more information on Rachelle's formal background, her research publications and teaching, see her [academic page](#) at U. Maryland.



[Daniel Siegel, M.D.](#)

Dr. Daniel J. Siegel is a clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine and the founding co-director of the Mindful Awareness Research Center at UCLA. He is also the Executive Director of the Mindsight Institute which focuses on the development of mindfulness, teaches insight, empathy, and integration in individuals, families and communities.

Dr. Siegel has published extensively for both the professional and lay audiences. His five *New York Times* bestsellers are: *Aware: The Science and Practice of Presence*, *Mind: A Journey to the Heart of Being Human*, *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain*, and two books with Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D: *The Whole-Brain Child*, and *No-Drama Discipline*. His other books include: *The Developing Mind*, *The Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology*, *Mindsight*, *The Mindful Brain*, and *The Mindful Therapist*. He has also written *The Yes Brain* and *The Power of Showing Up* with Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D. Dr. Siegel also serves as the Founding Editor for the Norton Professional Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology which currently contains over seventy textbooks.

For more information about his educational programs and resources, please visit: www.DrDanSiegel.com and www.mindsightinstitute.com



Rosalind Watts, Ph.D.

As Clinical Lead of the Psilocybin for Depression Study at Imperial College London, Dr Rosalind Watts led the clinical team which facilitated over a hundred psilocybin treatment sessions in just over a year. She has published qualitative research into the psychological mechanisms of psilocybin treatment, a model of psychedelic therapy- 'Accept, Connect, Embody (ACE)' -and designed a psychometric tool for measuring connectedness.

After recognizing that psilocybin treatment benefits usually subside after a few months without further therapy, she joined the Synthesis Institute as Clinical Director in order to set up a yearlong program for small groups of people with depression to access legal psilocybin truffle sessions in the Netherlands, supplemented with other tools for nurturing connectedness to self, others, and the natural world. Ros is committed to building structures to safeguard the ethical expansion of psychedelic therapy, and consults for Usona.



Andreas Weber, Ph.D.

Dr. Andreas Weber is a biologist, philosopher and writer. His work focuses on a re-evaluation of our understanding of the living. He proposes to view – and treat – all organisms as subjects and hence the biosphere as a meaning-creating and poetic reality.

Andreas teaches at Berlin University of the Arts and is Adjunct Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology in Guwahati. He contributes to major German newspapers and magazines and has published more than a dozen books, most recently *Enlivenment. A Poetics for the Anthropocene*, MIT Press, 2019 and *Sharing Life. The Ecopolitics of Reciprocity*, Boell Foundation, 2020.