

Evolutionize Your Life

1: YOUR LARGER STORY: Big History and the Power of an Evolutionary Worldview

2: PHYSICAL INSTINCTS: Our reptilian brain's hunger for safety, sustenance, and sex

3: SOCIAL INSTINCTS: Our old mammalian brain's longing for bonding, status, and play

4: INTERPRETIVE INSTINCTS: Our neocortex's drive for meaning, morality, and making sense

5: CO-CREATIVE INSTINCTS: Our prefrontal cortex's zeal for wholeness, transcendence, and contribution

1: YOUR LARGER STORY: Big History and the Power of an Evolutionary Worldview

INTENT-1

Learning, appreciating, and celebrating our science-based (and meaningfully interpreted) 13.7 billion year story of Cosmos, Earth, Life, and Humanity.

OUTCOMES-1

Dedicated, open-hearted involvement with Session 1 will help you develop...

- ASSENT: "Yes! I accept and trust the Universe and its emergent creativity."
 - YOUR LARGER STORY: "Big History is my larger story."
 - YOUR LARGER SELF: "I am an expression of Earth and Cosmos."
 - DYNAMICS WITHIN: "The dynamics of the Universe are also within me."
 - SOCIETAL BENEFIT: "I value evidence and our human gift of collective learning."
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2: PHYSICAL INSTINCTS: Our reptilian brain's hunger for safety, sustenance, and sex

INTENT-2

Learning about our evolved **Quadrune Brain**, with a focus this session on appreciating and managing the oldest ancestral part: the **Reptilian Brain**. Facing head-on the challenges of mismatched physical instincts in a modern world of supernormal stimuli.

OUTCOMES-2

Dedicated, open-hearted involvement with Session 2 will help you develop...

- **ASSENT:** "I accept that I and others have deep ancestral instincts that are mismatched with the demands and temptations of the modern world."
 - **APPRECIATION:** "I am grateful for my physical instincts. I wouldn't be alive today if my ancestors did not have these very same drives for sex, safety, and sustenance."
 - **HONOR:** "I choose to regulate my exposure to supernormal stimuli in ways that honor my physical instincts and, where necessary, to put in place systems of support."
 - **WITNESS:** "I notice when an ancestral urge is tempting me to slip in my commitments and responsibilities to myself and others. I do not make the urge wrong, yet I know I am responsible for my actions."
 - **COMPASSION within SAFE BOUNDARIES:** "I have compassion for myself and others, while maintaining safe boundaries."
 - **JOY:** "My choice to manage my physical urges and the supernormal stimuli in my environment will not diminish the joy I experience in the sensory blessings of life."
 - **SOCIETAL BENEFIT:** "I am keenly aware of the societal costs of mismatched instincts in our modern world of supernormal stimuli, and I will act in accordance with this understanding."
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3: SOCIAL INSTINCTS: Our old mammalian brain's longing for bonding, status, and play

INTENT-3

Learning about and appreciating the **Old Mammalian Brain** and its deep, emotionally charged social instincts. Growing an evolutionary perspective for better understanding and managing our personal and societal challenges in relating to one another.

OUTCOMES-3

Dedicated, open-hearted involvement with Session 3 will help you develop...

- **ASSENT:** "I accept that I and others have deep ancestral instincts to bond — and to bond in different ways — with kin, friends, romantic partners, mates, and our offspring. I accept that the joys of love can only be experienced in tandem with the hurts caused by human imperfections, and the mismatch between the instincts we inherit and the cultural conditions into which we are born."
- **APPRECIATION:** "I am grateful for my social instincts. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to love."
- **HONOR:** "I honor social instincts in myself and others by distinguishing the various forms of "love" — notably, the Reptilian urge for copulation from the Mammalian instincts for nurturing and for bonded attachment. I honor the gift of love by accepting the risk of suffering and loss."
- **WITNESS:** "I am increasingly able to notice and distinguish the urges within me for lust, romantic attraction, and bonded attachment. I do not make those urges wrong, yet I know I am responsible for my actions."
- **COMPASSION within SAFE BOUNDARIES:** "I have compassion for myself and others, and I know the importance of safe boundaries."
- **JOY:** "I joyfully exercise my mammalian instinct to play and my human instinct to maintain playfulness as an important part of my adult life."
- **SOCIETAL BENEFIT -** "I look for opportunities to apply my evolutionary perspective in ways that can spark and expand compassion and healthy forms of forgiveness in myself and in others who seek my listening or my counsel."

4: INTERPRETIVE INSTINCTS: Our neocortex's drive for meaning, morality, and making sense

INTENT-4

Learning about and appreciating the **New Mammalian Brain** (neocortex) and its urge to comprehend, predict, and interpret. Recognizing that our meaning-making instincts may be pushed by our deeper drives into deception and self-deception, but that our rational skills can also be harnessed for accurately assessing and honoring reality.

OUTCOMES-4

Dedicated, open-hearted involvement with Session 34 will help you develop...

- **ASSENT:** "I accept that the New Mammalian, rational part of my brain evolved in my primate ancestors to help the Old Mammalian and the Reptilian brains to fulfill their urges in a complicated and changing world. I recognize that I and others may unknowingly slip into *rationalizing* a choice or action that is driven by powerful hidden urges."
- **APPRECIATION:** "I am grateful for my interpretive instincts. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to recall almost any event in my life and re-interpret it in ways that empower and serve."
- **HONOR:** "I honor my interpretive instincts by remaining open to new evidence and by truly listening to others. I am humbled by the possibility that self-deception may infringe on my better judgment."
- **WITNESS:** "I am alert for signals that an interpretation or judgment I make may be in error or self-deceived. I notice when I keep reciting inwardly or outwardly the same complaint or make less than generous interpretations of myself and others. I do not make those tendencies wrong, yet I know I am responsible for how I interpret."
- **COMPASSION within SAFE BOUNDARIES:** "I have compassion for myself and others, and I know the importance of safe boundaries."
- **JOY:** "I joyfully exercise my primate instinct to figure things out and my human instinct to weave stories and meaning from the facts that my senses perceive. I can enjoy my reasoning abilities in my work and in the puzzles and games that I pursue in my leisure, without having my life consumed by these activities."
- **SOCIETAL BENEFIT -** "In my societal interactions, I am aware of the tendency to collapse fact, story, and meaning and to rationalize a judgment already made, rather than using reason to assist in making a judgment. I look for opportunities to gently point out these distinctions in situations in which my voice can make a difference."

5: CO-CREATIVE INSTINCTS: Our prefrontal cortex's zeal for wholeness, transcendence, and contribution

INTENT-5

Learning and appreciating the vital function of our distinctively human **prefrontal cortex** in establishing priorities and putting the brakes on harmful tendencies of the deeper ancestral drives. Appreciating the inevitability of death as empowering us to live *now* and in a way that will leave a sweet legacy.

OUTCOMES-5

Dedicated, open-hearted involvement with Session 2 will help you develop...

- **ASSENT:** "I accept that there are competing urges and drives within me and that setting and living by priorities is vital—even if doing so is sometimes neither clear nor easy. I accept that death is a natural and generative part of the cosmos."
- **APPRECIATION:** "I am grateful for my ability to reflect and choose carefully — and also for the nature, nurture, and life experience that helps me choose more wisely and compassionately as I age. I am also grateful for the impetus and poignancy that death-awareness offers me in living and loving fully."
- **HONOR:** "I honor my larger self, my ancestors, future generations, and my legacy every time I choose to live wisely and fully—ever mindful of the possibility that this year, this day may be my last."
- **WITNESS:** "I periodically remind myself of how brief a single life is; I bring to mind those loved ones who have already died; and I remind myself that the good and bad consequences of my own actions and ways of being will continue to ripple onward and outward long after my own life is over."
- **COMPASSION within SAFE BOUNDARIES:** "TO BE ADDED."
- **JOY:** "TO BE ADDED."
- **SOCIETAL BENEFIT -** "I look for opportunities to expand my circles of care and commitment so that my experience of in-group continues to grow."