

# CONTEMPLATIVE HIGHER EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA

Mirabai Bush, Senior Fellow, Center for Contemplative Mind in Society

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

*The fruit of education, whether in the university or in the monastery [is] the activation of that innermost center, that apex or spark which is a freedom beyond freedom, an identity beyond essence, a self beyond ego, a being beyond the created realm, and a consciousness that transcends all division, all separation.*

-Thomas Merton, *Learning to Live*

Imagine an architecture professor saying this: “I ask my students to sit in silence and then draw a simple map of their childhood, a map of the built environment where they grew up, with their house or apartment, school, playground, city block, friend’s house, corner store, grandmother’s house, whatever they remember that mattered to them, and they see how the structures of a community fit together and create meaning.” Bradford Grant, Contemplative Practice Fellow in Architecture at Hampton University (now Professor and Director, School of Architecture and Design at Howard), shared this practice with us at the conference on “Uncovering the Heart of Higher Education.” In his course, “Urban and Community Design and Contemplative Environmental Design Practice,” he uses contemplative practices to help students get to a deeper and more connected understanding of what it means to build, to create, to live a meaningful life inside a structure.

Fellow David Haskell, Associate Professor of Biology at the University of the South, teaches a course called “Food and Hunger: Contemplation and Action.” As part of this course, students not only learn the biology of hunger but also work with local hunger-relief organizations and learn the contemplative practices that motivate and sustain many of those who work with the hungry. With increased awareness of their own minds and emotions, David reports, students are better able to process the disturbing subject matter. Without some self-knowledge of one’s center, it is very hard to receive the bad news about hunger and even harder to discern what one’s own response might be.

When University of Connecticut poet and professor Marilyn Nelson was offered a Contemplative Practice Fellowship and an invitation to teach at West Point during the same semester, she combined the two invitations and taught poetry and meditation to cadets who were later deployed to Iraq. They emailed back to her about how meditation and poetry were helping them through difficult times. One said that both he and his wife (both are Black Hawk helicopter pilots) had continued to meditate during their deployments. He said that, although military culture is in some ways the antithesis of the contemplative life, they had both found it an invaluable tool to use in a crisis, especially as officers who must show composure before their soldiers, as, for instance, when one of their soldiers was killed or wounded. He said he camouflaged his meditating by sitting on his cot wearing headphones: Everyone thought he was listening to music, which is cool. But his headphones were silent. He was being in the moment, thinking “here, now, here, now.”

Brad, David, and Marilyn are just three of the 158 Contemplative Practice Fellows, a program of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society funded by The Fetzer Institute. At 101 colleges and universities in virtually every discipline, they have been teaching courses that incorporate a range of practices, including mindfulness, lectio divina, yoga, tai chi, and others that emerge from the disciplines. Together they are designing pedagogical methods and building a body of knowledge that is formulating a new way of teaching—and of learning and knowing—that complements critical thinking and the scientific method. They are demonstrating how contemplative development opens the mind to new possibilities, cultivates wisdom through deepening one's relationship to the world, and encourages compassion and empathy through an understanding of the interconnection of all life. And, at the same time, scientific research is confirming that contemplation/mindfulness develops such cross-disciplinary cognitive capacities as decision making, attention, intuitive understanding, and memory as well as emotional capacities such as self-awareness, self-management, and empathy.

Contemplative practices, a vital part of all major religious and spiritual traditions, have long had a place in intellectual inquiry. The predecessors of our colleges and universities in the West, of course, were established as *alternatives* to monastic schools, where contemplative practices had been central to learning. These new institutions were committed to the pursuit of rational knowledge and later to the scientific method. But, as Brian Stock (Professor, Centre for Comparative Literature, University of Toronto) explained in an address to the Symposium on Contemplative Education at Amherst College in 2003, there are important examples in Western intellectual history of the use of contemplative practices, which he defines as based on “a spirituality that does not depend for its validity on pre-existing metaphysical assumptions or associations, that is, a secular spirituality.” He names Montaigne, whose writing practice was a form of contemplative reflection, and whose interest in the nature of attention and the nature of the self is shared by contemporary contemplatives. Seneca gave such Zen-sounding advice as “To be everywhere is to be nowhere.” Augustine and Seneca both used a literary device, the soliloquy, as a form of self-inquiry through oral dialog. And Augustine was the first to use autobiography as contemplative practice; the *Confessions* is an inquiry into his life and the nature of all life.

These courses have been introduced at an interesting time in academic history. They both complement and challenge the postmodern campus culture. Contemplative practice focuses on moment-to-moment nonjudgmental awareness, the rising and passing away of momentary phenomena, which in some way confirms the idea of the fragmentary nature of reality that postmodernists posit when they claim that there is no metanarrative, no unifying story. No defining story, true contemplatives would agree, but unified nevertheless, in that all phenomena are interconnected, share an “interbeing,” are part of a, some would say, divine wholeness.

The question of contemplative epistemology is only beginning to be explored, but the contemplative approach is one of inquiry into the nature of things, a scientific suspension of disbelief (and belief) in an attempt to “know” reality through direct observation by being fully present in the moment. Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, educated in both Lhasa and at Oxford, said wisdom is “immediate and nonconceptual insight which provides the basic inspiration for intellectual study.” Having seen clearly one's own mind, one has a natural desire to see how others experience reality.

The challenge to the other great foundation of all contemporary institutions, modernity (from the Enlightenment onward), is probably greater. Buddhist contemplatives would say there is no stable self, certainly not one that is dependent on thinking (as in Descartes), and no contemplative from any tradition would agree that it is reason alone that leads to ultimate truth. Although the contemplative investigation is in some sense scientific, and although some scientists (notably Amherst physicist Arthur Zajonc) say that a nonrational leap happens in the moment of scientific insight, contemplatives look to an intuitive, nonconceptual, direct, experiential “knowing” as the path to wisdom. The practical legacy of the modernist tradition has also been a compartmentalized, fragmented way of learning and teaching, a dualistic alienation of body from mind, emotion from intellect, humans from nature, and art from science, whereas the basis of contemplative understanding is wholeness, unity, integration.

So what is the role of contemplative practice in the classroom? Just as introducing computers into students’ lives didn’t just affect the amount of research they could do or the length of their papers but also the way that they think (PowerPoint! Wikipedia!), the way they relate to other students and their teachers, their health, and so on, contemplative practices have had an extraordinary range of effects on the teachers, the students, the classroom, and on learning, teaching, research, and personal relationships. These include increased concentration, greater capacity for synthetic thinking, conceptual flexibility, and an appreciation for a different type of intellectual process, distinct from the linear, analytical and product oriented processes so often valued in contemporary education. For example, Robin Hunt at the University of Washington worked with contemplative practice to develop balance in a theatre piece: “I conceived of a play in which actors have to deal with all the literal meanings of balance while playing scenes dealing with the figurative meanings of the word.... Using the practice of *slow tempo*, the physical requirements of balancing demand that one find a calm and clear mental state in the moment.”

The definitions of **contemplative learning and teaching** are in process. Ellen Langer, part of the Williams James legacy at the Psychology Department at Harvard (described below), addressed “the power of mindful **learning**” in 1997. She described it as having three characteristics: the continuous creation of new categories, openness to new information, and an implicit awareness of more than one perspective. She states that the essence of mindfulness is flexible thinking. Dan Siegel, in *The Mindful Brain*, identifies the essential dimensions of mindful learning as openness to novelty, alertness to distinction, context sensitivity, multiple perspectives, and present orientation. He calls reflection the fourth “R” of education, the skill that embeds self-knowing and empathy in the curriculum. Fellow Mary Rose O’Reilly, in *Radical Presence: Teaching as a Contemplative Practice*, says that it has to do with being awake, being there, being present, listening, creating a space for learning and for developing an inner life by your very attention to the moment. Tobin Hart says that the contemplative teacher doesn’t add to the curriculum but invites students to the *inside* of the subject matter. And Arthur Zajonc says that in teaching college physics, he looks for experiments and experiences over which he can linger with his students so they and he can live more fully into them. He uses quantum paradoxes as koans to challenge their thinking.

Education systems reflect society’s values; therefore, most of current American education pays little attention to the potential contributions of contemplative values and perspective, including compassion and loving kindness. But society is changing, and education can either support the

status quo or prepare students for the emerging new directions. By encouraging contemplative ways of knowing in higher education in diverse disciplines, we can encourage a new form of inquiry and imaginative thinking to complement critical thinking, and we will educate active citizens who will support a more just and compassionate direction for society. At a Center conference at Columbia, Jon Kabat Zinn, founder of the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, urged us to *come to our senses*, to break through to the knowing that is based on direct experience, to see with eyes of wholeness, to practice awareness of the mind as if our lives depended on it—because, he said, “in virtually every way that has any meaning, literal or metaphorical, they surely do.”

Contemplative education is becoming a field. At this meeting, Susan Burggraf will report on Naropa University, an early leader and an important center for this work. I’ll report in this paper on some developments in the rest of the field, which I hope will suggest the extraordinary work emerging across the country.

## **PART 2: HISTORY AND GROWTH**

I’d like to begin with a Cliff Notes history of American contemplative education:

**1890 William James** publishes *Principles of Psychology*, in which he describes four methods, including introspection, or his study of his own state of mind and concludes with this quote which is included in every Power Point and website on contemplative education: “The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.... An education which should improve this faculty would be *the education par excellence*. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about.”

**1970’s William James Hall, Harvard:** After Tim Leary and Richard Alpert leave the department that was inspired by William James and is housed in William James Hall, interest in expanded consciousness continues, encouraged in part by David McClelland, former Chair of the Social Relations Department whose students then --Dan Goleman (Emotional Intelligence), Richie Davidson (U Wisconsin, Laboratory for Functional Brain Imaging and Behavior and the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience), Cliff Saran (Shamatha Project, UC Davis), and Mark Epstein (Thoughts without a Thinker)—later become important research and thought leaders of the new contemplative movement in this country. Outside the classroom, David and his artist wife Mary, both Quakers with an interest in Thomas Merton and Eastern religions, host an ongoing conversation in their home about meditative practices and consciousness. A lifelong teacher, David wants to know, How can contemplative practices affect knowing and learning as well as healing, social relationships, and motivation? Among the diverse voices that join David’s students and other of us who lived in the McClelland’s big Cambridge house were Mexican poet Octavio Paz, *Secular City* author Harvey Cox, Insight Meditation teachers Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, and Sharon Salzberg, Zen master Seung Sahn, Tibetan teacher Kalu Rinpoche, and, eventually, Allen Ginsberg and Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Richard Alpert, now Ram Dass, is also part of David’s circle.

**1974: Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche founds the Naropa Institute**, based on Buddhist principles of contemplative education, with a summer session in Boulder. He hopes to create an institution, where learning is “infused with the experience of awareness, insight and compassion for oneself and others, honed through the practice of sitting meditation and other contemplative disciplines.” Not well known in the US at that time, Trungpa asks Ram Dass, who has a huge following after publishing *Be Here Now* in 1971, to teach at Naropa in order to attract students. The organizers expect between three hundred and five hundred people to show up to take courses at the Institute. Instead, more than 1,300 students flock to Boulder.

“Almost overnight, Boulder has become a magnet of learning and excitement and promise... The student body is made up of an astonishing assortment of college students, dropouts, scholars, scientists, artists, therapists, dancers, heads of departments, musicians, housewives, and on and on. The whole first week seems to be filled with a sort of joyous incredulity that Naropa is really happening.”—September, 1974, *East-West Journal*

**Fast Forward to 1995: Charles Halpern**, president of **Nathan Cummings Foundation**, and **Rob Lehman**, president of **The Fetzer Institute**, initiate the **Working Group on Contemplative Mind in Society** and invite scholars to explore contemplative education in white papers:

**Robert Thurman, Columbia:** “Contemplation fits in the traditional inner science curriculum at the highest level of the cultivation of wisdom: first learning wisdom, then reflective wisdom, then contemplative wisdom. Therefore, it is virtually indispensable if wisdom is to become fully transformative. The question then for academic, especially liberal arts, institutions, is not a question of adding a desirable frill to their vast smorgasbord of offerings. It is a matter of their effectively fulfilling their duty to provide a liberal, i.e., a liberating and empowering, education.

He suggests:

1. “Encouraging the establishment of contemplative centers on campuses such as that proposed but not yet implemented at Middlebury by Steven Rockefeller. Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions was set up by its donors with such a purpose in mind, though, significantly, its meditation room was eventually turned into a library. Colgate's Chapel House was set up by the same donors, and has provided some contemplative relief in its undergraduate center over the years. At Columbia we would have the opportunity to set up such a center at Earl Hall in the University's pluralistic religious group meeting spaces I have had the opportunity for some time, but I simply have not had the time or resources to accomplish it successfully. I'm sure every liberal arts college and university has the seeds of the kind of center and process we would like to see available for the students and faculty already there within it.
2. Encouraging departments to introduce contemplative experience and expertise in whatever tradition as a recognized and rewarded accomplishment in the professor and the student.
3. Encouraging individual scholars in the natural and social sciences to expand their researches into physiological effects of various meditative disciplines, into institutions affected by the centrality of meditative experiences, and so forth.

4. Encouraging scholars in religious studies to research, translate, and publish more of the contemplative literature, technical as well as evocative, born of the contemplative disciplines, from all traditions, but especially the Indian traditions.
5. Encouraging media productions that inform about and instruct in the practice of contemplation, thereby reaching a wide audience, de-mystifying contemplation, and creating greater public acceptance of contemplation in the educational arena.

**Brian Stock, University of Toronto:** “We have to teach students what contemplative activity is all about. Among other things, they have to be instructed in reading meditative literature, not as they would read modern poems, plays, or novels, but as contemplatives read them, using texts as a means to an end and not considering them, as is the fashion in contemporary literary practice, as ends in themselves. They would also have to explore types of meditation that are unlike the Judeo-Christian tradition in not requiring the presence of texts, images, or other sensory supports. Beyond that, teachers of the humanities would have to use the renewed interest in the contemplative life to begin an exploration of what we mean by ‘the modern identity,’ that is, as a means of tracing the various strands of what it means to be a human agent, a person, or a self. This implies broadening the discussion of ethics beyond the traditionally narrow confines of academic speculation and taking up a number of cultural connections: religious history, gender orientation, ecological considerations, etc.”

**Steven Rockefeller, Middlebury:** “Meditation can improve the quality of life of those who choose to practice it under the guidance of competent teachers. When pursued seriously as a discipline, it can add a unique depth to democratic and ecological living. It can help people become free and fully human. By itself meditation does not impel human beings to social action, and it needs to be counterbalanced by a concern with social reconstruction and personal relationship. However, in a democratic ecological society that affirms life in the world and values social action and community, the practice of meditation can help to shape the direction of social action, contributing to an integration of the ethical and the political, the spiritual and the practical. The undergraduate college is one place where these issues should be thoughtfully explored.

“That undergraduate education should emphasize the experimental method of knowledge and the arts of critical reflection is not to be questioned. A question can be raised about whether the education of the undergraduate college in America today fails to put science and discursive reason in proper perspective and whether it tends to encourage a character orientation that is too head-centered as distinct from heart-centered, more interested in information than appreciation, more concerned about the knowledge which is power than wisdom and ethical values, more oriented toward I-it than I-thou, more skilled at striving for future ends than living a fulfilling life in the present. It is a question of balance.”

He recommends the following:

- The truth about meditation should be carefully researched and studied
- New research is needed on the effects of meditation on human growth and mental illness
- Students can also be introduced to meditation by health care and counseling professionals on campus and through a extracurricular college program

- An academic department or a chaplain's office could establish a program of visiting speakers and teachers in the field of meditation.
- Administration policy could allow staff time for meditation during the work day and creation of a space where people are working

**1997: The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society** is incorporated and partners with the **American Council of Learned Societies** to offer fellowships to academics who are interested in developing courses with a contemplative component. Advisors to the project include Carolyn Brown from the Library of Congress, Bob Thurman, Sharon Daloz Parks (Kennedy School of Government at Harvard), Francisco Varela (who introduced into neuroscience the concept of "first person science," in which observers examine their own conscious experience using scientifically verifiable methods, later key to the research on meditation) and members of the original Cambridge group: Dan Goleman, Deborah Salter-Klimburg (Director of the Institute for Tibetan Art History at U of Vienna), Joseph Goldstein, and David McClelland. Although the Selection Committee is unsure that they will receive any proposals at all, 136 are submitted. The committee finds many of them extraordinary, creative, and rigorous, and they award the first 16 **Contemplative Practice Fellowships** to "create curriculum in diverse disciplines that encompass and encourage the study of contemplation." **By 2010, there are 145 Fellows in more than 100 colleges and universities.**

**1999: Mindfulness and Education Conference**, the first of its kind, at University of Massachusetts under the direction of Chancellor David Scott. Joseph Goldstein and Mirabai Bush are keynoters. It is followed by a larger conference in 2000: **Going Public with Spirituality in Work and Higher Education**. Peter Senge declares that, in higher education, "Contemplative practice is a survival skill for the 21st Century."

**2000: Humane Creativity and the Contemplative Mind** project at Harvard (Howard Gardner), Stanford (Bill Damon) and Claremont (Mike Csikszentmihaly) does research on creativity and contemplative practice.

**2000 University of Michigan offers the first contemplative BA: Bachelor of Fine Arts in Jazz and Contemplative Studies.** Highly interdisciplinary program combines a solid grounding in jazz and improvised music study with courses that involve meditative practices and other areas related to creative development.

**2003:** The Center hosts the **Symposium on Contemplative Practice and Higher Education** at Amherst College, followed in subsequent years by conferences at **Columbia** and **University of Michigan**.

**2004: Arthur Zajonc**, Professor of Physics at Amherst College, becomes the Director of the Center's Academic Program and begins to articulate the nature of contemplative epistemology:

... knowing itself remains partial and deformed if we do not develop and practice an epistemology of love instead of an epistemology of separation. Harvard's motto is *Veritas* or Truth. Knowing is, in this view, the central project of higher education. I maintain, however, that truth itself – *veritas* itself -- eludes us if we bring to the world and to each other an epistemology of separation only. Our conventional epistemology

hands us a dangerous counterfeit in truth's place, one that may pass for truth, but in fact is partial and impoverished.

...Surely, science has brought enormous advances, but we cannot turn away from the central fact that the modern emphasis on objectification predisposes us to an instrumental and manipulative way of being in the world. While I am emphatically *not* calling for a roll-back of science, I am calling for resituating it within a greater vision of what knowing and living are really all about. That re-imagination of knowing will have deep consequences for education, consequences that give a prominent place to contemplative pedagogies. Indeed, I hope to convince you that contemplative practice can become contemplative inquiry, which *is* the practice of an epistemology of love. Such contemplative inquiry not only yields insight (*veritas*) but also transforms the knower through his or her intimate (one could say loving) participation in the subject of one's contemplative attention. Contemplative education is transformative education.

**2004: Columbia Teachers College Bulletin** published a special issue on Contemplative Education, edited by Fellow Clifford Hill.

**2005: Hal Roth**, with a Contemplative Practice Program Fellowship grant, forms **The Brown University Contemplative Studies Initiative**, a group of Brown faculty with diverse academic specializations who are united around a common interest in the study of contemplative states of mind, including the underlying philosophy, psychology, and phenomenology of human contemplative experience. At the Brown Alpert Medical School students may now pursue a concentration in contemplative studies as part of their medical education curriculum.

**2005: First Summer Session on Contemplative Curriculum development.** At Smith College.

**2007: Uncovering the Heart of Higher Education: Integrative Learning for Compassionate Action in an Interconnected World**, San Francisco, CA, a conference of more than 600 faculty members, administrators, student-life professionals, and chaplains from the broad spectrum of American colleges and universities, co-sponsored by the Fetzer Institute and California Institute of Integral Studies (CIIS).

**2008: Toward the Integration of Meditation into Higher Education: A Review of Research** prepared by Shauna L. Shapiro, Kirk Warren Brown, and John A. Astin.

By this point, the field expands so much that there too many activities to catalog. On the basis of evidence from surveys and conferences, a community of teachers now exists at all levels of higher education, from community colleges to research universities, who are using a wide range of contemplative practices as part of their classroom pedagogy.

In **2008**, the Center formed the **Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education** to promote the emergence of a broad culture of contemplation in the academy by connecting a network of leading institutions and academics committed to the recovery and development of the contemplative dimension of teaching, learning and knowing. There are now 450 members from across North America, and some from other countries. This year, at their second annual conference, 65 professors from a wide range of disciplines will present their work. Examples:

- Borges, Buddhism and Cognitive Science: A New Approach to Applied Cognitive Science and Intuitive Knowing through Contemplative Practice (UC Berkeley)
- Education of Peacemakers: Challenges and Opportunities in Interreligious Dialogue in Undergraduate Education (Mt. St. Mary's)
- We Teach Who We Are: Contemplative Pedagogy in Teacher Education (Bowdoin)
- The Contemplative Moment: an artistic presentation (Dartmouth)
- Neurobiology of Meditation (Harvard)
- Contemplating Time: Contemplative Approaches in Earth Science (Vassar)

**Professional schools** developing contemplative programs and courses include the Brown Medical School (mentioned above), University of Massachusetts Medical School (where Saki Santorelli of MBSR has taught “Medical Practice and Contemplative Practice” for many years), UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law (Charlie Halpern teaches a meditation course for law students). Courses are also taught in many other law schools (see white paper by Rhonda Magee). Harvard Law School hosted a symposium on Mindfulness and Alternative Dispute Resolution. At the Peter Drucker Graduate School of Management at Claremont, Jeremy Hunter teaches The Practice of Self-Management, a curriculum that cultivates human capital by developing mindfulness skills.

Other current notable events and centers that take contemplative education **beyond the classroom** include:

**Smith College School of Social Work, Contemplative Clinical Practice:**

An Advanced Certificate Program in Spirituality and Social Work Practice. A paradigm-shifting initiative in American social work education, the program considers the clinical relationship as a potential locus of the sacred. Deepens the clinician’s awareness of the sacred dimension of his/her work by exploring his/her own religious histories and spiritual practices, the clients’ spiritual beliefs and practices, and the clinical relationship itself. Provides a framework for assessing religious and spiritual development and exploring issues of ethics and social justice as they relate to spirituality.

**Emory-Tibet Partnership**

The Emory-Tibet Partnership has made Emory University a center for the study of Tibetan philosophy and religion in the West. They are conducting research in Tibetan medicine and meditation, as well as educational initiatives for teaching modern science to Tibetan monks and nuns. His Holiness the Dalai Lama was appointed Presidential Distinguished Professor, which gives students unique access to him, his teachings, and his insights both on campus and in India. Through a National Institutes of Health grant, the Partnership is also leading research in the use of compassion meditation to treat depression and stress.

**The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (Project Compassion), Stanford University**

Project Compassion will host a visit by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in October 2010, during which he will give a public lecture entitled, “The Centrality of Compassion in Human Life and Society”. Following the public lecture there will be a scientific symposium entitled, “Scientific Explorations of Compassion and Altruism”. Project Compassion is also developing a compassion curriculum, to be taught in diverse settings, including higher education.

**CUNY Contemplatives in New York City.** An informal association of CUNY professors dedicated to the use of contemplative practices in academia, has sponsored several one-day events on contemplative education, with guest speakers.

**Mind and Life Institute: Educating World Citizens for the 21st Century**

2009 Conference with the Dalai Lama asking how our educational system can evolve to meet the challenges of the 21st century? How will we educate people to be compassionate, competent, ethical, and engaged citizens in an increasingly complex and interconnected world?

**The 2010 Mind & Life Summer Research Institute: Education, Developmental Neuroscience and Contemplative Practices**

Focus on linking the work in contemplative science and practice with the work in the developmental sciences, including developmental neuroscience, to provide a scientific foundation from which we can investigate the feasibility, effectiveness and potential challenges of attempting to introduce secularized versions of contemplative practices into public educational settings.

**Mindfulness in Education Network 2010 Conference: Mindfulness: Foundation for Teaching and Learning**

**UC Davis Extension, Commitment to a Mindful Organization.** Includes workshops, guidelines, guest speakers.

### **PART 3: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN THE COMING DECADE**

The groundwork described above has prepared a real opportunity for the growth of contemplative education within the academy, especially in light of the emerging research on meditation and the brain. Scientists interested in the neural pathways associated with attention, empathy, compassion, memory, and other capacities are leading us toward more understanding of the educational uses of contemplative practices in education.

The discovery of neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to change throughout life and the stimuli that cause it to change, has fundamentally altered our view of the human potential. Early results show that meditation throughout life stages increases attention, resilience, internal attunement, empathy, memory, and ability to form ideas into a coherent whole. This should require us to re-think our fundamental ideas of education, including the value of first-person learning (investigating one's own mind/body) as well as the traditional third-person data of objective science.

The changing religious/cultural national and world maps are also driving educational reform. In 2005, Daniel Yankelovich identified "public support for other ways of knowing" as one of five most

important trends to radically transform higher education by 2015 (see “Ferment and Change: Higher Education in 2015,” *The Chronicle Review*, Nov 25, 2005) And as contemplative practices become more accepted in society at large through the popularization of the research results, which are showing up in *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Huffington Post*, and *Oprah* (*Time* reported on the value of meditation for becoming “smarter, one breath at a time” in “How to Sharpen Your Mind,” January 16, 2006), and through their use by people searching for relief of pain and stress, there should be an urgent call from within the university for the integration of practices that can complement critical thinking and help students live in a more-complex world with clarity and commitment.

#### **PART 4: WHAT WILL BE NEEDED TO NURTURE THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A CONTEMPLATIVE MOVEMENT IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION?**

Support for these initiatives (and others I have not thought of) will take us to the next level:

- publications that expand both the breath and depth of our understanding of contemplative education;
- conferences and meetings that build the network;
- exploration of distance-learning and enhanced digital contemplative methods;
- models of contemplative educational institutions; high profile programs like one that Hal Roth is now proposing at Brown; scholarships for students to majoring contemplative studies and
- fellowships for doctoral students and professors to expand the contemplative curriculum
- research on mediation’s effects on the cognitive and social factors of higher education.

And a few words would help from our contemplative president about the importance in a 21st Century democracy of flexible, adaptive, coherent, compassionate, energized, engaged, and stable, that is, contemplative, citizens if we are to sustain and care for this country and this fragile planet.