

The Believing Brain

Changing ourselves starts with changing our beliefs.

Bios for the Workshop:



Kevin Bickart is an assistant professor in neurology at UCLA who completed fellowship training in sport and behavioral neurology with Drs. Chris Giza and Mario Mendez in UCLA's BrainSPORT and Neurobehavior programs. Before that, he completed his MD/PhD in anatomy and neurobiology from Boston University School of Medicine, post-doc at Northeastern and Harvard Universities, and residency in neurology at Stanford. Kevin was the first to identify neuroimaging correlates of social network size in humans, among his other findings published in high impact journals, such as Nature Neuroscience. He comes from a line of well-known and inspiring mentors, including Lisa Feldman Barrett at Northeastern, Brad Dickerson at Harvard, and Mike Greicius at Stanford. Overall, Kevin's research focuses on the brain networks that underlie emotional and social behavior as it normally develops and degrades with brain injury and neurodegenerative conditions.



John is an over half century veteran teacher of both children and adults. He offers spiritual opportunities that he has presented over the last 50 years in business settings, public and private schools, and prisons. He has worked in the background up until the last two years, usually affecting only a small group or even one individual at a time. Like many others at this time, he has 'come out to the public' and become a workshop presenter to bring practical, spiritual opportunities to the mainstream.

Workshop Abstract:

*Your belief systems powerfully influence your biology, decisions, behaviors, and the community and world at large. Experience interactive *Belief Exercises* and the science behind them. You will learn how beliefs influence human:*

- *perception of reality*
- *learning and emotion*
- *biology and behavior*
- *teams, communities, and societies*

Workshop Description:

Activities ... This workshop is a first. Father, John will cross over with his son, Kevin to provide visceral demonstration on the power of belief. Kevin will use neuroscience as a lens to begin the discussion about how the brain is wired to believe and how these beliefs generate cascades of brain and bodily responses that shape humans and cultures. Kevin has been studying and presenting on the believing brain for years in the context of student and player development for high schools, colleges, and professional teams but also in scientific conferences and publications using brain imaging techniques. John will situate the discussion to the educational environment with practical and tangible exercises. He has used some of these exercises in schools (and on Kevin as he grew up). Through scintillating visuals, some data, and experiential exercises, they hope to empower you to become aware of your beliefs and their impact while also equipping you with a playbook to do the same for your students.

The Science ... We are what we believe. Our brain is wired to allow emotions, motivations, goals, thoughts, expectations, social contexts, memories, and more influence how we perceive reality. It mediates mind-body interactions, or the impact that the mind - your thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs - have on your body, not just the internal workings of your body, but your behavior, habits, decisions, reactions, and interactions with others. In fact, the contents of your mind influence far beyond the reaches of your own body. They are the seeds of culture, revolutions, wars, societal norms, in-group out-group mentalities, prejudices, and so on...

You've seen emotions spread through a room, read about attitudes corrupting a society, and belief systems driving communities to war. You have also seen the better side of this story, the utility of understanding your beliefs, sharing them with others, and working to arrive at a solution to construct better habits, more positive working environments, and motivating team culture. Beliefs can work against us just as easily as they can work for us. The solution is to be mindful of the content that you carry around in that 3lb piece of meat between your ears.