

The Intention Experiment: Using Your Thoughts to Change Your Life and the World

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Draws on original experiments as well as research conducted by some of the nation's most prestigious universities to explore a theory that the entire universe is connected by a vast energy field that can be manipulated for the betterment of the world using positive thought processes. 35,000 first printing.

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PREFACE
This book represents a piece of unfinished business that began in 2001 when I published a book called *The Field*. In the course of trying to find a scientific explanation for homeopathy and spiritual healing, I had inadvertently uncovered the makings of a new science.

During my research, I stumbled across a band of frontier scientists who had spent many years reexamining quantum physics and its extraordinary implications. Some had resurrected certain equations regarded as superfluous in standard quantum physics. These equations, which stood for the Zero Point Field, concerned the extraordinary quantum field generated by the endless passing back and forth of energy between all subatomic particles. The existence of the Field implies that all matter in the universe is connected on the subatomic level through a constant dance of quantum energy exchange.

Other evidence demonstrated that, on the most basic level, each one of us is also a packet of pulsating energy constantly interacting with this vast energy sea.

But the most heretical evidence of all concerned the role of consciousness. The well-designed experiments conducted by these scientists suggested that consciousness is a substance outside the confines of our bodies -- a highly ordered energy with the capacity to change physical matter. Directing thoughts at a target seemed capable of altering machines, cells, and, indeed, entire multicelled organisms like human beings. This mind-over-matter power even seemed to traverse time and space.

In *The Field* I aimed to make sense of all the ideas resulting from these disparate experiments and to synthesize them into one generalized theory. The Field created a picture of an interconnected universe and a scientific explanation for many of the most profound human mysteries, from alternative medicine and spiritual healing to extrasensory perception and the collective unconscious.

The Field apparently hit a nerve. I received hundreds of letters from readers who told me that the book had changed their lives. A writer wanted to depict me as a character in her novel. Two composers wrote musical compositions inspired by it, one of which played on the international stage. I was featured in a movie, *What the Bleep!?! Down the Rabbit Hole*, and on the *What The Bleep Do We Know!?! Calendar*, released by the film's producers. Quotations from *The Field* became the centerpiece of a printed Christmas card.

However gratifying this reaction, I felt that my own journey of discovery had hardly left the station platform. The scientific evidence I had amassed for *The Field* suggested something extraordinary and even disturbing: directed thought had some sort of central participatory role in creating reality.

Targeting your thoughts -- or what scientists ponderously refer to as "intention" and "intentionality" -- appeared to produce an energy potent enough to change physical reality. A simple thought seemed to have the power to change our world.

After writing *The Field*, I puzzled over the extent of this power and the numerous questions it raised. How, for instance, could I translate what had been confirmed in the laboratory for use in the world that I lived in? Could I stand in the middle of a railroad and, Superman-style, stop the 9:45 Metroliner with my thoughts? Could I fly myself up to fix my roof with a bit of directed thought? Would it now be possible to cross doctors and healers off my list of essential contacts, seeing as I might now be able to think myself well? Could I help my children pass their math tests just by thinking about it? If linear time and three-dimensional space didn't really exist, could I go back and erase all those moments in my life that had left me with lasting regret? And could my one puny bit of mental input do anything to change the vast catalog of suffering on the planet?

The implications of this evidence were unsettling. Should we be minding every last thought at every moment? Was a pessimist's view of the world likely to be a self-fulfilling prophecy? Were all those negative thoughts -- that ongoing inner dialogue of judgment and criticism -- having any effect outside our heads?

Were there conditions that improved your chances of having a better effect with your thoughts? Would a thought work any old time or would you, your intended target, and indeed the universe itself have to be in the mood? If everything is affecting everything else at every moment, doesn't that counteract and thereby nullify any real effect?

What happens when a number of people think the same thought at the same time? Would that have an even larger effect than thoughts generated singly? Was there a threshold size that a group of like-minded intenders had to reach in order to exert the most powerful effect? Was an intention "dose dependent" -- the larger the group, the larger the effect?

An enormous body of literature, starting with *Think and Grow Rich*,¹ by Napoleon Hill, arguably the first self-actualization guru, has been generated about the power of thought. Intention has become the latest new age buzzword. Practitioners of alternative medicine speak of helping patients heal "with intention." Even Jane Fonda writes about raising children "with intention."²

What on Earth, I wondered, was meant by "intention"? And how exactly can one become an efficient "intender"? The bulk of the popular material had been written off the cuff -- a smattering of Eastern philosophy here, a soup³ on of Dale Carnegie there -- with very little scientific evidence that it worked.

To find answers to all these questions, I turned, once again, to science, scouring the scientific literature for studies on distant healing or other forms of psychokinesis, or mind over matter. I sought out international scientists who experimented with how thoughts can affect matter. The science described in *The Field* had been carried out mainly in the 1970s; I examined more recent discoveries in quantum physics for further clues.

I also turned to those people who had managed to master intention and who could perform the extraordinary -- spiritual healers, Buddhist monks, Qigong masters, shamans -- to be able to understand the transformational processes they underwent to be able to use their thoughts to powerful effect. I uncovered myriad ways that intention is used in real life -- in sports, for instance, and during healing modalities such as biofeedback. I studied how native populations incorporated directed thought into their daily rituals.

I then began to dig up evidence that multiple minds trained on the same target magnified the effect produced by an individual. The evidence was tantalizing, mostly gathered by the Transcendental Meditation organization, suggesting that a group of like-minded thoughts created some sort of order in the otherwise random Zero Point Field.

At that point in my journey, I ran out of pavement. All that stretched before me, as far as I could tell, was uninhabited open terrain.

Then one evening, my husband, Bryan, a natural entrepreneur in most situations, put forward what seemed to be a preposterous suggestion: "Why don't you do some group experiments yourself?"

I am not a physicist. I am not any kind of scientist. The last experiment I had conducted had been in a tenth-grade science lab.

What I did have, though, was a resource available to few scientists: a potentially huge experimental body. Group intention experiments are extraordinarily difficult to perform in an ordinary laboratory. A researcher would need to recruit thousands of participants. How would he find them? Where would he put them? How would he get them all to think the same thing at the same time?

A book's readers offer an ideal self-selected group of like-minded souls who might be willing to participate in testing out an idea. Indeed, I already had my own large population of regular readers with whom I communicated through e-news and my other spin-off activities from *The Field*.

I first broached the idea of carrying out my own experiment with dean emeritus of the Princeton University School of Engineering Robert Jahn and his colleague, psychologist Brenda Dunne, who run the Princeton Engineering Anomalous Research (PEAR) laboratory, both of whom I had gotten to know through my research for *The Field*. Jahn and Dunne have spent some thirty years painstakingly amassing some of the most convincing evidence about the power of directed intention to affect machinery. They are absolute

sticklers for scientific method, no-nonsense and to the point. Robert Jahn is one of the few people I have ever met who speak in perfect, complete sentences. Brenda Dunne is equally perfectionist about detail in both experiment and language. I would be assured of no sloppy protocol in my experiments if Jahn and Dunne agreed to be involved.

The two of them also have a vast array of scientists at their disposal. They head the International Consciousness Research Laboratory, many of whose members are among the most prestigious scientists performing consciousness research in the world. Dunne also runs PEARTree, a group of young scientists interested in consciousness research.

Jahn and Dunne immediately warmed to the idea. We met on numerous occasions and kicked around some possibilities. Eventually, they put forward Fritz-Albert Popp, assistant director of the International Institute of Biophysics (IIB) in Neuss, Germany, to conduct the first intention experiments. I knew Fritz Popp through my research for The Field. He was the first to discover that all living things emit a tiny current of light. As a noted German physicist recognized internationally for his discoveries, Popp would also be a stickler for strict scientific method.

Other scientists, such as psychologist Gary Schwartz of the Biofield Center at the University of Arizona, Marilyn Schlitz, vice president for research and education at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Dean Radin, IONS' senior scientist, and psychologist Roger Nelson of the Global Consciousness Project, have also offered to participate.

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