

Written by Michael Mendizza

Wednesday, 01 December 2010 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 February 2014 15:27

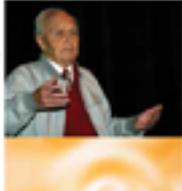
Joseph Chilton Pearce has authored many books, beginning with 1973's *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg* and continuing through *Magical Child*, *Evolution's End*, *The Biology of Transcendence*, and most recently with 2007's *The Death of Religion and Rebirth of Spirit*. He is both original and unique in his view of human potential and our limited development of that potential. In Pearce's view, we human beings are the apex of billions of years of creative, evolving adaptation. The complexity of our structure includes all that came before; we are truly magical. We express, moment by moment, the creative force that formed us. And yet, generation after generation, through our habits, beliefs and traditions, we fail to manifest the full spectrum of our inherent potential. Joe's lifelong quest has been to "understand our amazing capacities and self-inflicted limitations" in hopes that each of us, by sharing in this journey with him, will discover and become more of what we truly are—but don't yet know it. Author and educator Michael Mendizza sat down with Pearce and had this illuminating conversation.



AMAZING CAPACITIES & Self-Inflicted Limitations

An Interview with **JOSEPH CHILTON PEARCE**
By Michael Mendizza

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MICHAEL: What started you on your journey?

JCP: My first book, *The Crack in the Cosmic Egg*, which I wrote and rewrote for 12 years, was a protest against the prevailing academic, consensus view, which narrows our perceptions and limits us to grim necessity, as William Blake would say, to the death of spirit. In my 23rd year of life I underwent a series of paranormal events which challenged the foundations of classical thought. These events took place with abundant objective witnesses. Over time, however, watched how these witnesses screened out or blamed over their own perceptions, and I realized this was a necessary move to keep intact their established consensus of what was real. This selective tendency of the brain-mind is part of a general maintenance system, which keeps our collective world experience stable, and seems to function below awareness, healing little rifts in the fabric of the known.

Since these paranormal events were my direct experience, not just witnessed, I questioned their meaning, which opened a whole new realm of possibilities, and I wondered how much of our potential this automatic survival system filters out? Through studying child development, I saw how our cultural worldview was formed by neural models, and how this view is locked into the very neural structures of our brains, not an opinion but as our world-forming, perceptual-conceptual process. When writing my third book, *Magical Child*, I started giving workshops and seminars to get feedback on my ideas. By the time I completed the book, this feedback had enlarged my original focus to include untapped capacities and self-inflicted limitations.

MICHAEL: So your intention has always been to show our atten-

tion to these undeveloped capacities and limitations we impose on ourselves and on our children?

JCP: To grasp the nature of adult spiritual development we must understand the nature of child development, which in turn opens fully to us only when we understand the self-organizing properties of the brain and the way our brain draws on fields of intelligence and memory. The paradox of the idiot savant is a dramatic example of this, and challenges large sectors of common sense and classical belief.

MICHAEL: What are our hidden possibilities and why are they important?

JCP: For a long while academic thought has considered the brain a chemical-electrical soup, bringing in signals from the outer world and processing them into an inner facsimile of that world, which includes, of course, all the information we try and "teach." Current research has partly well-explored these notions. Consider instead that the brain is translating from fields of potential—physical, emotional-relational, and intellectual potentials—all of which are inherent within any child's system, simply awaiting the appropriate stimulus and nurturing.

Obviously we need to develop cognitive skills and discover the processes by which these fields manifest, but to spend years trying to pound information into the young person, from the top-down, so to speak, is a very limited approach.

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Michael: So your intention has always been to draw our attention to these undeveloped capacities and limitations we impose on ourselves and on our children?

Joe: To grasp the nature of adult spiritual development we must understand the nature of child development, which in turn opens fully to us only when we understand the self-organizing properties of the brain and the way our brain draws on fields of intelligence and memory. The paradox of the idio-savant is a dramatic example of this, and challenges large sectors of common sense and classical belief.

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Michael: You have said the capacity to learn is infinite. Brain matter is localized, but its operations are both in and beyond time-space, what quantum physicists speak of as localized and non-localized, as wave and particle.

Joe: Within any brain is the potential for unlimited structures of knowledge, but nothing is as worthless as infinite potential. Actual education, coming into knowledge, can only take place by selectivity, distinguishing a particular reality from the whole. And this selectivity is determined by our models, parents and society.

All processes are complementary dynamics. Brain-mind and world create each other through “structural coupling.” Mind shapes its environment, which gives shape to that mind, and the two can never really be separate. An environment for the child includes all the shaping forces, including our misguided notions of schooling, testing and failing, with the inevitable guilt, anger and closure of the absorbent mind.

Within the first three years of life the absorbent mind of the child has either opened up to embrace a benevolent universe or closed down into a frightened defense mechanism on guard against a world it can’t trust. Which is the root cause for the social mess we have today.

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Michael: This calls into question the critical role we adults play in this process.

Joe: Stages of development unfold at birth, age one, four, seven and eleven, concluding (for now) at age fifteen. Except for birth, these are statistical averages. Any child may vary from them as much as a year, but the universality of the stages themselves is beyond question. Each stage consists of a block of potential intelligences and/or abilities appropriate to that age. For optimal development, those abilities must be stimulated and nurtured within the time frame of that stage. This stimulus-nurturing implies a model imperative. Just as no teeth could appear unless the new infant is nourished, no intelligence or ability will unfold unless given a like stimulus from the environment. Not even the physical senses can function until the infant is given sufficient sensory stimulation. No intelligence can unfold unless the child is given an appropriate environmental model of that intelligence— someone who has themselves developed that intelligence and, in turn, provides the child with both initial stimulus and ongoing guidance in his or her own development of that capacity. There are no exceptions to this.

As part of this model imperative, the nature, character and quality of the model determines to an indeterminable extent the nature, character and quality of the unfolding intelligence-ability of the child. Children don't become who we tell them to be. They become who we are, and the mother is the first and most important model in a child's life.

Plato said, "Give me a different set of mothers and I will give you a different world," which is simply to say that the mother is the most powerful presence in shaping the emerging mind. She is the infant's environment and emotional world, and that infant has no choice except to rough in his basic knowledge of the world as he finds it expressed in her.

Michael: Which implies that if we want to change the world, and change childhood, we must begin with the model, by supporting mothers.

Joe: Montessori despaired over changing the adult, recognizing that once neural structures form and mature they don't lend themselves to reconstruction. She saw a way around our adult limitations by carefully designing a rich, secure environment for the child, leaving very little to

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chance. The environment includes parents, of course, and later, teachers. But Montessori's adults didn't teach, they facilitated and allowed the child's absorbent mind to function. She let the environment teach the child. Parents must understand the environmental needs of the child, at each stage of development. Above all, parents must respond to the child's need for total emotional nurturing. To be betrayed by a primary caretaker is the most serious injury that can occur. And emotional deprivation, much less immediate abandoning of the infant to daycare, creates such deep anxiety that it affects every aspect of a child's growth: physical, emotional and mental. Herein lie the roots of violence, social maladaptation and most of our woes.

Michael: What is it going to take to get parents and educators to truly understand the profound implications of their personal behavior and modeling?

Joe: First, we have to get birthing out of the hands of men and return it to the natural intelligence of women, who managed fairly well for untold ages and can do even far better with contemporary knowing and techniques. The modern midwife is a trained, efficient, careful practitioner who still relies on her natural instincts and body-knowing, leaving emergency methods for the rare 1 percent or so of labors that have problems. The whole issue is to stop intellectually interfering with the natural intelligence of the system, and treating the other 99 percent of deliveries as emergencies. Women need this as much as children. The interaction of mother and infant at birth and afterward activates an intelligence enfolded within the mother's neural system, which literally empowers her to make the proper response to her child. It activates her mammary glands, charging her with the sensually rewarding desire to nurse and nurture her infant at all costs. She comes into her own as the mother of the species, a person of power.

Dr. Paul MacLean spoke of "species survival instincts," and survival is indeed the issue. Awaken these in the mother, as they were so long as women tended women at this crucial time, and support the mother as needed to follow these nurturing passions, and you will have no psychologically abandoned, withdrawn, defensive, fearful children or adults.

Michael: In what ways has the current birth practice destroyed this innate intelligence?

Joe: Destroyed is a bit strong; damaged is more appropriate. The damage is brought about by mother and infant being separated at birth, and even before birth. Women caught up in various

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pursuits preclude intimacy with the prenatal infant and prebirth bonds are natural to us. Then every action of medical manipulation at birth results in separation of mother from infant, physically, emotionally and mentally.

Each medical intervention with childbirth breeds more intervention. Each solution, each new monitoring device, creates more problems that demand more intervention. "If it isn't broke, don't fix it" is nature's dicta, to which the medical community has turned a deaf ear. Again, the issue lies with certain bonding procedures designed by nature to take place at birth that profoundly affect the neural structures of both mother and infant if they do take place, and equally affect them adversely if they don't.

Michael: There is a general impression that birth practices are improving.

Joe: Things are better today than a hundred years ago, but there is far more publicity and brainwashing regarding birth reform than actual fact. Those in the birthing rooms undergo all the hospital processes deemed necessary to protect the investments and income of the hospital. I have observed births with fathers present, movie camera in hand, the doctor, having doped the mother and infant, getting the infant out, cutting the umbilical cord immediately (a disaster in itself) and placing the infant on the mother's belly briefly, for the benefit of the camera. Following standard procedures, just with the added theatrics of a movie. Then the father and mother proudly show the film later to prove they had bonded with infant. Such bonding is a travesty, a double lie.

Michael: I understand that real bonding is only possible through prolonged and intimate contact between mother and infant.

Joe: I wish the term "bonding" had not been invented. For one thing, it assumes that these two separate creatures must be brought together and a connection made between them. In the natural scheme of things, no separation should have taken place, no connection broken. The point is to maintain the connection established in utero in the new post-uterine experience. The mother is the environment in both cases, and the so-called bonded infant simply discovers the rediscovery of the known, its mother, in a marvelous new setting. The mother is the environment, but now a moving one, in an expanded, infinitely open world to be embraced. The known moves into an exciting unknown. That stability must be maintained if the absorbent mind

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is to remain open and form new structures of knowledge of a vast new and benevolent world.

If the infant is suddenly removed from all his known structures, which are extensive and established in utero, and placed in isolation, as we have throughout this century, then all the genetically encoded programs for moving into the new world are seriously undermined, delayed and put at risk. The infant retreats to defensive posture against an alien world that has brought rejection, isolation and pain.

Michael: We seem to have accepted an increasingly dysfunctional norm as normal. Why has this happened?

Joe: The major cause, separation of mothers and infants at birth, has grown throughout our century. At the same time, achieving a high standard of living became the focal point of all schooling and training, creating a new mindset and set of values. Standard of living has nothing to do with the development of intelligence— including, ironically, the ability to be socialized and schooled. Quality of life determines the growth of intelligence, and as standard of living increased, the quality of life for children decreased.

Quality of life to an infant-child means only one thing: complete unconditional acceptance and emotional nurturing on the part of a permanent caretaker. We have the most emotionally deprived children on earth, separated from parent at birth, and continually separated as they grow. Convinced that we are giving them what is most important, a high standard of living, we overload them with material goods to compensate for the love and attention we deny them. We work to earn money to buy these goods, leaving little time for the child already isolated.

So our heaping goods on the child to compensate for the love and nurturing they don't get keeps the wheels of industry turning. And around it goes. Each child grows up to intensify the cycle in their interaction with their own offspring. It's an insane spiral toward chaos, sponsored and encouraged by a society based on economic games in which a few winners are bought at the price of masses of losers.

Meanwhile we build more and more prisons and accuse our young of moral failure for not becoming what we are not.

Michael: What other factors have impacted the development of intelligence in our children?

Joe: The breakdown of the extended family was another key factor. Michael Odent once said that our attempt to sanctify a “nuclear family,” made of a separate social unit of mother, father and child, is untenable. Strip away the extension of family, kinfolk, grandmothers and so on, the backbone of all societies, and the nucleus implodes.

For largely economic reasons, the extended family disappeared by 1950. By that time, through medical maneuvering, birth shifted from home to hospital and delivery practices underwent radical change, with massive medical interventions culminating in that critical separation of mother and infant. Hospital stays were lengthy affairs since the injured mother required a long convalescence.

Once at home, mothers followed the pattern established in hospital, having infants in the crib, even for bottle feeding, picking them up as little as possible, and all that. Home was a single-family sealed unit, where the new mother had little access to advice or relief. And since bonding hadn't taken place, no intelligences for nurturing the child had been awakened in her and she was generally unsure and confused about how to handle the infant.

The infant— in his or her separation anxiety, colic from incorrect diet, and general lack of stimuli—cried, day and night. Serious increases of actual physical child abuse began at that point, although the greatest abuse was emotional deprivation.

Michael: Can we recoup these nurturing instincts in mothers after a half-century of disruption, and on a large enough scale to save an endangered species?

Joe: A century is nothing in evolutionary time, and the intelligences at stake are ancient and powerful. Regardless of her personal birth history and childhood, any woman allowed to bond with her infant will respond according to those genetically encoded “species survival” skills.

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A 35-year-old woman I know, a professional person with graduate degree, decided to have a child, her first. Thirtyfive is considered a high-risk period by medicine men.

This woman had a typically disastrous birth and childhood history herself, with her share of resultant anxieties and neuroses. But she was informed, and brave enough to withstand the great brainwash. She avoided medical people entirely and entered into pregnancy and birth with intelligent planning, careful midwife assistance, total confidence and genuine excitement.

At the time of delivery she felt competent and in charge. She delivered in her family bed with no visible signs of discomfort, and so rapidly that the midwife arrived too late for anything except the clean-up. This mother was up and about the house immediately, infant at her breast—even drove to town that day. She breastfed her child for three years—the last year or so, “token” feedings as needed for emotional nurturing—and scorned the library of how-to-parent books written by all the male specialists. Her own patterns of behavior and attitude changed from timorous uncertainty to ongoing energetic, secure confidence. She had come into her own through her child, and of course was, in turn, helping that child come into its own. The infant unlocks the true nature of the mother, even as she unlocks the infant’s.

Michael: The obstetrical-hospital complex is a multi-billion dollar industry, with enormous prestige and political clout, and “archetypal” mythical imagery of grim necessity burned into the nation’s psyche. How can such a structure be turned around?

Joe: I’ve given up on that. Women have undergone a stringent and specific brainwashing throughout the twentieth century to convince them that birth is the most dangerous and painful experience life inflicts on us, that they are themselves incompetent to deal with either pregnancy or birth. Common sense thus dictates that they should surrender their lives to male surgeons, at vast expense on every level, and few ever stop to question this.

Those who do face enormous social and legal opposition should they run counter to such propaganda. Fear is a powerful weapon, used to full effect in this case. Husbands are as terrified of home birth as wives, both are quite willing to buy their way out of responsibility. That hospital births have a 600 percent higher mortality rate than home births, regardless of conditions in the home, is an unsung irony.

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Further, to be politically incorrect, note this century's remarkable rise in women's enmity towards men, and men's rage toward women. The age-old "battle of the sexes" has given rise to endless literature and humor, but it has now turned deadly. Many women are unconsciously angry at men because male surgeons literally robbed them of their power and their place in the universe, turned their breasts from the fountainhead of life to an advertising gimmick, and denied them any rights to their own reproductive functions. They know "something tremendous was supposed to happen" at birth and didn't, and intuitively know those lost or aborted functions were of universal significance. Women rigorously deny the source of the wound within, but it often surfaces as anger, both at husbands and even their children, making the pair-bonding on which life and family rests divided.

On the other hand, males harbor an equally deep resentment against women, since at their own birth, the time of their greatest venerability and need, that need was denied them. Males carry a rift within their core as great or greater than women. That betrayal at birth was by a woman, the mother, an episode seen only as rejection by the infant, and one that harbors so much pain he will never risk himself to such intimate openness. He wears various forms of armor and must deal with his frustration and rage as best he can. The rest of this mess is a fallout of such magnitude that few of us, overwhelmed as we are with the immediate crises engineered, have the time or energy to trace out the root cause and address it. So the chance of changing either hospital practices or women submitting to it wholesale is probably nil. The most we can hope for is "operation lifeboat"—a few women who sense the nature of this largest betrayal of modern times and no longer buy into it. They will be the vehicle for a saving remnant perhaps, and we can only work to increase their number.

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