

Hiram's Lighthouse



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Contents Page

Events Calendar

Around and About

(News & Notices)

This Month in History

Nature & Science

Nullius in verba

... by the Lighthouse Beam

Administration

Events Calendar

May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

EVENTS

[Click Here to Print Calendar](#)

...Now here's a Lodge in



**2 Gloucester St
Toronto Ontario
M4Y 1Z5**

1936 vs 1920

The Masonic Hall at Yonge & Gloucester
Gloucester Mews Constructed in 1938



Around and About
(News & Notices)

Educational Committee
upcoming events

- May the 18th - Robert Lund the Symbols in the 3rd Degree



Lodge of Instruction Tuesday Evening Classes

2nd Tuesday's

May 10th

6:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Thornhill Temple at 30 Elgin Street, Thornhill

Fee: If able please contribute \$10 towards food.

Who can attend....

All Masons are welcome for the Tuesdays and the Saturdays. There will and can be something of 'Profit and Pleasure' for everyone. Yes that means EAs too. Sponsors, Mentors bring the new ones out and enjoy the fellowship that classes offer.

Dress code is casual, no regalia required.

Facilitators: Allister Ttooulias and Dennis Rankin

Topics covered will reflect on the makeup of class members and their needs, but we

anticipate that our main focus will be assisting with kicking off the rust and sweeping out the cobwebs.

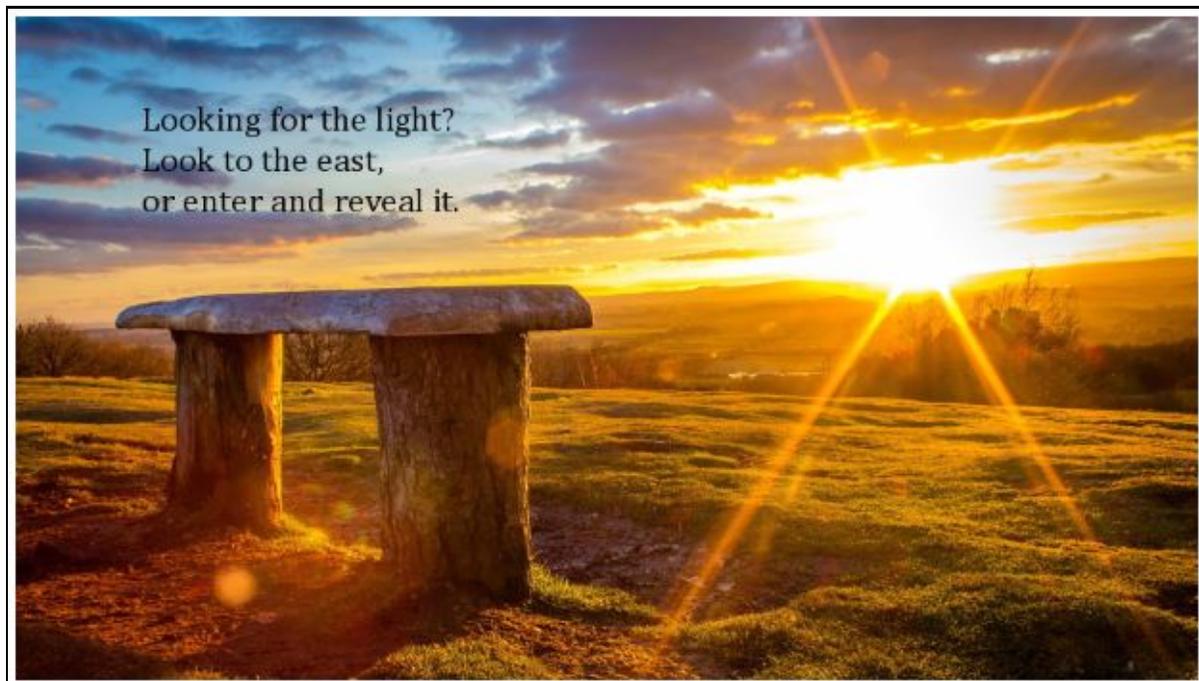
Until updates happen, presently the 2020 Black Book of the Work, the 2019 Blue Book of Installation and the red 2018 Guidelines for Lodge officers are our primary sources of authority.

This Month in History

May 1st - Observed as May Day, a holiday and spring festival since ancient times, also observed in socialist countries as a workers' holiday or Labor Day.

May 5th - Celebrated in Mexico as Cinco de Mayo, a national holiday in remembrance of the Battle of Puebla in 1862, in which Mexican troops under General Ignacio Zaragoza, outnumbered three to one, defeated the invading French forces of Napoleon III.

May 6, 1527 - The Renaissance ended with the Sack of Rome by German troops as part of an ongoing conflict between the Hapsburg Empire and the French Monarchy. German troops killed over 4,000 Romans, imprisoned the Pope, and looted works of art and libraries. An entire year passed before order could be restored in Rome.



Nature & Science



The right way to be introspective (yes, there's a wrong way)

Obsessive navel-gazing can be satisfying, but the problem is, it can also be damaging. Organizational psychologist Tasha Eurich suggests ways to escape the loop of rumination and learn how to move forward for real.

It was Tuesday evening around 11pm. Holed up in my dark office, I sat staring at a set of freshly analyzed data. A few weeks earlier, my team and I had run a study looking at the relationship between self-reflection and outcomes like happiness, stress and job satisfaction. I was confident the results would show that people who spent time and energy examining themselves would have a clearer understanding of themselves and that this knowledge would have positive effects throughout their lives.

But to my astonishment, our data told the exact opposite story. The people who scored high on self-reflection were more stressed, depressed and anxious, less satisfied with their jobs and relationships, more self-absorbed, and they felt less in control of their lives. What's more, these negative consequences seemed to increase the more

they reflected.

We can spend endless amounts of time in self-reflection but emerge with no more self-insight than when we started.

Though I didn't know it at the time, I'd stumbled upon a myth about self-awareness, and one that researchers are only beginning to understand. University of Sydney psychologist [Anthony M. Grant](#) discovered that people who possess greater insight — which he defines as an intuitive understanding of ourselves — enjoy stronger relationships, a clearer sense of purpose and greater well-being, self-acceptance and happiness. Similar [studies](#) have shown that people high in insight feel more in control of their lives, show more dramatic personal growth, enjoy better relationships and feel calmer and more content. However, Grant and others have also come to [realize](#) there's no relationship between introspection and insight. This means that the act of thinking about ourselves isn't necessarily correlated with knowing ourselves. And, in a few cases, they've even found the opposite: the more time the participants spend in introspection, the less self-knowledge they have. In other words, we can spend endless amounts of time in self-reflection but emerge with no more self-insight than when we started.

Why does this matter? After so many years of researching the subject of insight, I've come to believe that the qualities most critical for success in today's world — including emotional intelligence, empathy, influence, persuasion, communication and collaboration — all stem from self-awareness (TEDxMileHigh talk: [Learning to be awesome at everything you do](#)). If we're not self-aware, it's almost impossible to master the skills that make us stronger team players, superior leaders and better relationship builders, either at work or in the rest of our lives.

Introspection is arguably the most universally hailed path to internal self-awareness. After all, what better way is there to increase our self-knowledge than to look inward, to delve deeply into our experiences and emotions, and to understand why we are the way we are? When we reflect, we might be trying to understand our feelings (“Why am I so upset after that meeting?”), questioning our beliefs (“Do I really believe what I think I believe?”), figuring out our future (“What career would make me truly happy?”) or trying to explain a negative outcome or pattern (“Why do I beat myself up so much for minor mistakes?”).

Introspection can cloud and confuse our self-perceptions, unleashing a host of unintended consequences.

But my study results, along with Grant's and others, appear to show this kind of self-reflection doesn't necessarily help people become

more self-aware. One study examined the coping style and subsequent adjustment of men who had just lost a partner to AIDS. Although those who engaged in introspection — such as reflecting on how they would deal with life without their partner — had higher morale in the month following their loss, they were more depressed one year later. Another study of more than 14,000 university students showed that introspection was associated with poorer well-being. Other research suggests that self-analyzers tend to have more anxiety, less positive social experiences and more negative attitudes about themselves.

In truth, introspection can cloud our self-perceptions and unleash a host of unintended consequences. Sometimes it may surface unproductive and upsetting emotions that can swamp us and impede positive action. Introspection might also lull us into a false sense of certainty that we've identified the real issue. Buddhist scholar Tarthang Tulku uses an apt analogy: when we introspect, our response is similar to a hungry cat watching mice. We eagerly pounce on whatever "insights" we find without questioning their validity or value.

The problem with introspection isn't that it's categorically ineffective, but that we don't always do it right. When we examine the causes of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors — which we often do by asking ourselves *Why?* questions — we tend to search for the easiest and most plausible answers. Generally, once we've found one or two, we stop looking. This can be the result of our innate confirmation bias, which prompts us to lean towards reasons that confirm our existing beliefs.

Asking "why?" in one study appeared to cause the participants to fixate on their problems instead of moving forward.

Asking why can sometimes cause our brains to mislead us. Let's say I ask you to list all the reasons why your relationship is going the way it is. And let's say that last night, your spouse stayed out at the office happy hour later than planned, leaving you alone to cook dinner for your visiting, rather dull in-laws. Because of something called the "recency effect," this could be your most salient thought about your relationship, so in reply to my question, your brain may misdirect you to the first available explanation — he doesn't spend enough time at home and leaves me to deal with his parents — even though that behavior is quite rare. Likewise, let's say your spouse had gone to happy hour and then came home and surprised you with a weekend getaway, your brain could mislead you to think your relationship is in better shape than it really is.

Another reason that asking why is not always so beneficial is

the negative impact it can have on our overall mental health. In one study, after British university students failed what they were told was an intelligence test, they were asked to write about why they felt the way they did. Compared to a control group, they were more depressed immediately afterward, and these negative effects persisted 12 hours later. Asking why appeared to cause the participants to fixate on their problems and place blame instead of moving forward in a healthy and productive way.

So if asking why isn't so helpful, what should we ask? A study by psychologists J. Gregory Hixon and William Swann arrived at a simple answer. The researchers told a group of undergraduates that two raters would evaluate their personality based on a test of "sociability, likeability and interestingness" they'd taken earlier in the semester, then they asked the students to judge the accuracy of their results. What the students didn't know was that everyone's results were the same: one rater gave a positive evaluation, while the other gave a negative one. But before making their accuracy judgments, some of the participants were given time to think about why they were the kind of person they were, and others were asked to think about what kind of person they were. The whystudents, it turned out, were resistant to the negative evaluation. As the paper's authors muse: "Presumably, participants who focused on why used their reflection time to rationalize, justify and explain away the negative information." The what students, on the other hand, were more receptive to the same data and to the notion that it could help them understand themselves. The lesson here: Asking what could keep us open to discovering new information about ourselves, even if that information is negative or in conflict with our existing beliefs. Asking why might have the opposite effect.

In the course of my research on insight, my team and I compiled a group of 50 self-awareness unicorns: people we found who were rated high in self-awareness (both by themselves and by others) but who had started out with only low to moderate self-awareness. When we looked at their speech patterns, our unicorns reported asking what often and why rarely. In fact, when we analyzed the transcripts of our interviews, the word why appeared less than 150 times, but the word what appeared more than 1,000 times. One unicorn, a 42-year-old mother who had walked away from a career as a lawyer when she finally realized that there was no joy for her in that path, explained it this way: "If you ask why, [I think] you're putting yourself into a victim mentality When I feel anything other than peace, I say 'What's going on?'; 'What am I feeling?'; 'What is the dialogue inside my head?'; 'What's another way to see this situation?' or 'What can I do to respond better?'"

“Why” questions trap us in our past; “what” questions help us create a better future.

So when it comes to developing internal self-awareness, I like to use a simple tool that I call What Not Why. Why questions can draw us to our limitations; what questions help us see our potential. Why questions stir up negative emotions; what questions keep us curious. Why questions trap us in our past; what questions help us create a better future. In addition to helping us gain insight, asking what instead of why can be used to help us better understand and manage our emotions. Let’s say you’re in a terrible mood after work one day. Asking “Why do I feel this way?” might elicit such unhelpful answers as “Because I hate Mondays!” or “Because I’m just a negative person!” Instead, if you ask “What am I feeling right now?” you could realize you’re feeling overwhelmed at work, exhausted and hungry. Armed with that knowledge, you might decide to fix yourself dinner, call a friend or commit to an early bedtime.

At times, asking what instead of why can force us to name our emotions, a process that a strong body of research has shown to be effective. [Evidence shows](#) the simple act of translating our emotions into language — versus simply experiencing them — can stop our brains from activating our amygdala, the fight-or-flight command center. This, in turn, seems to help us stay in control.

However, there is one important exception to What Not Why. When you’re navigating business challenges or solving problems in your team or organization, asking why can be critical. For example, if a member of your team drops the ball on an important client project, not exploring why it happened means you risk recurrences of the problem. Or if a new product fails, you need to know the reason to ensure that your products are better in the future. A good rule of thumb, then, is that why questions are generally better to help us understand events in our environment and what questions are generally better to help us understand ourselves.

Excerpted with permission from the new book [Insight: Why We’re Not as Self-Aware as We Think and How Seeing Ourselves Clearly Helps Us Succeed at Work and in Life](#) by Tasha Eurich, published by Crown Business, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York. Copyright © 2017 Tasha Eurich.

BEYOND MIND-BLOWING—IS OUR BRAIN A MIRROR OF THE UNIVERSE?

There is a whole universe in your brain, but did you ever think that your brain could be a reflection of the vast universe out there?

The network of neurons in the brain and network of galaxies in the cosmos might actually be reflections of each other. This is what you get when you put the minds of an astrophysicist and a neurosurgeon together. Besides being two of the most complex systems in nature, the number of neurons in your brain is eerily close to the number of galaxies in the observable universe. Neurons form in long filaments or nodes between filaments, just like galaxies, and there is mass or energy that has seemingly passive role in both—water in the brain versus dark energy in the void of space.

Unlikely as it seems, astrophysicist Franco Vazza and neurosurgeon Alberto Feletti, who recently published a study in *Frontiers in Physics*, have merged their knowledge of the brain and the cosmos into something with the potential to advance both sciences further than they have ever gone. This study and the work it inspires in the future could revolutionize both cosmology and neurosurgery.

“Our research tries to show that with shared statistical tools, both networks can be analyzed in a quantitative way, and we found a good degree of structural similarity across a broad range of scales,” Vazza told SYFY WIRE. “Despite the obvious differences in their internal interactions, complex networks do tend to evolve according to similar laws, in order to economize on energy and fill space in a more efficient way—but that’s just the start of the quest.”

The human brain and the structure of the universe are two of the most complex systems in nature. Everything in our brains is interconnected, from the molecular level to networks of neurons and other cells that create even more complicated structures. So is everything in the universe (at least what we can see of it). It started at the molecular level when the Big Bang went off like a firework out of nowhere, and those molecules created larger molecules that kept accumulating and eventually became stars, planets, asteroids, comets, and other objects born from swirling discs of gas and dust. Many of these objects became their own star systems, and groups of star systems formed entire galaxies.

Now think about this. There is a network of about 69 billion neurons in your brain. In the observable universe, there are at least 100 billion galaxies. 70 percent of the brain is water while the same percentage of interstellar stuff is dark energy. By studying the spectral density, or how power in a signal as opposed to its frequency, Vazza and Feletti found out that fluctuations in the cosmic web are on the same scale as those distributed within the network of neurons in the cerebellum, which mostly powers voluntary movements, balance, coordination and

posture.

While the proportions might not always be exact, they are still somewhat scary. There still is one enormous difference despite all these possibly unsettling mirror images.

“The biggest difference between our brains and the universe is how they process their information content,” Vazza said. “In the case of the cosmic web, this is the 3D structure of galaxies. In the human brain, it is recorded through the local connectivity of neurons, and at a highly different speed. Some qualitative estimates suggest that the human brain has a computing power about 10^{17} times faster than the cosmic web - meaning that the local organization of the human brain can be changed extremely faster than what galaxies can do.”

Whether that is more fascinating or even scarier is hard to say. It is impossible to deny that both networks, the one in our heads and the one above our heads, are both organizations of clusters and nodes, whether those happen to be made of molecules and neurons or star systems and galaxies. Vazza ran simulations revealed, among everything else that makes our brains reflections of something much larger and almost unfathomable, something else unreal. There is actually less similarity between the universe and a single galaxy, or the brain and a single neuron, than there is between the brain and the universe as systems.

Finding parallels between the brain and the final frontier has shed light on things that each branch of science can borrow from the other. The similarities between such complex networks could also mean incredible discoveries, because if something about the universe may have implications for something in the brain or vice versa, there could be a major scientific advancement depending on the results of simulations and experiments.

“Our work exposes the way in which such different systems (indeed sitting at the opposite extremes of cosmic scales) may evolve according complex ways in which physical laws combine to evolve macro objects, or in this case networks of event,” said Vazza. “We hope this will trigger new research in the near future.”

That should sufficiently blow your mind



The Universe Inside Our Minds



"Not only are we in the Universe, the Universe is
in us..."

— Neil deGrasse Tyson

... by the Lighthouse Beam



Michio Kaku: Consciousness Can be Quantified | Big Think

Administration

NOTICE: Hiram's Lighthouse is currently looking to expand its Editorial Board, should you or someone you know be a good candidate, please contact the editor at hramslighthouse@gmail.com with a brief bio.

ADMINISTRATION:

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To get a notice into the newsletter at least one month before the event, send a message to hramslighthouse@gmail.com with all the information and we'll run it every month until the function is past.

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