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An Interview with Dr. Dean Radin



Dean Radin Gets Intentional

BH: One of the topics that received the most questions through the What the BLEEP website was on Dr. Emoto's water crystal experiments. More specifically, people want to know just how scientific they are.

Radin: Okay. I think like a lot of people, I've seen Dr. Emoto give his lectures and they're quite amazing, perhaps a little too amazing. So the question that most people have, whether they're scientists or not, is how robust is this effect really? Is it so robust that the pictures that they are showing us are truly representative of what they end up with? Or maybe they're just a selection of a much larger body of pictures.

After one of these talks I went up to Dr. Emoto and asked him if he'd be willing to participate in a double blind experiment to get rid of the potential selection problem and also bias in deciding what pictures to take. And to my delight he immediately said sure. Initially we were thinking we'd get a walk in freezer and I would duplicate the entire method, and then I realized I don't want to spend a week in a freezer, and more importantly, I don't have to. If we do it under proper double blind conditions, then his analyst in Tokyo could do the analysis of the water, and I would do the analysis of the results of the experiment.

BH: And what does double blind mean?

Radin: It means that in the case of the images of crystals that they're working with they don't know which water they're working with. There are two types of water in this experiment, there is treated water, which is treated by intention, and then there is a control water. So, if the analyst and Dr. Emoto and everyone in Tokyo did not know which of the water samples they were dealing with, then they can't be accused of selecting out the best pictures because they don't know from which samples they came. So that's one form of being blind. They're blind to the condition.

The way the experiment worked is this: I said to Dr. Emoto, if I send you some water samples, can you go through your procedure and take pictures? He said fine. So I selected some bottles of Fiji brand, commercial, bottled water and put them in our shielded room, here at Noetic Sciences. On a given day, I think this was in 2006, there were 2,000 people at a conference or lecture that Dr. Emoto was giving in Tokyo and I had sent him a digital picture of what the bottles looked like in the shielded room. So what he did is he presented his talk and then at the end of the talk, he said okay, now we're going to try an experiment. Here are two bottles of water at this institute in California. He used the Google Earth application to show them where they were in Tokyo as compared to where we were here, roughly 3,000 miles away. And then he put a Kanji prayer for water overlaid on the picture and he led them through reciting this prayer for water, to send it to the water that was in the laboratory.

The next day I retrieved the two bottles and unbeknownst to Dr. Emoto, or anybody at this conference, I had two additional bottles of water, all four just taken off the shelf from a store, and the two bottles that were the control bottles were just up in my office in a different part of the building from where the two treatment bottles were. I sent all four bottles to Dr. Emoto and said, "in each case, take 50 samples as you normally do out of each bottle and take pictures of the crystals, I will tell you afterwards which is which, but for now, just consider them bottles A, B, C, and D, and then send me back the pictures." So when he sent back the pictures, I said, "since they're labeled A, B, C, D, you re-label them so you're sending back pictures and I don't know yet which bottle they're from." So that's the second blind. So the first blind is all they know is A, B, C, D, they don't know the condition, the second blind is that when they return the pictures of the crystals I don't know which bottles they were using. So we're both holding part of the information, we're both blind to the data so we can't be biased.

So what I got back from his analyst were a bunch of pictures of crystals that they took and while there are four bottles leading to 4X50 crystals, potentially 200 pictures could be returned. But I only got back about 40 pictures and the reason is, I learned,

is that a lot of times there aren't any pictures at all. So this is our first hint that what Dr. Emoto shows are selections. They're selections of examples of what he is looking for.

The next question is, how do we assess whether the crystals are different in the two conditions? In this case, I put all the pictures on a website without labeling what condition they were in and asked people (about 2,000 participated) to look at the website and assess the esthetic beauty of each one of these pictures. And the way they would do this is they would simply look at a series of pictures all in a row, and they're simply asked on a 6 point scale to say they thought this was the most beautiful thing they ever saw, all the way down to they didn't think it was beautiful at all ratings. Esthetic beauty ratings. What you end up with then is a pretty stable, grand assessment; what would the population agree upon for this particular picture, or the next picture and so on.

And so now the proof of the pudding is we had some crystals that were in fact in the treated condition and some that were in the control condition. What was the difference in esthetic ratings between these two conditions? The prediction would be that the crystals should look better in the treated water and should not look so good in the control water. And that's what we found to a statistically significant degree. Now when you look at the actual crystals returned from this experiment in the two conditions, there are some cases of control water leading to quite good looking crystals, and there are some cases of treated water with pretty bad looking crystals. But on average, just doing a simple statistical test, the difference between the crystals in the two conditions is significant and in the direction that he had predicted. So it lends some credence to the general idea that something about intention has an effect.

So we've since done a triple blind experiment where we had one additional level of blindness. In this case the entire analysis was finished before I learned what the different conditions were. I'm revising the paper now for publication and that also showed an effect that was significant. It was a weak statistical effect, it's significant but it's not a massive effect. It's certainly not as robust as the effects as he shows in his presentations. But on the other hand he's not claiming that these are scientific tests.

BH: The water that had an intention placed on it, was there any treatment process done to it beforehand?

Radin: No, it was straight off the shelf from Whole Foods.

BH: I recently saw, in a new movie from Russia titled Water, where Dr. Emoto does another, similar experiment. He has three glass containers with rice and he pours water into each one, I believe it's just regular tap water. Everyday for about a month, someone goes in and says, "I love you" to the first container of rice and water. In the second container, they say "You idiot," and the third container of rice and water is completely ignored. After the month is up, they come back and in the first container of rice and water, the water is still clear and the rice has fermented, giving off a nice aroma. In the second container, the rice and water are black. And in the container that was completely ignored, the rice was rotting. I was wondering if that would be a good suggestion for people who are skeptical or just want to see for themselves?

Radin: Yes. There have been plenty of science fair projects, both elementary and high school, that do basically the same things. The power of prayer on plant growth has been studied many times. The effects that you see with plants is sometimes more dramatic than you see with a crystal because there are lots of factors that influence crystal formation, of course there are a lot of factors that influence plant growth as well.

The tricky part of doing an experiment of the course that you describe, which is a perfectly fine experiment, is to make sure that the conditions of the three containers is as close as is humanly possible to create. Because obviously if you made a mistake, for example when you're looking at something like how high plants grow and the treated plants happen to get more light, then that would confound the experiment.

I know some colleagues who were working with their children on their science fair projects and doing things like praying over, or simply intentionally responding to plants in different ways, in the way that you described with the rice. They claim they were astonished at the results, which came out pretty much like you would predict. So I think these things do happen, as in any experiment there are many ways in which it can go wrong and give you the impression that it worked when in fact it was a mistake. But having also seen experiments that were done under extremely tight conditions in a laboratory we see that there are changes that occur, both in the structure of water and things like the hydrogen bonding in water itself. When we see small but real effects in the laboratory, it's not too surprising that you can see larger effects in the uncontrolled real world.

BH: I was at a conference where Dr. Joe Dispenza and Lynne McTaggart spoke on intention. There were some interesting experiments discussed and many in the crowd seemed to be concerned with negative intention. Have you done any work with negative intention?

Radin: I get asked that fairly often and the answer is no. Mainly because any experiment that we do has to pass through an

ethics review and it would be very difficult to get approval from an ethics board to do an experiment that involves negative intention, at least one that involves people. So if you're feeding a plant and calling it ugly everyday, I suppose you can do that but I'm not sure I want to ask people to exercise those kinds of intentions.

BH: Many of the conference attendees were concerned with whether or not negative intention is as strong as positive intention.

Radin: I think it is a valid concern. I don't think the magic underneath this is the intention per se, although that's part of it. I think what is also a big part of this is the motivation that comes along with it. So the motivation is a focusing mechanism for the brain or for the mind. If you have very strong intention, either positive or negative, there's something about that intense focus, especially focus that is sustained, which seems then to carry the nature of the intention out into the world. So a negative intention could work probably just as well as a positive one.

I should say that in most of these studies, there is the assumption that the world is actually changing as a result of our intention and we still don't know that this is actually the case. We see experimental results which are consistent with that interpretation but there's another interpretation which is that whenever there is an experiment that is designed, somebody has to make decisions about how it's going to look, how it's going to work. And if that person was able to sample the future, say they had precognition, they would be able to craft an experiment in such a way and conduct the experiment at such a time, to give them the results that they want. Then, when they actually do the experiment it would look a lot like magic force beams come out of people's heads and push the world around, when in fact that didn't happen at all, they just took advantage of a fortuitous time.

There's independent evidence that we do have some form of precognition, and some people have it better than others, and often times it's unconscious, we have to be more careful how we interpret the result of these experiments. Maybe we're not really influencing the world, maybe we're taking advantage of knowledge about what the world can bring to bear. In the case of the water experiment that I did, when I went to Whole Foods and bought 4 bottles of water, and then I had to assign them A, B, C, and D, this is what created the two conditions of water. Well, what if the crystals in bottles A and B were better than the crystals in C and D, (because there are small differences in water) and what if I somehow knew that and I assigned it in that way, well we'd get exactly the same results that we actually got.

I didn't have, by any normal way of knowing, knowledge that the bottles would result in different crystals, but if I was able to sample possible futures, I might be able to figure it out. So we always have to keep this in mind when we run an experiment, that we do the best we can to make sure we don't have an ordinary explanation, like it's not a flaw and it's not a mistake. Even if we get significant results and we know it's not due to a conventional explanation, still there are many interpretations of the results that give quite a dramatically different picture of what we think is actually going on.

BH: That's an interesting way to look at it. At the conference, the group tried an experiment where 12 people took baby food jars of water and tried to place an intention on the water – just a word like horse, or love, or mother. Then the rest of the group came in and walked around to the different stations each containing one jar of the water and tried to pick up on what intention the water was holding. Aren't there numerous uncontrollable factors involved in this type of experiment, like what is really in the subconscious of someone trying to place an intent on an object, or the fact that none of the 12 people trying to put an intention in the water were Tibetan Buddhist monks with years of practice at focus and meditation?

Radin: You're right, in the realm of intention, we can think of it like a sports talent or musical talent. There will be the Tiger Woods of the world but most of us are never going to reach that level no matter how much we practice. You need both talent and practice, a lot of it in order to get really good at this, and that may not be such a bad thing.

There are lots of cautionary tales, from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, to the movie *Forbidden Planet*. It's a very common theme which asks the question, if your conscious or unconscious desires actually manifested, what would happen? The answer is, you would destroy yourself and the rest of the world very, very quickly because most of us don't have that good of control, especially over our unconscious desires, and if they are allowed to express into the world easily, then the game is over.

The people that I've tended to use in intention experiments, sometimes I used just ordinary people because they're interested, and we do see results but they are really, really weak, very weak. When I've used meditators, we get results which are much, much, much stronger, and the longer and more experienced the meditator, the better the results tend to be. There haven't been that many studies in parapsychology that have compared meditators vs. non-meditators, but of the studies I'm aware of, almost all of them show that the meditators do better. This may be for the very simple idea that the meditators are able to pay attention to the task.

If most psychology experiments ask somebody to do something in their head, pay attention to this, think about that, intend this and so on, if you're not used to following instructions of that type, especially if the nature of the intention is maybe for 30

seconds, for 30 seconds put your intention completely on this water and leave it there with this strong intention, most non-meditators can't do that. They can't do it for 30 seconds, they can do it for about a second and then they forget what they were doing. Their mind wanders immediately.

There may be a built in saving grace here that intention may have, under some conditions, extremely strong ability to influence the world, if that's in fact what's going on, but only certain people who are talented and practice an enormous amount will ever be able to get to that level. With large groups of people who are acting in a coherent fashion, even though they're not individually able to maintain strong intention for a long time, the effect of the group is that you could get a thousand people and for 5 seconds maybe they could act collectively like Tiger Woods by comparison. Or, take one highly trained or highly talented person and they can do what a thousand people can do.

BH: And that's what your random number generator experiments showed; that when a huge group of people focused on one thing, they created a shift in randomness.

Radin: Right. So there's something about the group that requires a high degree of coherence. I think the same is true for individuals though. The nice thing is people are different. And people are different in many different ways and some people have extreme talents, some of which fall into this general domain. Some people are extremely good intenders and some are extremely good perceivers. What we're beginning to learn is that if you're a scientist and you're a very good intender or perceiver, then your experiments will tend to work.

BH: Isn't there some term for that, where the person doing the experiment is so skeptical that it affects their results, no matter what other experimenters' tests show?

Radin: The term is called the sheep/goat effect. The sheep are the believers and the goats are the non-believers and these experiments give the same test to people who have very strong, different beliefs and the results are usually in alignment with the person's beliefs. So this probably has a psychological explanation that if you're not open to seeing a certain outcome, then you're not going to see it. Especially if you're very motivated not to see a certain result then you won't see it. If you're very motivated to see that result then you will see it. It may be nothing more mysterious than the nature of our perception is very strongly modulated by the nature of our belief.

I have great sympathy for people who are extremely skeptical because in their experience, they have never seen anything that they regard as unusual. And so they're given a completely rational response. They're saying, "In my experience, I've never seen anything that involves ESP, and I've never seen a UFO, or this, or anything else," and so their rational conclusion is that everyone else must be crazy. That's because it's not part of the world as they perceive it.

BH: I understand you have done some work with intentional chocolate [1].

Radin: Yes, in fact, we've done and published an experiment. This came about from thinking about this long line of experiments involving intention and water and wine and food, and almost every religious ritual in the world. And even in secular context, like in the bar where people are always toasting each other with alcohol, maybe just as an excuse to drink but it goes back so far, it's such an ancient idea that there's something important about intention and food.

So I was thinking about what's the difference between mom's chicken soup and the same ingredients out of a can? Mom's chicken soup feels a lot better to me than the same stuff out of a can and so maybe we can think of intention as a kind of ingredient in the food. In this case it wasn't just the intention but it's love. Is love something like an ingredient? Well, chefs in fancy restaurants don't normally think of love, I think, as part of their job, but I think they do pay attention to intention while cooking because they have a sense that people respond differently depending on what's going on in the kitchen.

To test this I discussed this idea with a man named Jim Walsh who owns a chocolate plantation in Hawaii. When we were discussing this, he was the one who reminded me that chocolate is the food of the gods. It's been considered quasi magical for a long time and chocolate is the most craved food in the world. So there's something inherently attractive about it and we wanted to do an experiment to see what would happen if people ate chocolate, some of which was treated with intention.

We wanted to push the chocolate in the direction that it normally goes anyway. What chocolate does when people eat it, it elevates their mood for a short period of time, 20 minutes or so. This is partially because of the caffeine and the theobromine, which are chemicals in the chocolate itself. We wanted to push it through intention. Tibetan Buddhist meditators and a Mongolian Shaman acted as the source of the intention. We asked them, with samples of chocolate in front of them, to impress into the chocolate the intention that anybody who ate that chocolate would feel greater vigor, less fatigue and a better sense of well being.

We also had identical pieces of chocolate that weren't exposed to such intentions and we did a double blind experiment with

60 people. Some of them got the treated chocolate and some got the control chocolate, they didn't know which was which. They both knew what the nature of the experiment was, so this is a placebo control in that everyone was told that they might get intentional chocolate but they might get controlled chocolate. We were also blind to what they were receiving, so that's the second blind.

At the end of the day we had them think back and record their mood over the course of the day using a standard mood reporting scale which is 35 adjectives. The scale is called the Profile of Mood States. This is a very popular questionnaire that's used in thousands of studies each year. On the three middle days of the week, at 10:00am and 3:00pm, we asked people to eat the chocolate that we'd given them, a half an ounce at 10:00 and a half an ounce at 3:00 and then at the end of the day to record their moods. So this is done over the course of 7 days, first two days were a control, or a base line to capture what their mood was, then three days of eating chocolate and two more days as an after effect. What we had predicted was that by the third day of eating chocolate, if there was any effect, it would show up by then.

The analysis showed that there was a significant difference in the reported mood in the two conditions and the mood in the intentional chocolate group was significantly better as compared to the mood on the control condition. Then we did a second analysis, which we had planned beforehand. We figured if someone tended to eat a pound of chocolate a day, that asking them to eat just a little bit extra may not make much of a difference. So we planned to separate out the data according to how much chocolate each individual tended to eat, on average, and then take the grand average and only look at people who tended to not eat much chocolate during the average week. We found a much, much stronger effect in those people, as we'd sort of hoped to find. The less chocolate people tended to eat, the more this intentional chocolate had a bigger effect.

BH: Do you foresee many more intention products coming onto the market now. Is this the new craze?

Radin: I know of two others. There is something called [H2Om intentional water](#) [2], and then there is another one, a company called [Creo Mundi](#) [3] a Canadian based company that sells intentional clothing. That's kind of a clever idea. What they have looks like just a regular t-shirt or a sweatshirt on the outside, but imprinted on the inside are positive words from all different languages. So when you put it on, you know what's on the inside and so you have this private intention that's on you.

BH: Have you tried the intentional chocolate?

Radin: Yes.

BH: How is it?

Radin: It's a really, really good chocolate to begin with. So, whether it has intention in it or not, it almost doesn't matter.

BH: As if we need an excuse to eat chocolate!

Check out these intention products:

[H2om water](#) [4]

[Intentional chocolate](#) [5]

[Intention clothing](#) [6]

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