

...with Jaak Panksepp

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One inspiration

None more than Darwin. His love of life and openness to its subtle complexities remains unsurpassed in many of our minds.

One moment that changed the course of your career

Starting graduate school in clinical psychology, I had a chance to study brain self-stimulation reward in 1965, as a Veteran's Administration Hospital Trainee, and I was hooked by the possibility of really understanding the causal infrastructure of our affective life and shifted promptly to physiological psychology.

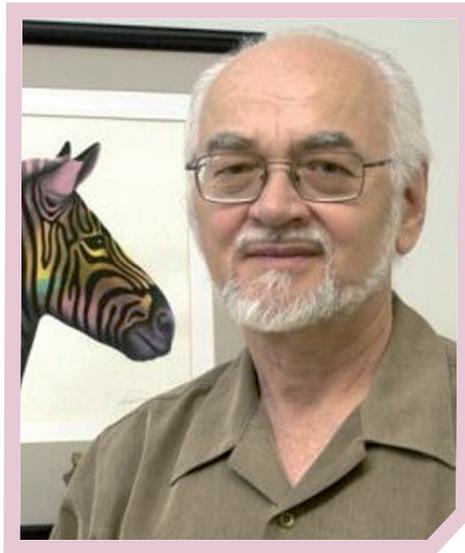
One book that you think all psychologists should read

My *Affective Neuroscience* if you seek understanding of the emotional foundations of human/animal minds.

One way of understanding 'the chills' evoked by music

'Skin orgasms' may be closely linked to our primal social emotional circuits; there may be basic neurochemical

similarities between the chilling emotions evoked by music and those engendered by separation distress and grief. I talk about this in my 1995 paper in *Music Perception* (15, 171–207).



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One thing that you would change about psychology

Forty years ago all students majoring in psychology should have become masters of functional neuroscience. We still don't have the will to emulate biologists who realised soon after Watson and Crick that every biologist must understand genetics. We can't fathom mind without understanding the brain. Evolutionary psychologists in love with 'modularity' in adult brains should understand that at birth the neocortex is largely tabula rasa. Even neocortical capacity for vision is learned. Evolved functional specialisations (aka 'modularity') are sub-neocortical.

One challenge you think psychology faces

Pre-clinical work with animal models of psychiatric disorders must focus on understanding affective networks of mammalian brains as foundational for mental disorders. What came first in evolution generally controls what came later. Emotional feeling arose first in ancient caudal and medial brain regions; they are not simply neocortical 'read-outs' of bodily commotions.

One role for play in children's lives

Play is essential for healthy prosocial mental development, and if our kids do not get enough, it is wise for society to increase opportunities (build 'play sanctuaries') so children have ready access to this tonic. If we respect their playful emotional nature, they have many reasons to respect us and be less depressed.

One more question

Can we ever scientifically understand the human mind if we do not understand the animal mind? After we discovered tickle-induced ultrasonic 'laughter-type' chirps in rats in 1996, we critically evaluated the idea from many angles (including its reward value – young rats love being tickled) and sought to share this discovery in *Nature*. A prominent animal 'emotion' researcher torpedoed us with 'even if this phenomenon were true, you would never be able to convince your colleagues'. Gosh, whatever happened to the rules of evidence?

Much more online at
www.thepsychologist.org.uk

resource

Panksepp, J. & Biven, L. (2011). *The archaeology of mind: Neuroevolutionary origins of human emotion*. New York: Norton. 'The evidence that other animals are feeling creatures is close to definitive, so why do we still disregard that experienced "rewards" and "punishments" operate through affective changes in their brains? Let the conversation begin!'

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