



Mind from Body: Experience from Neural Structure

Don M. Tucker

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Although we no longer live in the relative simplicity of the Jurassic age, and even though we are not aware of them, primitive mammalian brain that developed in that era still live on inside our skulls and remain crucial to our daily functions. The challenges we face today in the information age--how to process the vastly greater, more varied and quickly changing inputs we receive--are very different from those that our ancestors faced during the Jurassic age. As we struggle to process overwhelming amounts of information, we may sometimes ask whether our brains can change to help us adapt. In fact, our brains have always changed gradually, so the questions we should ask are really how our brains will change, and whether we will be able to take full advantage of the changes, perhaps even enhance them, to help us keep up with the accelerating evolution of machines. To understand how our brains will change, we need to understand how they evolved in the first place, as well as how the interactions of the resulting brain structures, including the relics of primitive mammalian and even reptilian processes, influence how we think and act. In Mind from Body, Don Tucker, one of the most original thinkers about organic information processing, provides a fascinating analysis of how our brains have become what they are today and speculates intriguingly about what they could be tomorrow. He presents important research that explains how personal experience creates the emotional and motivational bases of each of our thoughts, even though we are usually not aware that it is happening. Tucker shows that in exploring how these bodily thought processes still determine how we react to the world and make decisions, we can become more rational in our actions, free ourselves from fruitless or even self-destructive patterns of behavior, become more efficient, and perhaps even wiser. By combining the most up-to-date scientific thought and hands-on experimental results, expressed clearly and compellingly, along with a story of hypothetical decision-making, Tucker explicates what is happening behind our thought processes as our minds struggle to maintain the pace of the information age.

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