

The following [abstract for a 90' symposium at the Mind & Life CRC 2020 conference](#) was co-created on August 14-16, following the ESRI 2020. **Status:** since [our original submission](#) was **NOT accepted**, a new abstract for a 15' paper presentation has been **submitted** and was **accepted**, and the presentation was given by Wolfgang.

New submission for 15' paper presentation at CRC 2020

Authors: (* = presenter)

- Wolfgang Lukas*
- Dav Clark
- Annika Lübbert
- Sophie-Anne Perkins
- Mary Rees
- Frank Schumann
- Mareike Smolka
- Fr. Francis Tiso
- Marieke van Vugt

Only a single presenter is allowed for the 15' paper presentation. The names above (i.e. the main contributors to the original and new proposal) were included in the submission, and were printed by the organizers in the conference program.

Note: as we cannot make this presentation interactive and participatory, we aim to self-organize an event some time after the CRC, e.g. later in 2020. This event would be centered around our theme "The Mindful Researcher" and could include several presenters as well as participatory formats (e.g. break-outs, open space, word-clouds) to allow for collaborative exploration and interactive dialogue, to open the conversation to participants' experiences and contributions.

Again, a big **thank you** to ALL for co-creating, discussions, and mental / heartfelt support!

----- ***submitted abstract (250 words max)*** -----

The Mindful Researcher: Transforming Academia from Within

Today's academic environment is dominated by fierce competition for scarce resources. The majority of researchers struggle with chronic publication and career advancement pressures. Moreover, a lack of collaboration and support structures, rewards based on publication metrics, and increasing workload often lead to reduced quality of research (e.g., publication bias and

hyped results) and life (e.g., burnout). In this process, science loses invaluable protagonists on the urgent quest to respond to our societal, humanitarian and ecological challenges.

Under such systemic pressures, researchers (particularly contemplative practitioners) also face the challenge of enacting their values through their academic work. Consequently, they have been increasingly advocating that academia be rendered more compassionate, generous and inclusive.

As a growing collaborative, we explore the values, practices, and structures that can sustain such a transformation. How can diverse stakeholders, including funding agencies and the public, contribute to this change? How can interdisciplinary collaboration and mutual support be skillfully embraced by research communities? What resources can social, embodied, or contemplative practices and research provide in this direction? How can they assist researchers in maintaining their grounding in compassion, generosity and deliberate action?

Our vision for transforming academia focuses on practices that align larger social structures and collaborative projects with individual needs and values. We present possible pathways to integrate these practices and foster skill and integrity in our academic environments. Furthermore, we invite participants to join our interdisciplinary dialogue and collaborative exploration, to advance an academic and research culture that is alive with purpose and meaning.

----- ***submitted NEW abstract end*** -----

Original submission for 90' symposium at CRC 2020

Presenters: (* = moderator)

- Wolfgang Lukas*
- Francis Tiso
- Annika Lübbert
- Mary Rees

Each symposium will be allotted **90 minutes total**, including Q&A time.

Note: we intend to make the format interactive and participatory, e.g. including 1-2 short break-outs followed by word-cloud and dialogues, to open the conversation and hear participants' shared experiences and contributions.

Contributors to the co-creative process leading to this abstract submission include:

Wolfgang Lukas, Annika Lübbert, Frank Schumann, Mary Rees, Sophie-Anne Perkins, Mareike Smolka, Daniel Meling, Hendrik Stark, Francesco Michele Noera, Rocio Martinez Vivot, Oussama Abdoun, Fr. Francis Tiso, Amy Cohen Varela, ...

Thank you to ALL for co-creating, discussions, and mental / heartfelt support!

----- ***submitted abstract (750 words max)*** -----

[Symposium Field]

- Other: Research Collaboration

[Thematic Tags]

- Research Collaboration
- Systemic Change
- Academic Culture

The Mindful Researcher: Transforming Academia from Within

Collaboration is foundational to nature, human culture, and scientific research. However, today's academic environment is largely based on fierce competition for scarce resources. The majority of researchers struggle with chronic publication and career pressure and a genuine lack of sufficient support structures. Such factors can lead to reduced quality of research (e.g. publication bias) and life (e.g. burnout). Ultimately, this undermines public trust in science and may even yield harmful consequences for humanity and our planet: When researchers see themselves forced to abandon their once beloved profession, science loses invaluable protagonists on the urgent quest to respond to our societal, humanitarian and ecological challenges.

Contemplative researchers in particular face the challenge of enacting the values that they cultivate through their practice under such systemic pressures. Consequently, they have increasingly been advocating that academia be rendered more compassionate, generous and inclusive. However, we believe that such transformation is more likely to occur when „bottom-up“ individual and group-level change meets „top-down“ organizational and systemic change.

During this symposium, we will investigate the values, practices, structures, roles, etc., that are required to sustain such a transformation on all levels. How can diverse stakeholders (including funding agencies and the public) contribute to this change? How can the challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinary collaboration be understood and skillfully embraced by research

communities? More specifically, what resources can contemplative practices and the existing findings of contemplative research provide in this direction?

We would like to explore these questions collaboratively and interdisciplinarily, from diverse angles such as physics, cognitive science, religious studies, and contemplative scholarship. Furthermore, we intend to turn our lens of inquiry towards several possible roles that can be fulfilled by contemplative researchers:

- **The Mindful Academic:** acting mindfully and compassionately, he places his contemplative and scientific practice on equal footing, by building a community that supports the cultivation of shared values and sustainable research practices, and generously allowing time for what arises in silence or through generative listening.
- **The Embodied Academic:** knowing through her lived participation in the world, she invests in diverse forms of listening and expression. Her body-mind is alive with presence, at ease with impermanence, ready to acknowledge limitations. Examples of this include: movement and awareness practice, non-verbal expression, and open spaces for witnessing and reflection.
- **The EnActivist Academic:** striving for systemic change through grass-roots contemplative activism, they direct individual and shared contemplative practice towards safeguarding academia from the inadvertent proliferation of exploitative dynamics within it.
- **The Playful Academic:** trust and invitation form the basis of her explorative approach, which celebrates playfulness and curiosity as crucial elements of a purposeful, satisfying and productive academia. She co-creates and encounters the world, open to experiences of surprise and unexpected competence, which can be enabled via genuinely shared stories, or offers of mutual trust and generosity (taking turns at facilitating collaborative experimentation, readiness to improvise or follow an impulse).
- **The Collaborative Researcher:** trusting a foundational set of shared values – an “ethical code” that fosters dedication to highest-quality research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and contemplation – he manifests generosity through co-creative “best practices” (including participatory decision-making, internal peer review, mentoring dyads). His community’s quality of contemplation and interaction provides a strong foundation for successful collaboration and research that can benefit all beings.
- **The Responsible Researcher:** dedicated to ethical, inclusive, equitable, and caring research, she moves beyond frames of metrics, funding and other incentive structures towards participatory research processes. Instead of performing risk analyses, she deliberates on societal impacts and uses methods and tools that integrate ethical reflections with research practices.
- **The Contemplative Scholar-Researcher:** residing in deep phenomenological awareness, her philosophy is grounded in uncertainty and tentative, rather than definitive, outcomes. She strives for relationality across all systemic levels and between systems, and bases her theory, design, and methods in lived experience (e.g. epoché, receptive awareness of enactive processes, relational practices such as Insight and Bohm Dialogue).

In the spirit of “being the change we wish to see in academia”, we would particularly like to focus on elucidating pathways and supporting conditions for researchers to find and express value, purpose and meaning through their professional vocation. Therefore, we also seek to embody these principles through the interactive format and moderation of the symposium. Besides shared presentations, we will offer different engaging modalities, including space for silence, contemplation, movement, and embodied presence. We will invite participants to share experiences and explore possible future steps through dialogue, in order to deepen this inquiry and advance the transformation of academia and research culture together.

----- ***submitted abstract end*** -----