



Neuroscience reveals the happiest man in the world

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin have cited Buddhist monk and molecular geneticist, Matthieu Ricard, as the happiest man in the world. Their revelation stems from extensive trials demonstrating that the 66-year-old's brain produces staggering levels of gamma waves (attributed to attention, consciousness, memory and learning), never before recorded in neuroscience.

Ricard, who is the French interpreter for the Dalai Lama and esteemed author of bestselling works on the science of happiness, is no doubt relieved that science has finally caught up with what he already knew to be true: namely that meditation really is the route to lasting happiness. "It's a wonderful area of research because it shows that meditation is not just blissing out under a mango tree but it completely changes your brain and therefore changes what you are," said Ricard.

The study's MRI scans showed that Ricard experienced immense levels of "positive emotions" in the left pre-frontal cortex of the brain; the neurological home of happiness. Conversely, the right-hand side, responsible for negative thoughts, was found to be suppressed. The same applied, if only to a slightly lesser degree, to other "long-term meditators" amassing 10,000 hours of meditation each. Novice meditators will be happy to hear that further studies confirmed that even those who only dabbled in meditation displayed increased levels of happiness too.

Ricard told The Independent: "The mind is malleable. Our life can be greatly transformed by even a minimal change in how we manage our thoughts and perceive and interpret the world..."

