

## Review

David and Austin Perlmutter, MDs., Brain Wash, New York, 2020

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This father and son team of MDs tackles a very significant, big picture challenge for humanity in the modern age – what they refer to as “Disconnection Syndrome.” In this regard, they make a very valuable overview contribution identifying six key variables that collectively illuminate this separation-isolation syndrome: 1) Isolation impact of run away technology – especially social media, 2) Poor diet – especially loss of diversity and dependency on processed foods, 3) Separation from nature and loss of integration in natural cycles, 4) Loss of sufficient physical activity in a sedentary lifestyle, 5) Sleep deprivation, and 6) Fractured sense of self. While many have identified some of these variables as the source of problems in modern life, few have gathered them together under a unified conceptual umbrella, and most importantly, no one has related these variables collectively to the physiological components and processes of the brain.

The Perlmutter's assert that the research evidence supports the conclusion that these variables constitute an integrated set that negatively impacts the established human mental operation that evolved and stabilized in hunter-gatherer societies during 98% of our 250,000 year history as homo sapiens. They identify the plethora of diseases that flourish in modern society as a result of these negative impacts – most of which are evidenced in mental dysfunction, social interactive isolation, chronic stress, and generalized inflammation.

Brain Wash is well written with abundant references to the supporting research. The work includes the description of a recommended ten day implementation trial period to introduce the lifestyle changes that are needed to reclaim our mental, social and ecological heritage. The Perlmutter's also identify a variety of recipes to encourage the consumption of “real food” rather than the grossly addictive and nutritionally deficient offerings of the processed food industry.

As a social scientist focused on artistic behavior, I suggest that true Art – not to be confused with addictive, sensational Entertainment – can play a significant role in the “rediscovery” of the integrated, “happy” life and self that the Perlmutter's identify as their goal. Art therapy, which has demonstrated its potential unification function both in society and in the discovery of the expanded self, supports the mindfulness component in the Perlmutter solution for the Disconnection Syndrome. In Brain Wash, the Perlmutter's offer a great deal that is worthy of consideration; but, there is always more!