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From Monkey-mind to Embodied Performance Presence

Sacred traditions in the East and the West as well as research in psychology concur that a typical mind constantly wanders on topics unrelated to his/her current tasks. I will first present research from our and other labs on mind-wandering in everyday life, and then discuss how some spontaneous or induced alterations of consciousness bring about a greater continuity of conscious experience. The third part of the presentation will focus on how ritual and performance experts use three processes to create a greater sense of presence in themselves and their audience through various processes:

- a) "Incantations" and verbally or otherwise suggested experiences.
- b) Reinterpretation of ongoing experiences.
- c) Use of intentional, physical actions to diminish or eliminate the gap between mental events and physical actions.
- d) Developing reverberating circuits between the ritualist/performer and the audience to create communal experiences.

This presentation will traverse through various areas of inquiry including laboratory research, fieldwork, analysis of successful and unsuccessful performances, and personal experience, to attempt to shed light on that rare creature, a fully embodied performance presence.

Etzel Cardeña PhD holds the endowed Thorsen Chair in Psychology at Lund University in Sweden, where he directs the Centre for Research on Consciousness and Anomalous Psychology (CERCAP). His main areas of research include exceptional (anomalous) experiences including ostensible psi phenomena, the neurophenomenology of hypnosis and dissociation, and psychological acute reactions to traumatic events. He has been elected fellow of a number of professional organizations and his more than 300 publications include *Varieties of Anomalous Experience* and the two-volume *Altering Consciousness: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. He has also worked professionally as a theatre director, actor, and playwright in México, the USA and Sweden, and is currently the Artistic Director of the International Theatre of Malmö. He has been a consultant to the University of Huddersfield's Center for Psychophysical Performance Research and the NODE Center for Curatorial Studies.