JOE L. PARKIN MEMORIAL LECTURE ON AGING
Sponsored by the UI Center on Aging

Stronger Brains in Older Citizens: New Strategies for Managing Organic Brain Health

Michael Merzenich, PhD
Director, Brain Plasticity Institute
Chief Scientific Officer and Board Chairman, Posit Science
Professor Emeritus, Departments of Otolaryngology and Physiology
University of California, San Francisco
San Francisco, California

Wednesday, April 4, 2018
11:00 am
Prem Sahai Auditorium (1110A MERF)
Reception immediately following in the MERF Atrium

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For more information, please contact
Nancy Davin, Center on Aging, at 319-384-4566, or nancy-davin@uiowa.edu

With a long history of studies of the way that the brain is changed by how we engage it, Dr. Michael Merzenich is often described as “the father of brain plasticity science”. His research groups at UCSF, Scientific Learning, and Posit Science have been world leaders in translating this science to help both normal and struggling people get the most out of their plastic brains. He’ll outline strategies for growing and sustaining your brain health. Merzenich has won many international awards and prizes for this ground-breaking work.

Over the past several decades, scientists have radically revised their perspective about the origins of human abilities. We now know that the brain is continuously “plastic”, changing physically as a function of how it is used—that every important ability is a product of these progressive brain-change processes—and that your individual personhood is a continuous work in progress. Merzenich’s team conducted studies demonstrating that these brain remodeling processes can be engaged, in one mode, to advance human abilities, and in a second mode, to degrade them. Completely natural “negative” plasticity has now been shown to contribute to the expressions of a wide variety of neurological and psychiatric illnesses, and to a progression to dementia and Parkinson’s in normal aging. Importantly, these “negative” progressions are inherently biological reversible. After reviewing this science, Merzenich shall describe new lifestyle and computer-based strategies for growing your human abilities, and for sustaining organic brain health.