



Altered Egos: How the Brain Creates the Self

Todd E. Feinberg

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In *Altered Egos*, Dr. Todd Feinberg presents a new theory of the self based on his first-hand experience as both a psychiatrist and neurologist.

Feinberg introduces dozens of intriguing cases of patients whose disorders have resulted in what he calls "altered egos": a change in the brain that transforms the boundaries of the self. He describes patients who suffer from "alien hand syndrome" where one hand might attack the patient's own throat, patients with frontal lobe damage who invent fantastic stories about their lives, paralyzed patients who reject and disown one of their limbs. He then argues that the brain damage suffered by these people has done more than simply impair certain functions--it has fragmented their sense of self.

From these fascinating cases, Feinberg proposes a new model of the self that links the workings of the brain with unique and personal features of the mind, such as *meaning*, *purpose*, and *being*. Drawing on his own and other evidence, he explains how the unified self, while not located in one or another brain region, arises out of the staggering complexity and number of the brain's component parts.

Lucid, insightful, filled with fascinating case studies and provocative new ideas, *Altered Egos* promises to change the way we think about human consciousness and the creation and maintenance of human identity.

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