

Recognition of Meaning - Neurophysiology of Perspective Taking

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Humans estimate to what extent perceived objects and events have a personal value or relevance for them. These are probabilistic judgments representing the default first person perspective of “what does it mean to me?” Meaning making is based on memories of prior experience and reflects personal standards and predispositions such as attitudes, desires, and hope or abstract categories of general value such as moral, justice, and ethics. It is operative in all human psychological functions including perception, learning and social interaction enabling logical predictions about future events. A limitation of meaning making is that subjects judge the credibility of their inferences and predictions in terms of trustworthiness, convincingness, and substantiating evidence. In the positive case the subject believes his/her personal perspective to be true or granted, although he/she does not know whether the information is really true. Empirical studies have shown that such a judgment or personal perspective taking occurs early during processing of the sensory information with critical involvement of the medial frontal cortex.