

New Age Healing and the Language of (Pseudo)science: A Rhetorical Case Study of the Works of Joe Dispenza

– A reduced PDF version

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U.S. NEWS

How Joseph Dispenza Seduced America With Pseudoscience

| SPIN DOCTOR |

Maria Shriver, Russell Brand, Maria Menounos, and Ana de Armas are among his devotees. But is he perverting science for popularity?



Emily Shugerman
Senior Reporter

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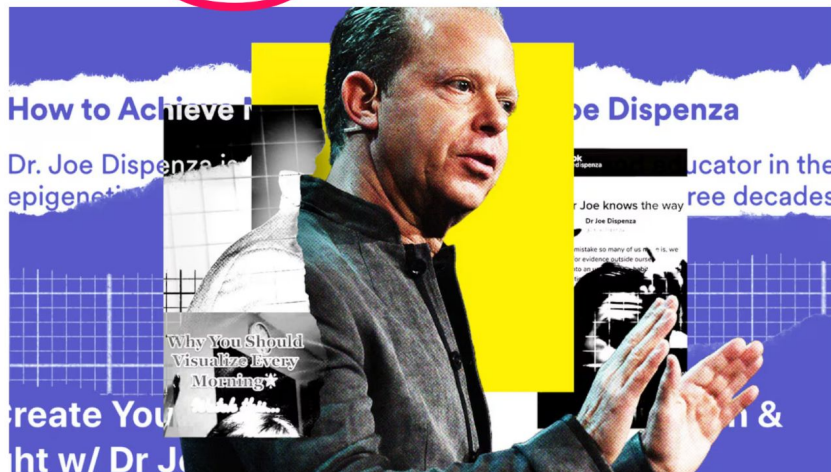


Photo Illustration by Luis Rendon/The Daily Beast/Getty Images and official_drjoedispenza/TikTok

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Dan Ladden-Hall



The combination of climate change, the COVID pandemic, and the Trump presidency has spurred a heightened worship of science on the left. Herbs and elixirs have been rebranded as “plant medicine” and algae-eating yoga devotees stick “Science Is Real” signs in their front yards. Dispenza is a perfect blend of these, a new-age guru who uses the language of science to make his mysticism seem slightly more mainstream. [...] But what makes Dispenza’s approach even more appealing is his ability to go beyond science, to use the language of physicists and neurobiologists to make grand claims about immortality and alternate dimensions and miracle cures that someone with a firm grasp on the science would never claim (Shugerman).

Pseudoscience and Joe Dispenza

Pseudoscience

- › Claims scientific basis without empirical support
- › Lacks adherence to scientific method
- › Includes alternative medicine, astrology, new-age philosophies

Recent Trends

- › Figures like Dispenza bring pseudoscience into mainstream
- › Prompts critical examination of rhetorical strategies

Joe Dispenza

- › Chiropractor and author
- › Promotes self-healing through mental practices
- › Cites scientific research to support claims

Key Works

- › Evolve Your Brain (2007)
- › Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself (2012)
- › You Are the Placebo (2014)
- › Becoming Supernatural (2017)

Literature Review:

Language style and rhetoric of the "new age" movement

New Age movement characteristics:

- Blends Eastern and Western spiritual traditions
- Holistic approach to understanding the universe
- Emphasis on individual spiritual growth
- Particularly significant in health and alternative medicine fields

Common language style in New Age writing:

- Emotional appeals
- Use of metaphors
- Personalized affirmation

Context: Joe Dispenza's Books

- Popular self-improvement "self-help" works
- Targeted at non-scientific readers
- Published by non-specialist publishers

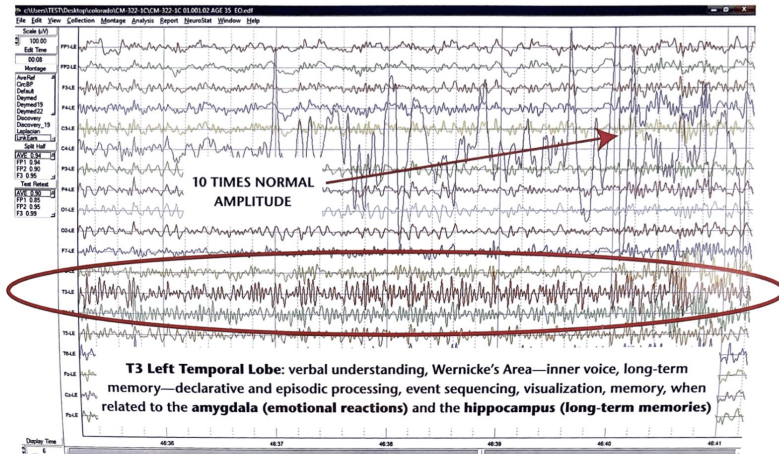


Figure 10.19

HEIGHTENED ACTIVITY IN THE FRONTAL LOBE

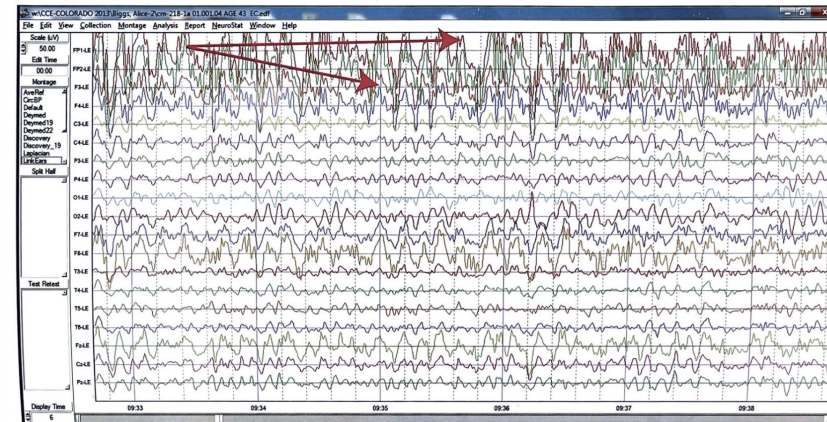
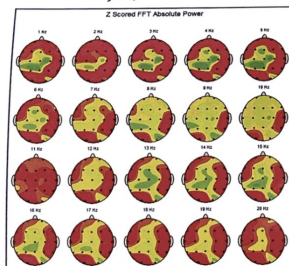
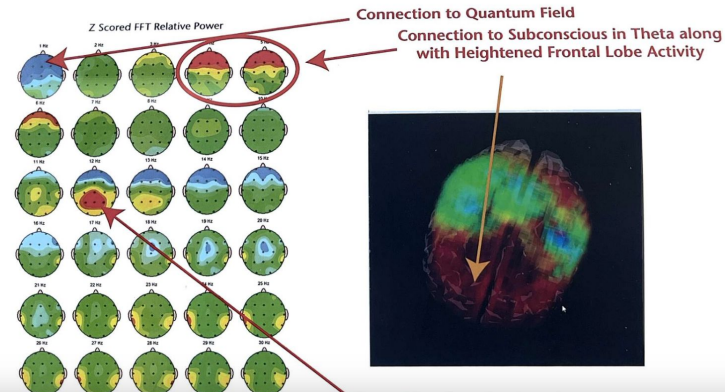
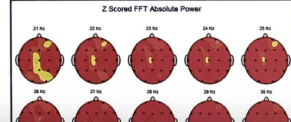
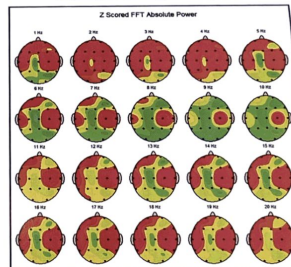


Figure 10.15C

February 20, 2013—Carefree, AZ



July 11, 2013—Englewood, CO



Dispenza's Redefinition of the Supernatural

- Reframes "supernatural" as achievable through scientific practice
- Positions mystical experiences as natural outcomes of self-regulation