

Inside Out: Behind-the-Scenes Science With Dacher Keltner, PhD

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Psi Chi:

Six years ago, Pete Docter (the director of Pixar's *Monsters, Inc* and *Up*) made a phone call to explain his ideas for a film about how emotions shape people's interior lives and relationships with others. On the other end of the call was Dacher Keltner, PhD, an emotion psychologist at the University of California, Berkeley. Dr. Keltner agreed that these would be great topics for a movie and became a major consultant throughout the development of Pixar's *Inside Out*. Today, he discusses his interactions with Pixar, as well as some of the scientific thought that went into this highly successful and well-liked 2015 film.

In his own words, Dr. Keltner says, "What I mainly did at Pixar was to serve as a scientific sounding board for their core interests such as how people remember emotions and how our current emotions shape our recollection of the past." In addition to many e-mails and phone calls, he estimates that he visited Pixar Studios at least five or six times to speak with small groups of three to seven. These groups included people such as Docter; Docter's right-hand man, Ronnie del Carmen; and some of the film's animators. "Sometimes," he explains, "I would talk about the science of emotional expression or neurophysiology of emotion. Then, most of the time, I would really just answer questions and have conversations."

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