

Ellen Langer to be Honored at Liberty Science Center Genius Gala

April 13, 2016



APS James McKeen Cattell Fellow **Ellen Langer** is among four leading figures in science and technology being honored on May 20th at the Liberty Science Center Genius Gala, an annual celebration of science and creativity. The recipient of four distinguished scientist awards and a Guggenheim Fellowship joins world-renowned architect Frank Gehry, paleontologist Jack Horner, and astrophysicist Kip Thorne among the 2016 honorees announced by the nonprofit Liberty Science Center (LSC), an interactive museum in Jersey City, New Jersey.

LSC is honoring Langer — a Harvard social psychologist — in recognition of her achievements as the “mother of mindfulness.” Langer has written extensively on the illusion of control, aging, stress, decision-making, health, and of course, mindfulness. She is particularly well-known for her findings on the power of social cues to make us feel and act younger and healthier than our chronological age. In a classic 1981 study, Langer had elderly men live in a retreat that was retrofitted to look like 1959 and speak of the past in the present tense as if they were living in that year. The men experienced improvements in vision, hearing, strength, and other abilities, and actually appeared younger as well.

Langer is the author of 12 books and more than 200 research articles. Her best-selling books include *Mindfulness: The Power of Mindful Learning*; *On Becoming an Artist: Reinventing Yourself Through Mindful Creativity*; and *Counterclockwise: Mindful Health and the Power of Possibility*.

“It was an unexpected but certainly much appreciated honor,” Langer said about the award.

LSC has held the Genius Gala for the past 5 years to honor great thinkers in science and technology. Past honorees include Jane Goodall, Oliver Sacks, Temple Grandin, Richard Branson, Jeff Bezos, J. Craig Venter, and Vint Cerf. About 700 people are expected to attend this year’s gala, hosted by LSC

President and CEO Paul Hoffman with celebrity presenters Susan Sarandon, Buzz Aldrin, and singer-songwriter will.i.am.