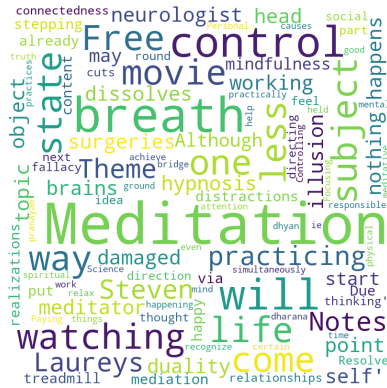


Making Sense

(Based on Podcast Series by Sam Harris)

227: Knowing The Mind



227: Knowing The Mind

A Conversation with Steven Laureys

- Theme: Meditation
- Steven Laureys, a practicing neurologist working on damaged brains, surgeries under hypnosis.
- Meditation: subject-object duality is an illusion. At one point, the meditator and the topic of meditation dissolves into one. No control, just happens.
- There is nothing watching, no 'self' in head. Although you may start with watching breath, but the state comes when mindfulness has no subject.
- Meditation: doing less, stepping out of the treadmill.
- Due to realizations via mediation, you already are happy/content and then you put that in relationships, social connectedness and not the other way round.

227: Knowing The Mind

- Meditation cuts the idea that you are 'thinking'. There is no Free will.
- Free Will: You don't have control on what thought will come next. You feel you are directing the movie, but the direction itself is part of the movie.
- Resolve the fallacy by doing both simultaneously ie have a good life, do work, achieve things, at the same time recognize that its just happening on its own [but practically in life, you are held responsible for what you do].
- Science is ground truth for even spiritual practices. Paying attention certain ways only causes meditation.

[Personal: Breath (pranayam) is the bridge from physical to mental. Controlling breath can control mind, relax it. Focusing on breath (dharana) can help get into meditative state (dhyana)]

228: Doing Good



228: Doing Good

A Conversation with William MacAskill

- Themes: Generosity, effective altruism.
- Minimum 10% of pre-tax income to most effective charity ("Give-Well")
- Better if done anonymously? Not really!! Taking public pledge.
- Altruism needed? Be self-made?
- You didn't pick location, parents, timing and plain luck. So, not really "self"-made. Like Will in Free-Will may not be really be Free.
- Even if you feel you have earned it, why not help? Have compassion for less fortunate.

228: Doing Good

- Solutions should come from the ground. Example of failure: 25hrs on play-pump needed for one household.
- What are targets for charity? Homeless in USA or poor in Bangladesh?
- Make life boat better, to save more.
- To alleviate animal suffering: be vegetarian, support artificial meat research
- Good example: Bill Gates lives a luxurious life and donates huge sum as well, rather than deciding to live like a monk while giving away everything else. Even other rich are comfortable doing same. Don't stigmatize wealth.

[Personal: Apart from sponsoring blind girls education, additionally, I give away everything I earn apart from my job, ie from my speaking engagements, online courses, teaching, etc.]

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