

9.128 Review of 'Your resonant self. Guided meditations and exercises to engage your brain's capacity for healing.'

Sarah Peyton, W W Norton, New York, 2017

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10.4.18

The cause of mental sickness is a savage Default Mode Network (not chemical imbalances) Eureka at last. Sarah Peyton is a healer who has studied neuroscience, and shows that the cause of mental sickness is a savage **Default Mode Network** (DMN) and that healing needs meditation, (not medication), by cultivating our **Resonant Self Witness** (RSW). The way we behave depends on how our brain is wired, not on chemical imbalances, unless we have put them there by taking drugs.

Summarising the key findings of this seminal book, we can choose to use our minds in many different modes, (such as talking, listening, acting, moving, watching, sleeping) These are networks of neural connections between different lobes of our brain, by which we can bring sensory input and memories onto different screens of our mind, like a manual telephone exchange. The Default Mode Network (DMN) is the default state when we stop **doing** something, and are just **being**, which is the altered state of meditation. We can then hear our inner critic, (amygdala) which is like a smoke detector. If we are mentally healthy, our DMN is calm, but if we are mentally sick our DMN is savage with intrusive thoughts and hostile voices, which may trigger 'fire' when there is none, activating inappropriate behaviour.

We quieten our chattering DMN by switching to another mode (like video games), and doing something or by using drugs (street or prescription), which numb the painful feelings from our hostile thoughts. However, when we stop doing or using, our DMN intrudes again, which is why we may find it difficult to meditate. The DMN concept explains compulsive and obsessive behaviour, and why we may do to excess, as workaholics, or fitness freaks. Animals have no neocortex, so always have a calm, watchful DMN, so seem to meditate all the time, setting a good example of a calm nervous system (which is why we keep pets). Our DMN is partly inherited (nature) but it is also nurture, (conditioning)

Luckily, thanks to neuroplasticity, we are not stuck with how we are now, as we can develop our **Resonant Self Witness** (RSW) with Sarah's meditations to calm down our DMN and rewire our brains. Sarah says the RSW is 'the part of the brain which is capable of self warmth and self regulation... and is the experience of feeling supported and held. In the brain this shows up as an easy, self-supportive dialogue between the Pre Frontal Cortex (PFC) and the amygdala/limbic system, which has the effect of shifting the savage and traumatised DMN, the automatic voice of self-hate, and self-recrimination into self-accompaniment of a kind, resonant DMN, thereby increasing our capacity for attuning and resonating with another human being with curiosity, self-warmth and self regulation. It is the PFC in which emotion is noticed and named, and where we can hold attention to bring attunement to self and other.' (p 44) Although Sarah wisely does not use these words, the RSW is what mystics call our 'soul' or 'heart', and what I call the 'operator' in the computer system metaphor, in which the body is the hardware, and the mind is the software.

(See paper 9.91 of www.reginaldkapp.org).

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Your Resonant Self

Guided Meditations and Exercises
to Engage Your
Brain's Capacity for Healing



Sarah Peyton

Foreword by Bonnie Badenoch