

## Summary of Buddha's Brain

Chapter 1 The Self-Transforming Brain: what brain states underlie the mental states of happiness, love and wisdom? How can we use our mind to stimulate and strengthen these positive brain states? When your mind changes, your brain changes.

Chapter 2 The Evolution of Suffering: Sticks are stronger than carrots. Brain detects negative information faster than positive. Brain is more sensitive to negative info than positive.

Chapter 3 The First and Second Dart: Inescapable physical or mental discomfort is the first dart - Pain. Our reaction to these events is the second dart - Suffering.

Chapter 4 Taking in the Good: Keep a positive experience in awareness while a painful one is sensed in the background of awareness.

Chapter 5 Cooling the Fires: use the tools of yoga to stimulates the Pns and sooth the SNS.

Chapter 6: Strong Intentions - strength applied to clear and apporproiate goals sustained over time: Patanjali: practice sustained over time, carried on with devotion, becomes steadfast.

Chapter 7 Equanimity: Being present in the world without being upset by it, being aware of feelings and watch as they come and go.

Chapter 8 Two Wolves in the Heart: restrain one and feed the other.

Chapter 9 Compassion and Assertion: Establish your personal code of relationship observances. Be aware of the suffering of others and remain established in your own values.

Chapter 10 Boundless Kindness: be assertive without falling into ill-will. Turn ill-will to goodwill.

Chapter 11 Foundations of Mindfulness: remember that what flows through your awareness sculpts your brain, and how your brain is sculpted determines the nature of your experience of the world. Be aware of your awareness.

Chapter 12 Blissful Concentration: Concentration gives insight into the causes of both suffering and inner peace.

Chapter 13 Relaxing the Self: Aspects of self are based in brain functions.

- Reflexive self - “I am solving a problem.” ACC & PFC
- Emotional self- “I am upset.” amygdala, hypothalamus, basal ganglia.
- Autobiographical self - sense of “I am me having this life.” Reflexive + emotional self, absent in meditative states.
- Core self - nonverbal sense of “I”. Still there even if PFC is damaged. Not there if the subcortical and brain stem are damaged.
- Self-as-object - when you deliberately think about yourself, “Why do I have so much trouble with Maricasana D?” like a kind of movie over time.
- Self-as-subject - when you are the experiencer using the senses.
- Self as pure awareness but without a subject.

Suggestions from the authors:

Be generous

Be humble

Be good to yourself

Relax about what others think.

Give up needing to be special.

Cultivate a broader awareness of the world. Have you looked at the sky today?

Yoga Forms of Meditation Taught at Yoga East

Passage meditation as taught by Eknath Easwaran, a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. This form of meditation is based on Gandhi’s daily meditation on a passage from the Bhagavad-Gita. A link to instructions is on the recording link email.

Concentration on a Yantra (diagram) - links to the yantras are on the email.

Meditation using a mantra. There are many resources on the internet.