

A BROKEN HEART

Coordinators: Lorne Taichman, Bob Braff

Our hearts beat faithfully in our chests all the days of our lives. We explore the physical nature of this wondrous organ and delve into the origin of its image as an emotional center in culture and literature. We examine how the normal heart works and how subtle mechanisms that keep it working can and do go awry. Topics include genetics, atherosclerosis, rhythm disturbances, the heart-brain connection and transplantation. We also look into cultural practices and beliefs based upon a view of the heart as a seat of bravery, emotion and even the soul itself. No prior knowledge of science is required though a heartfelt interest in how things work will be helpful. We use a mix of readings and YouTube videos.

This study group was given previously in the Spring of 2015. This is an encore performance.

Readings and other Required Materials:

There will be a variety of handouts from newspapers, journals, books and blogs. In addition we will be using and assigning YouTube videos to watch. There is no "text book."

Lorne Taichman is an MD/Phd and has worked in medical research for three decades. He coordinated the Cancer Therapies study group in 2013.

Bob Braff is an MD and was an interventional and non-interventional cardiologist. He has coordinated study groups on the History of Science and Consciousness and Free Will.

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- Week 1 Introduction I: Heart Iconography; The Heart as the Soul; Beliefs and Superstitions
- Week 2 Introduction II: Our Evolving Insights into the Heart
- Week 3 Introduction III: The Heart in Language and Literature
- Week 4 How the Heart Works I: Anatomy and Physiology of the Heart (Muscle, Valves, Coronary Arteries, Conduction System)
- Week 5 How the Heart Works II: The Heart-Brain Connection; Lost

- Love, Dying of a Broken Heart, Voodoo Death, Takasubo
Cardiomyopathy
- Week 6 A Broken Heart I: Cardiac Risk Factors; Arteriosclerosis and
Inflammation; Acute Coronary Syndrome; Interventions
- Week 7 A Broken Heart II: Good Cholesterol: Bad Cholesterol
- Week 8 A Broken Heart III: The Beat Goes On (and Off); Arrhythmias;
Heart Rate Variability; Pacemakers
- Week 9 A Broken Heart IV: Congestive Heart Failure - What it is and
What Can You Do About it?
- Week 10 A Change of Heart: Heart Transplantation; History; Fairness
in the System; Ethics; Interview with a Recipient
- Week 11 Born with a Broken Heart: "Blue Babies" - Alfred Blalock,
Helen Taussig and Vivien Thomas - Movie: *Something the Lord
Made*
- Week 12 A Mended Heart: The Future of Heart Medicine: Wrap Up