Why meditation is in my life

- Daily morning practice exercises/stretches my mind by stilling the mind fluctuations.
- It broadens perspectives to experientially appreciate that mind & awareness are more than thoughts.
- Meditation complements thinking by nurturing space and insight.
- It fosters an awareness of the way things are rather than how we think they are (great skill for scientists!)
- Meditation is a systematic method to investigate subjective experiences: e.g., “Who am I?”
- Stress = viscosity * strain. Meditation helps to reduce “viscosity” so that life strains are less easily converted to stress.
Some meditation methods/styles

- Vipassana & Mindfulness (awareness)
- Contemplative (koan, non-rational conceptual)
- Movement (yoga, walking, whirling, swimming, surfing)
- Breath/Mantra/Chant/Kirtan (concentration, devotion)
- Metta/Loving-Kindness (compassion, empathy)
Meditation practice: what has worked for me

- Daily practice: mind & body need training to open up to stillness. It gets more natural with practice (just like science).
- Early morning before the mind is overly engaged in activities.
- Modest start (e.g., 10 min) built up to 60-90 min after year(s).
- Seated posture (bum higher than knees) w/ crossed legs to keep body balanced & aligned.
- Meditation time is balanced with family time.
- Judgements can arise (“I’m no good at this!”). Yet patience & persistence payoff. It is called meditation practice after all!
- Group meditation & teachers can be very useful.
- Anytime is a good time to develop a meditation practice.
Selection of books

- **Posture of Meditation**: practical details for the mechanics of sitting in meditation.
- **The Mind Illuminated**: manual for the vast array of meditation stages and styles from the perspective of a neuroscientist and practicing meditator.
- **Why Buddhism is True**: straightforward language with a psychological perspective on meditation.
- **Altered Traits**: evidence-based research on how meditation changes (helps) the mind.
- **Mindfulness in Plain English**: Just as the title says!
Many thanks!