“When I Woke Up Tuesday Morning, it was Friday”- Martha Stout Discussion Questions Notes

1. Of what is the analogy of the fuse box representative? How does trauma affect the brain? List page numbers for your responses.

   The fuse box represents the brain (382). Trauma affects the way the brain causing it to overreact or misreact to new events. Trauma also affects and usurps the natural brain functioning and as a result the memory.


   Dissociating is extended periods of distraction or not being present for long periods of time. Julia was abused which led to her dissociation. Seth was a trauma survivor which led to his dissociation.

3. Julia and Seth both qualify as extreme cases of dissociation, but their experiences could also shed some light on ordinary consciousness. What are the differences between Julia’s lapses and Seth’s? Has Seth devised ways of coping that have proven more successful than Julia’s? List page numbers for your responses.

   Seth is more aware and mindful of his dissociation than Julia. He describes what is happening to himself while he is experiencing dissociation- being in the middle of an ocean. Julia blacks out.

4. In the name of Martha Stout’s book The Myth of Sanity: Divided Consciousness and the Promise of Awareness she refers to sanity as a myth. What is the definition of sanity, and how could it be considered a myth based on Stout’s findings? How does sanity differ from awareness? List page numbers for your responses.

   Sanity is the ability to act rationally, to have the willingness and ability to reflect on one’s thoughts and to have awareness. It also in a sense is to be able to live successfully in society and deal with common day-to-day tasks aka “reality.”

5. Can we ever know reality-some commonly accepted concept of how the world is- or are we trapped within our own mental worlds? If memory shapes our perception from moment to moment, then can experiences teach us anything new? Can we as a society still function if everyone defines reality differently? How? List page numbers for your responses.
Experiences act as a filter on how we experience life. Healthy people are aware of how their experiences shape them. Trauma damages the brain. Processing of the past relieves a person of trauma and its effects.

6. In what ways does Siebert’s discussion in “An Elephant Crackup?” confirm, complicate, or contradict Stout’s claims about trauma and its consequences?

Both discuss the effect of trauma on the brain and how it responds to trauma. Trauma changes one’s outlook and behavior. Both the elephants in Siebert’s article and the individuals in Stout’s article have to learn how compensate and rehabilitate for the losses and the damage to their lives. It can also be argued that both articles deal with the brain’s tendency to try to bypass the damage. Challenges and past experiences shape perceptions. Unhappiness and awareness can often act as catalysts for change.