Listening to Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Antidepressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self

By Kramer, Peter D.

New York, New York, U.S.A.: Viking Pr, 1993. Soft cover. Condition: New. From Kirkus Reviews A provocative volume that sets up the mood-altering Prozac as a tool to examine the growing—and often troubling—use of drugs in the treatment of psychological illness. Brown University professor Kramer (Moments of Engagement, 1989—not reviewed) is a practicing psychiatrist who uses traditional techniques of therapy but also prescribes Prozac and other psychopharmaceuticals for his patients when they seem appropriate. Thanks to exposure on TV talk shows, Prozac is associated in many people’s minds with suicide and violence, but only in the last chapter here—an appendix, really—does the author argue directly against these charges. What he explores instead are the far-reaching implications of the generally positive changes in temperament triggered by Prozac and other drugs prescribed to relieve anxiety and depression, and what these medications have taught us about how character and temperament are shaped. Prozac relieves mild depression, for instance, by elevating levels of serotonin in the brain. Knowledge of that fact opens the door to further investigation of chemical pathways in the brain, individual variations in levels of serotonin and other neurotransmitters, and perhaps even to early diagnosis and treatment of mood disorders. But,...

Reviews

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-- Shakira Kunde

This kind of publication is every little thing and taught me to looking ahead of time and a lot more. It is packed with wisdom and knowledge Once you begin to read the book, it is extremely difficult to leave it before concluding.
-- Ida Herman
Part of emotional self regulation is avoiding those behaviors which self harm: alcohol nicotine caffeine recreational chemicals, habitual damaging behaviors (eating buying seductiveness helpless dependency vindictiveness anger), instead placing our attention on healthy fresh fruits vegetables nuts, physical activity outdoors in sunshine, associating with those from whom we can learn self- and other- care and respect. Listening to Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Antidepressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self is a book written by psychiatrist Peter D. Kramer. Written in 1993, the book discusses how the advance of the anti-depressant drug Prozac might change the way we see personality, the relationship between neurology and personality. The Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel described the books as "one of the most provocative popular science books published in 1993", stating that "Kramer is in full command of the array of knowledge - from cellular biology to animal studies to literature - that he draws upon to put the impact of antidepressants into perspective. In his hands, ancient ideas suddenly seem vital again, cast in a new and disquieting light by Prozac." [1]. Listening to Prozac: A Psychiatrist Explores Antidepressant Drugs and the Remaking of the Self. by Peter D. Kramer. Caring for the Mind: The Comprehensive Guide to Mental Health. by Robert E. Hales, Allen Frances, Dianne Hales. The authors are too ready to push conventional therapies, primarily drugs and psychotherapy, without enough regard to the problems associated with those therapies and without paying enough attention to more holistic approaches. Strictly speaking, Listening to Prozac is not about depression, and the author is quick to state that it is not his intention to discuss Prozacâ€™s use as an antidepressant but rather its use in â€œfairly healthy peopleâ€ who are â€œtransformedâ€ (a word Kramer uses several times) when they go on it.