

Working With The Voice Transcript
WWTV Episode 002
The Science Behind Voice Hearing with T.M. Luhrmann
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Juliet Mee: Hey listeners! This is Juliet, your host. I've been blown away with the positive response I've received since the first episode, so I'm going to need to give a bit of information here. Working With The Voice is a course to teach you how to speak with the Holy Spirit. The best way to use it is to listen to the episodes in order. The first episode is about me, and how I received this material. If you haven't listened, please go back and listen. In addition, many people have requested the Daily Practice I am encouraging you to learn. The free Workbook will be on the website shortly, but if you want information now, go to the website workingwiththevoice.com and sign up for the weekly email from me and I'll send you a 13 page pdf, or go to the Resources page, look for the area marked "Worksheets" and it's all there. Thanks for listening! In this episode, my guest Tanya Luhrmann will be talking about the research on voice hearing. I look forward to your feedback about it all!

In 2006 I bought a Global Positioning System device, a GPS. I didn't know anyone else who owned one and the \$1000 price tag was definitely a deterrent to the purchase. Once I had one, my travelling life would never be the same. I learned to set it up and poof. 90% of the uncomfortable and dangerous experiences of being lost went away forever.

GPS uses a combination of physics and mathematics to give you directions once you have plugged in the address of where you want to go. There's really no debate or politics about using a GPS because once you have learned its simple method of operation, most people trust it and see its usefulness. Using a GPS isn't seen as a moral issue, it's seen as a practical technology application that will continue to make life better for everyone.

I teach people to find direction from the Holy Spirit. The practice is the most rewarding, positive experience I have ever had, with no downsides. Previously, I had a pretty different belief about this than I do now. I thought hearing the Holy Spirit was an endowment that occurred in a flash, like a gift that whooshed down from heaven. I've learned that, although that has been reported by some, it is a skill, something you can learn how to do and get better at. Since learning about the Holy Spirit and learning to work with Him, I am happier and healthier, and the guidance and direction I receive is simple, concise, efficient and productive. People who know me know that I am a good teacher, practical, rational, and somewhat enlightened. I've been successful in getting people to see my side of things in the past and have helped to change bodywork and massage from being a cottage industry to being a researched, licensed and regulated profession. But this subject is different than anything I've encountered. It's a tough sell! Almost without fail when I begin to explain using the voice of the Holy Spirit as a real and consistent practice and as a skill that can be learned, the person listening to me doesn't say, "Sign me up! I want to learn more" Instead, I find a range of response from reasonable skepticism to barely veiled hostility. They ask for the hard science and evidence backing up the practice. They want me to understand that their tribe mates do not agree with this practice, and neither do they. They aren't ready for a conversion experience, thank you very much, and they really aren't going to volunteer to be seen as stupid. I've had more than one person tell me that they were disappointed in me because they thought I was smarter than this, and I've been asked if I have considered that this might be a bad idea.

Rather than talking about the practice immediately, I've found that things go much better once I have acknowledged people's objections and validate the position they are coming from. The objection that I encounter the most is straightforward and consistent. The moral outrage over what is perceived as Christian hypocrisy that has been simmering on the back burner is now boiling HOT. We hate hypocrisy

more than anything else because it's based on a false signaling, and signals are what we use to get what we want from other people. We might not know why someone is trying to trick us into believing they are something they are not, but when we see hypocrisy, it means we see the con. It doesn't take much to trigger this internal outrage. Encountering a person wearing a cross necklace who has a Christian fish on the back of their car butting in line at McDonalds will do it. We see their intentional use of symbols of Christianity as a short cut, one that signals how they want to be identified whether it is true or not, to gain an advantage over us. This is usually not a good time in the discussion to remind them that we are all hypocrites in our own special ways. If I can help them see that I agree with them 100%, and am not condoning hypocrisy in any form, then they are open to my asking three simple questions. Do you believe in a higher power? Do you believe you have ever heard from that higher power? Do you want to hear more often from the higher power? My experience lines up with the Gallup polls. 9 out of 10 people believe in a higher power, the majority pray regularly in a conversational way, and feel they receive answers to those prayers, and 7 of 10 feel they have heard a voice that they recognize as God tell them something that was meaningful. So what is so controversial about promoting this practice? Underneath it all, I find a lack of knowledge of Christianity, a mistrust of the inner experience, and a shortage of acceptable language to discuss the concept of answered prayer because of distaste for words that are used by the Christian tribe.

Let's start here. Mathematics and physics were studied to create the GPS. Math is part of the branch of science called formal science, and physics is a subdivision of physical science, which is a subdivision of natural science. Using the voice of the Holy Spirit is also an emerging technology, even though it hasn't been subjected to much proper research. I can hear the grumblings now from my tribe of intellectuals. Technology? Yes, that is the proper use of the term. A technology is defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes. Technology is exactly what this course promotes, and although not heavily researched, it has been researched in credible ways, with interesting implications. The branch of science used to study this type of phenomenon is social science, which is the study of human behavior and societies. It includes fields such as anthropology, archaeology, economics, theology and psychology. In social science, the methods are different from the sciences based on physical evidence. Research in social sciences is sometimes designed through combining quantitative evidence and qualitative evidence within the scientific method. We are well acquainted with the social sciences of anthropology and psychology. No one has trouble acknowledging that these are credible fields of study or that the different branches have different research interests and techniques within each discipline. There may be moral or cultural implications of the outcomes of any inquiry, but even though these fields investigate cultures and tribes, you aren't being forced to change your tribe just by reading and contemplating the material, but the subject of religion is at the root of tribes, cooperation and conflict.

I get an opportunity to talk to many people who haven't ever considered conversing with the Holy Spirit as a skill that can be learned. Just like everyone else, I belong to multiple tribes. Bodyworkers, entrepreneurs, animal lovers, and the "spiritual-but-not-religious" as well as Christian. Most of the people in these tribes that I am closest to seem to consider themselves to be intellectuals, members of the "smart" part of the tribe. They are decisive, and most have chosen to be atheists, or... agnostics who don't want to talk about it. But even many of my Christian tribe mates consciously or sub-consciously doubt this practice is real, available, or able to be trusted. I experience a lack of openness to this experience that borders on hostility. Digging deeper, I experience people's fierce loyalty to their tribes. The concept of cultivating the ability to ask God questions and hear clear answers back is part of religion, and religion strikes at the foundations of how people sort themselves into tribes, cooperate, or have conflict. My tribemates are not very willing to cooperate on the issue of religion, but feel the conflict especially about Christianity.

It's a challenge to be heard around so many raised hackles.

Tanya Luhrmann: It's very easy to present this topic to somebody and get an emotional response that that's not focused on the research.

Juliet Mee: That's Tanya Luhrmann. She's a Harvard Educated psychological anthropologist who has studied the experiences of conversing with God.

Tanya Luhrmann: My name is Tanya Marie Luhrmann. I'm an anthropologist. I was trained in the classical method of anthropology which is participant observation and for many years I have spent time trying to understand the experience of people who have vivid spiritual events and their lives.

Juliet Mee: Currently, she is the Watkins University Professor at Stanford University. The New York Times identified her book, "When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship With God" as a notable book of the year. Tanya firmly holds one of the leading positions of authority on this topic in America.

Tanya Luhrmann: So I have a Ph.D. from Cambridge University. I have worked on a series called ethnographic projects so a series of studies where I've gone to a particular place and I've spent a bunch of time there and I've really tried to figure out what it would take to be a member of that world.

Juliet Mee: For people in my tribes, hearing from a confirmed authority changes their willingness to listen. I'm no authority, and they know that. I'm just a person who has had the experience and investigated other people's work on the subject. I'm pretty sure that they are afraid that even discussing this practice will signal to other members of their tribes that they are not credible. If they do speak with me, their behavior implies that they are taking me into a confidence, and that I'd better not tell the secret that they have had one or two of these types of experiences themselves. They seem to think the concept is secretive, dangerous to discuss, and uncommon.

Tanya Luhrmann: These kinds of events are more common than you would imagine. And although any particular event is unique and powerful, there are many different kinds of events and many people have some sort of event. And so it depends on what the event is. I mean recently I have become more and more interested in people who hear God's voice. That's a very particular kind of event where people have an auditory or near auditory experience of some kind of communication that really doesn't feel like "them".

Juliet Mee: There's another conflict. A conversation usually begins with this low hanging fruit, so let's get this one over with too. People who hear voices are crazy, right? This question doesn't seem near as hostile, but the people who ask this seem to be amused with their own audacity, as if they are the first to present me with all their skepticism, rolled into one snarky question. I don't mind the question at all, even though it's weird how they seem to be okay first implying that I might have a mental illness, and second, that the question is the end of the discussion rather than the beginning. The question seems to lose its edge when they learn that there is a "Hearing Voices" movement that challenges the notion that the only people who hear voices are people experiencing a pathology. This scientific movement regards hearing voices as a meaningful and understandable human variation, one that can be experienced by people who are completely mentally healthy and do not have symptoms that would lead to a diagnosis of mental illness. Tanya has been a speaker at the Durham University project, Hearing The Voice, which is a large inter disciplinary study of voice hearing led by a team of researchers from the social sciences of anthropology, cognitive neuroscience, history, linguistics, literary studies, medical humanities, philosophy, psychology and theology. Remember, my tribesmates connect first on intelligence, and this leaves them without any place to turn, and the mood becomes much more calm.

The more beneficial question is, "What's the difference between hearing the voice of God and people who have a diagnosable symptom of mental illness?"

Tanya Luhrmann: I've also spent a lot of time trying to understand psychiatric illness and spent time with psychiatrists and also with people identified with psychiatric illness and I've become increasingly intrigued by the ways in which the sense of communication is different between people who will meet criteria for a psychiatric illness and people who don't, because both groups of people will, you know, folks who are religious but are not ill, will report communications and folks who are ill will report communications. So one of my questions is what is similar and different about that sense of being communicated to? How do how does somebody know that it's God? How does a group of people like a church. How do they make a judgment that this person might be hearing God, but that person? That person is crazy. So you know how do you how does a group of people think about that judgment? What are they paying attention to in the experience that the person is reporting? Anyway, so I spent a bunch of time with young psychiatrists and then with people on the streets of Chicago who were hearing voices, and more recently, I've spent a lot of time with a charismatic Christian church called the vineyard which really seeks to encourage all members of the church to have an intimate relationship with God so that they experience God as talking back. The church's understanding is that God is talking to all of us. It's just that some people are more able to recognize than others and then more recently I've been looking at the way that people in charismatic churches around the world experience God and how different understandings of the mind and different understandings of a voice might shape that, the recognition of God talking.

Juliet Mee: What is anthropology?

Tanya Luhrmann: So anthropology is the study of the social lives of people in which an anthropologist will go to some group, and become a member of that group to some extent, and ask, "What would I have to learn in order to, in effect, go native in this group?". What has this group of people learned to pay attention to in their world that enables them to function, to communicate easily with each other? So traditionally anthropologists would go to pre-literate pre-modern societies and they would spend time in that social group and they would say okay you know this is a world without much of what we'd recognize as government. But they have a really strong kinship system, so authority is that people will follow the rules of the people who are related to them. How does that work so the social world is orderly and it doesn't fall apart? And these days people do anthropology in modern worlds as well.

Juliet Mee: Understanding modern tribal behavior is increasingly important today because the mainstream media and social media allows us to receive signals about which tribe people belong to very quickly. A basic understanding of tribal behavior includes the information that tribal group behavior applies to everyone, no exceptions, and it's primal. Early humans would have not survived without the tribe, and human beings are social creatures. We require other people for our own existence. The potential of being cast out or excluded from our tribe can trigger feelings that we won't survive the event. Tribal behavior goes on in one form or another for our entire lives.

By the time we are two, we have already begun to define ourselves. By the time we are four, we become competitive and want to not only get things, we want to win over others. By seven, we are very aware of what other people think. Although it won't be a fully developed definition of ourselves, it is reasonable to think that before we are eight years old, we have very definite ideas about who we are and who we want to be like. We have some understanding about status, who is desirable to hang out with and who can be a threat to what we think is important. We know who we are, which team we are on, who is "us" and who is "them". We understand that it is very important that the people who we want on our team recognize us and see our being on the team as desirable too. So we begin to consciously and unconsciously signal information to make sure the desired people see that we are not just in the group, we are loyal to the group called "us" and think less of people who are "them". We classify, or sort people into the groups from a very early age, and many of these sortings are helpful and even fun. It helps to know if you are a kindergartener or a first grader, and it's fun to be a Minnesota Viking or a Green Bay Packer. At a certain

point, those are benign “us” and “them” names. But there’s a tipping point, classifications can become toxic, foster stereotypes, prejudice and even violence. The “overly religious” tribe and the “mentally ill” tribe are “them” names for groups that seem to be fair game for discrimination. It seems there is a subconscious perception that they are dangerous to the other tribes, like they have social cooties and if you hang out with them, you could be a modern day leper. Today, the tribal separation into “Republicans” and “Democrats” has become more polarized than ever before in the history of the United States, and the Christians in both parties aren’t playing together well.

Changing tribes is only perceived as valuable if the change is voluntary, not forced. People don’t usually volunteer to change to a tribe they perceive as having a lower status without some type of payoff. The us-versus-them tribal thinking can be managed and many people do this by joining the tribe of people who want to be happy regardless of other people’s opinions. When you can recognize us-versus-them thinking as a major basis for unhappiness, life begins to get much easier.

To be clear, I find that almost every person I speak with is concerned that even considering Working With The Voice inevitably has the consequence of being excluded and ostracized by their tribe mates. It is my strong belief that we are missing out on input that would be very beneficial in our lives, our communities, and the resolution of large social problems.

The scientific method requires specific rules for studying questions. How do you design a study when it requires finding subjects who are willing to engage in a religious practice? How do you report on the findings of a process that is externally unverifiable?

Tanya Luhrmann: Most of my work is qualitative. I’m interested in how people talk about this experience but what I also did was to do an experiment and the way that you find you quantify these subjective experiences is that you randomly assign people to one kind of practice or another kind of practice and then you ask them what kinds of experiences they had during that practice. And I was intrigued. I was persuaded by listening to people talk, that prayer practice made these experiences more common. So some people hear God speak and that happens automatically or spontaneously. These people aren’t practicing. They’re not doing a lot of prayer. They just have this remarkable experience. But I thought that what I saw was that people who prayed more were more likely to report these events. And so I got a group of 100 Christians into my office and I randomized them. I assigned them randomly either to a prayer condition or to lectures in the Gospels and the rule was that they had they were going to do that for half an hour a day for a month. Then we talked to them afterwards and figured out you know learned what they were experiencing. They also gave them a series of more structured exercises. to see whether the kinds of things they also report, like having sharper images, whether that was also true. Those kinds of interventions, those are more psychological interventions. So you can do something like that. So when people for example talk to me about hearing God’s voice, I ask questions like was it in the mind or in the world? Was it in your ear or was it more you know farther out? Was it loud? Was it soft? Those kinds of things. ...

Juliet Mee: Do people question their experiences? Are they concerned that what they are hearing isn’t valid?

Tanya Luhrmann: Sure. I mean humans are, you know, human. So they have fundamentally similar bodies and so I would say that when people are having these experiences they’re typically making two judgments. They’re making the judgment, did I hear it outside of me or to come from inside of me? And they’re saying, did I generate this or did somebody else generate this? They can answer those questions in different ways. So if something feels internal and it feels like you generated it, you would call that “thought”. If something feels external and it feels like you didn’t generate it, we call that either a sensory

event or if there's no sensory stimulus, people sometimes call that a hallucination. I call it a sensory override or some kind of event where people have a sensory experience that's not from a sense resource. But then there are experiences for people have an in-the-mind event, that feeling, which that feels, you know, like, it's really not them. A lot of people have those experiences about God. And one of the things that I saw in this church is that as people pay more attention to hearing God's voice those experiences kind of you know that sometimes they'll recognize God's voice as an in-the-mind almost thought-like experience and over time God's voice feels like it's more external, and more like more like a heard voice.

Juliet Mee: In your experience how people discern the origin of these experiences?

Tanya Luhrmann: So I think that there are internal experiences that people will say look I think this is likely not from me. And so when people make that judgment typically they're going to choose a thought event that's spontaneous. They'll say, "I wasn't thinking about it at the time, it just happened." And you know because a lot of people will say, "Look some events, I just know were God and other events you know I'm not quite. I'm not quite sure whether that's God or not God. The church also is similarly aware that people will make judgements, and sometimes the person can be wrong. I heard a pastor once say if a thought comes into your mind, and the thought says < "Calm down it's going to be okay" then it's totally fine to ascribe that to God. Maybe that was from God. Maybe it was from you. It's fine. You can assume that it's from God. It doesn't really...you know, its good advice. But if you have the experience the pastor said that if a thought comes into your mind and it pops up from nowhere, and the thought is "quit your job, move to Los Angeles, do my work". You really need to get a lot of other people to share with you the kind of the job of discerning whether that's really from God or not from God. When something is consequential, I saw that church members would be open to the idea that the event comes from God and then they would that they would want to discern whether it was likely the event was really from God or whether it came from the person. In that discernment process, the spontaneity of the event is one of the principles that people will use to evaluate whether it's God or not, whether it's likely to be God or not.

Juliet Mee: Churches have taken on many difficult subjects but distinguishing true from false religious experience is one that I consistently find that churches shy away from. In fact, some denominations are pretty wishy washy about the entire subject. What do you see overall about churches and helping their congregants discern true guidance that comes from God?

Tanya Luhrmann: Most churches and most people will also presume that people can be mistaken about whether God has spoken to them. And so that's why you know that great sociologist Max Faber would talk about the shift between the appeal of charismatic practice and the appeal of what he called the routinization of church's practice so a church will go through times where people are really being encouraged to have these vivid powerful experiences. And what happens when you do that is that sometimes people think that they're experiencing God and they're not. They are experiencing goodness knows what and how are they experiencing demons are they experiencing themselves? I mean people have different views but you know many churches will say that there are there are times when you know when you get this kind of charismatic exclusion you know one of the great evangelical pastors called it Charismania, that you know at some point, you know, people get so excited about having these experiences that they have a lot of human experiences that are not divine experiences but those experiences are really powerful because they bring people into the church. But the more people who have those experiences the more likely it is that some of those experiences are pretty clearly not going to be coming from God. So this is the stuff that a church will fight about. This is this is the reason that churches split. This is the reason that you know there are sectarian divides because you know to one to one person of God an event that somebody is reporting is profoundly religious, very important and worth taking seriously. And to another person it's just crazy. So this is the burden that these experiences place on people. How do you make sense of them? When should people follow them? How seriously should you

take them? When is the person crazy? When is the person lying? When is the person self-indulgent? Those kinds of questions.

Juliet Mee: It seems that there is a lot of diversity of experience in the frequency of messages and the type of messages people receive. Is there any help you can give us about knowing the difference between healthy and non-healthy messages?

Tanya Luhrmann: So there are two big patterns in which people have these experiences. There's one pattern which we typically called psychosis, in which people report that they're having thought-like events and sensory events. So they have events inside their mind, they know it's an inner experience and they know that their outer experiences and they know there are experiences between those two. So like a lot of people will say well I don't know whether it's inside my mind or out in the world. So most people with psychosis report a lot of these events. They can hear voices you know throughout the day. It's like their their head is inside of a beehive of voice hearing. When those voices speak, they're often quite negative. So they'll hear a voice saying, "You smell!" or "You're disgusting, you should die!". I mean really terrible things. And what they're hearing is often you know many, many words. The general population, so people who aren't identified as being mentally ill, when they report that they have--even people who are practicing a lot-- and they're really trying to experience God intimately, typically they remember a handful of sensory events. So you talk to them and they'll say well you know God spoke to me twice, you know in a way I could hear with my ears. And they might say well God talks to me every day. In my mind and you know they'll think about is this god is this not God that people often you know develop a sense of recognizing what they what they call God by the quality of the thought they're experiencing, the nature of the thought. And you know a skeptic could say oh that's just your conscience. But that's not really the way they experience it. So those are the two big patterns there are, you know, people with psychosis, a lot of voices often negative, many, many words, voices throughout the day. People without psychosis, a handful of sensory experiences, very rare. Many much more thought experiences. Then there are people in the middle and those are and those are very interesting people. You know there are people who have patterns of experience that are much more like people with psychosis but they're clearly not ill. And that group is a group I'm really trying to understand whether they're different phenomenological patterns within that group of people who aren't ill by any ordinary criteria. I mean they don't behave in a way that people say is crazy. They seem to be you know quite functional. But you say so have you know we hear God speak in a way you can hear with your ears and they say, "Yeah that happens every day.". So researchers are full of arguments about how to understand this middle group.

Juliet Mee: Do people trust the experience enough to act on what they hear? Obviously, it could be problematic.

Tanya Luhrmann: I think it varies. I mean particularly when people are, they really develop this sense of a back and forth there's guidance, there is companionship, and there's comfort. I would say that in most cases when people identify when people are talking to me and they identify the experience as God, and they don't experience psychosis, meaning that they're not obviously failing to function, the people around them don't think they've lost touch with reality. God can issue a command that it often doesn't feel that commanding. One of the salient marks of psychosis is that the sense of command feels kind of absolute, even though the person with psychosis usually doesn't follow the command. So you know there's this funny. This is the way in which these experiences are similar and different. So the psychosis experience you know people will say, "You know I hear the voice and the voice says to kill you know to kill myself, but I don't do it." But as they are describing it often there is this physical quality a feeling that the voice is somehow in their body commanding them and that physical quality is often less marked much less marked with people who don't have psychosis. So people will say that yes God told me to do this but it didn't quite and in one case a woman said God you know God told her to start to school. She never did

it. And it didn't sound that commanding when she described it, whereas people with psychosis that kind of sometimes feels as if the voices beaming in from outside and it's hitting their skull.

Juliet Mee: To recap, on one end of the scale of people who hear voices are the mentally ill who receive lots of troubling messages; messages that are harsh and commanding and have a lot of rapid words. On the other end of the scale are people without psychosis who hear voices much less frequently maybe only once or twice in a lifetime, and the messages, rather than being troubling, are comforting, pleasant, not commanding, and many fewer words are involved. Speak with us a little bit more about this middle group who hear voices with the positive quality but with a frequency that is much greater than usual. This is the group I belong to and am encouraging the listeners to work to become part of.

Tanya Luhrmann: Very interesting, a very interesting group of people. Yeah I would say that the middle ground that is what I am struck by. It's a group of people who say that they have an auditory event once a week or more often, or an event that is in their mind but so clearly not them that they have no doubt that it is not their own voice. It's just they have a very clear "not me" experience and they have it more than once a week. And they are not ill. They might have a very active prayer practice but even most people with a pretty active practice they don't give you many. Typically they will give you like one vivid experience of hearing God speak, maybe two, but maybe they'll even say that they have an event once a month. But people who have an ongoing very active sense that this is "not me". Those people are relatively rare and they are, they're very interesting. So some people want to say, "Well these are people whose bodies could be bodies that would be more vulnerable to psychosis but they never fell ill." Other people, I actually think that that's true of some people in that group but not everybody. I think that there are active prayer practitioners, people who are very actively praying, who enable themselves to have these very vivid experiences. And of course you can have a kind of theological openness about you know who you're going to take seriously as being communicating from God or the goddess. However you understand because it's, I think there are probably people in that in that middle group that do you know I could have I could well imagine people take different stances about some of these people.

Juliet Mee: I've observed that people expect that someone on the outside of the experience should be able to validate its legitimacy. What do you think about that?

Tanya Luhrmann: Now it's you know it's remarkably challenging. So I mean I I don't feel I can say you know, this one, that's legitimate, but that one I mean no I wouldn't I wouldn't call that one legitimate.

Juliet Mee: Has anything surprised you about the studies?

Tanya Luhrmann: What has surprised me the variety of voice hearing experiences. The variety of ways that people pull out or identify what they've what feels like a communication to them. The ways in which thoughts that people will recognize as their own thoughts still sometimes feel like they didn't come from themselves. The ways in which people... the comfort actually. Once people really develop this back and forth experience with God, I think it's profoundly good for people. And if you are lucky enough to have a back and forth relationship with God in which you really feel a sense of this the presence of this invisible being and that invisible being is a good guy. I mean some people have an experience they represent God in a way that is not good. Now some people's you know whatever the Bible says some people who experience God they, that to them that God is is a very difficult person or being that if people are able to have to have a back and forth relationship with this invisible other who is a good God, I think it's a profound gift.

Juliet Mee: Is there anything you'd like to add about training yourself, enabling yourself, to have these types of voice hearing experiences?

Tanya Luhrmann: I mean I think that if you're able to develop that experience I think it's healthy. I mean we I think we actually have a pretty good body of research now that suggests that being religious is good for your body, that it's socially comforting, that it's you know it gives you this sense of a social relationship that's healthy and sustaining. One of the most basic things we know about bodies is that bodies do better when they are in loving relationships and to develop. And this is kind of back and forth is experienced by people as a loving relationship. And yeah I think it's good for people.

Juliet Mee: In an opinion piece Tanya wrote for the New York Times, she says that frequency of hearing seems to correlate with the intensity of the prayer practice and more focused and frequent prayer appears to lead to more vivid inner experiences. She also says that although anthropologists can't say definitively whether God exists or not, prayer it seems is a powerful instrument and that it's probably more accurate to understand prayer as a skill that changes how we can use our minds. A quote from her book is one of my favorites. "Prayer has consequences."

Many thanks to Tanya for being on one of our first episodes! You can find more information about Tanya on the Working With the Voice website, on her website luhrmann.net and you can email her at luhrmann@stanford.edu. She is definitely interested in your experiences of voice hearing.

If today's podcast held your interest, you'll really like the next one. It's a rare podcast that I find so interesting that I listen to every single episode when they first come out and then listen again. I felt like a fangirl when I interviewed the guest on our next episode, David McRaney, host of the podcast "You Are Not So Smart". He is the author of a book with the same title and its follow up book is "You Are Now Less Dumb". If you have been a student of mine, you will recognize David as the blogger who introduced us all to his perspective on the Dunning Krueger effect, the Backfire Effect and a new way to look at procrastination. David will introduce us to the arena he is a master at explaining; self delusion.

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