



# Jesper Petersens tale ved overrækkelsen af The Brain Prize

## Taler

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Uddannelses- og  
forskningsminister

## Dato

24. maj 2022

1 Your Royal Highness  
Prize winners  
Chairman of the board  
Guests.

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Tonight we celebrate neuroscience. We celebrate decades' long dedication to the field of movement. To basic neuroscience.

What I find especially interesting about tonight's winners is that even though  
10 you are neuroscientists and this ceremony is called The Brain Prize. You are really researching the relationship between the brain and the body.

This intricate system that allows us to move through the world. To run until we're out of breath. To start nodding our head or tapping our feet when Bruce  
15 Springsteen or Dire Straits comes on the radio. To open our arms and embrace a loved one. Movement defines so much of who we are as humans. Our relationships with others and ourselves. It's something most of us takes for granted.

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**You don't take movement for granted**

But three people in this room don't take any movement for granted. In fact, a passion for this complex system that controls our movements has brought our three prize winners together from different parts of the world tonight.

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You – Silvia, Martyn and Ole – have dedicated yourselves to the science of movement.

30 In many ways, you are explorers. Venturing into the unknown with nothing but a microscope and an open mind. Trying to draw a detailed map of the uncharted territory that is the human central nervous system.

You have changed the way we understand movement. Your research gives us  
35 knowledge and hope that we can someday treat the disorders that affect our movement.

### **Making a map**

40 The burden of brain disorders – both here in Denmark and globally – is immense.

Disorders that affect our movement – like ALS or Parkinson’s – often hit even harder. Because most of us view movement and the control of our own bodies  
45 as completely fundamental for the human experience.

It is so important that we have people, who dedicate themselves to the basic neuroscience. To making that map. So that one day – hopefully soon – we’ll have treatments for these disorders.  
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### **A neuroscience nation**

The Danish government wants to make sure that Denmark is a top pick nation for anyone who wants to do research and innovation in the life science field.  
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Last year Denmark launched a national life science strategy that seeks to create better conditions for life science research and development.

We support life science in Denmark by our strategic approach and by public  
60 funding.

And we cannot do it alone. Therefore, I am incredibly grateful for the philanthropic support this field receives.

65 Just like tonight’s prizewinners have made ground-breaking discoveries as to how we move; The Brain Prize is in itself part of moving Denmark’s position as a neuroscience nation to a higher level.

70 Thank you Lundbeck Foundation for your generous contributions. For putting Denmark on the map as a neuroscience nation.

### **The brain is a muscle**

75 The author Stephen King once said: "*The brain is a muscle that can move the world*".

I find this a very apt quote to leave you with tonight.

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Whether it's our first tiny movements as humans: The first time we reach out to grab something with our hands. Our first trying steps.

85 The political or theological thoughts behind big world-altering movements for our society and civilisation: The Reformation, The Enlightenment, The Democratic Movement.

90 The scientific brain specifically moves us forward as humans and as society. It moves us towards new knowledge and new discoveries. In life, in science, and other fields. It helps us understand others, ourselves, and our history. Helps us solve big challenging issues in the world – like climate change and health crises.

### **A recognition, an honour, and a request**

95 Tonight we celebrate three of these scientific brains.

A big congratulations to you Silvia, Martyn and Ole. This prize is a recognition. An honour. And a request for you to keep on exploring. Keep drawing that map. We need it to guide us even further.

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Thank you for your contributions and for using your brain muscle to move the world.

Thank you.

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115 **URI**  
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