

THE LOST ART OF HEALING: PRACTICING COMPASSION IN MEDICINE BY BERNARD LOWN

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"I have made this thoughtful book by Dr. Lown required reading for physicians in the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona. It conveys the wisdom about the doctor-patient relationship that has indeed been lost in the noise of high-tech, profit-driven medicine."
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From Publishers Weekly

Too many well-trained, well-credentialed doctors fail to take a careful patient history, indulge in rampant overuse of technology and excessively prescribe drugs that result in death or disability, charges Lown, a cardiologist and professor emeritus at Harvard Medical School. In these gracefully written essays, full of interesting vignettes and case studies drawn from his 45 years of practice, he urges doctors to practice attentive listening, to desist from using intimidating language and to pay attention to the emotional stresses in patients' lives. Keeping an open mind toward alternative medicine, Lown describes his partially successful treatment in China with acupuncture for his severe back pain. He also looks at the challenges of caring for the elderly and shares helpful insights on death and dying. His stimulating inquiry is sound medicine for doctors and patients alike.

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From Booklist

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The real crisis in medicine today is not about economics, insurance, or managed care--it's about the loss of the fundamental human relationship between doctor and patient. In this wise and passionate book, one of our most eminent physicians reacquaints us with a classic notion often overlooked in modern medicine: health care with a human face, in which the time-honored art of healing guides doctors in their approach to patient care and their use of medical technology.

Drawing on four decades of practice as a cardiologist and a vast knowledge of literature and medical history, Dr. Lown probes the heart and soul of the doctor-patient relationship. Insightful and accessible to all, *The Lost Art of Healing* describes how true healers use sympathetic listening and touch to hone their diagnostic skills, how language affects the perception of illness, how doctors and patients can cultivate a relationship of trust, and how patients can obtain the most complete and beneficial care through a combination of healing techniques and conventional practices.

As Dr. Lown explains, the art of healing does not mean abandoning the spectacular advances of modern science, but rather incorporating them into a sensitive, humane, enlightened approach to medical care. With its urgent message and poignant, fascinating vignettes, *The Lost Art of Healing* is a book of vital, universal importance.

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Helping physicians recapture their focus

By Gary Margolias

I bought a copy for myself, and now I am trying to give a copy to everybody I know who is involved in patient care. Most of us went into the medical field with noble aspirations to take care of others and in doing so, to grow ourselves as human beings. The process of going through a medical education debases in many respects our initial aspirations. I read this book and found myself recentered. Dr. Lown approaches medicine as an opportunity to glean from the people for whom he cares. The book is filled with anecdotes gathered from decades of doctoring. The stories lead the reader along the same journey that the author has taken in coming to a sense of himself as a healer. The characters whom he has filled his life are interesting and the story of Dr. Lown's personal journey from medical student, to researcher to teacher and master clinician, is fascinating. I highly recommend this book. It has changed the way that I approach my work and given me a zest for opportunities to grow in this profession.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Well intentioned book, little wisdom

By doug korty

I don't doubt that Dr. Lown is a good man and a good doctor and that this is a well-intentioned book. However, I found very little wisdom in it and too many generalities and long winded stories. The odd thing about the positive reviews so far is that none of them are by anyone with any reviews of other books about medicine. It is not clear what the book really has to offer. I would not recommend it.

Midwest Independent Research, mwir-improvinghealth.blogspot.com.

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

An Inspirational work for Aspiring Medical Students

By Joseph Ong

In a profession dominated increasingly by science and technology, it is heartening to hear a courageous voice who spoke forcefully and emphatically against the dehumanization of medicine and for the urgent need to return to the traditional ethos of medicine. This coming no less from a physician of Dr Lown's stature and credentials, a technological wizard who had given the world the first cardioverter and DC defibrillator, and yet managed to stay aloof and above the lure of medical scientific and technical sophistry which had captured the awe and fantasy of many of today's medical students and doctors alike. Debunking the myth of the omnipotence of clinical medicine, Dr Lown sought to reconcile the divide between the art and science of medicine, advocating a more humane approach towards the management of patients. He is both a philosopher and a healer, equipped with an open mind and divergent mindset extending beyond the normal confines of medical practice. As a young medical student struggling with the heavy workload imposed by an explosion of medical scientific knowledge, Dr Lown's book is thought-provoking and inspiring, a timely reminder that knowledge and academic grades are merely a means to an end and that human qualities such as empathy, compassion and a sound understanding of the human condition is not only crucial in medical practice, but must be reinforced and developed in the impressionable medical student navigating through rigors and constraints of his studies and training.

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