

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT
RE-HUMANIZING MEDICINE

Modern medicine is engaged in a struggle to find its heart, soul, and spirit. This task must begin with physicians themselves. Dr. David Kopacz's *Re-Humanizing Medicine* is an excellent guide in how this urgent undertaking can unfold.

Larry Dossey, MD, author of *Reinventing Medicine* and *Healing Words*; executive editor of *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*

Brilliant, well-written, practical and inspiring, *Re-humanizing Medicine* provides clarity and understanding of the most pressing issues facing doctors (and patients) today. All doctors, including future doctors, should read this book and empower themselves to be the change that is so needed in our current systems of health care. As we physicians transform ourselves, we will transform the practice of medicine and be better able to serve those who seek our help.

Rama Thiruvengadam, MD, founder of Physician Heal Thyself Retreats™

Dr. David Kopacz bears exquisite witness to medical dehumanization and puts his heart and soul into a thoughtful, reflective, yet practical guide for countering its contemporary ills. This book can change lives, careers, and systems.

Stevan M. Weine, MD, author of *When History is a Nightmare* and *Testimony after Catastrophe*; director, International Center on Responses to Catastrophes, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Re-humanizing Medicine is a marvelous book about one person's journey to find meaning and quality of life in the practice of medicine. Dr. David Kopacz presents a very human account of

his frustrations within the conventional health care system and inspires us with his search for solutions. His analysis of the underlying philosophies of the kind of care we provide was illuminating for me and helped me understand why conditions only worsen despite our collective (as physicians and patients) complaints. His proposals for how to move forward into a sustainable health care future are solid, well supported by science, and promise to integrate the poetic, mystical, compassionate side of medicine with its science. In a world of no time, this book is well worth the time to read it.

Lewis Mehl-Madrona, MD, PhD, author of *Healing the Mind through the Power of Story: The Promise of Narrative Psychiatry*; Core Faculty, Union Institute & University, Clinical Psychology; Executive Director, Coyote Institute for Studies of Change and Transformation, Brattleboro, Vermont

In *Re-humanizing Medicine*, David Kopacz offers an informed and committed corrective to the loss of soul that has occurred in the practice of Western medicine over the past century. Central to his understanding is the notion that the broader transformation of medicine turns on the personal awakening and transformation of the physician. Until such time as the biomedical curriculum gives as much attention to the cultivation of sensitivity, empathy and holistic consciousness as it does to the transmission of the reductionist principles on which it is based, *Re-humanizing Medicine* will remain a welcome source of nourishment for all within the profession of medicine who are searching for ways to deepen their connection to the historic mission of medicine, which is to heal not only the ills of the body, but also those of the entire nexus of relationships within which we find ourselves.

Vincent Di Stefano, DO, ND, MHSc, author of *Holism and Complementary Medicine: Origins and Principles*

If this informative, readable and practical book encourages doctors to put into practice even half of what is being put forward here, the world will be a better place.

Dr. Patte Randal, Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (LRCP), Membership of the Royal College of Surgeons (MRCS), DPhil, co-editor and co-author of *Experiencing Psychosis: Personal and Professional Perspectives*

Simple yet complex, idealistic and realistic, this book turns a spotlight onto human connection, a fundamental factor that is too readily neglected in today's technology-driven medical practice. Thoughtfully bringing his personal experience and a rich collection of literature, Dr. David Kopacz offers an excellent 'portable' holistic framework that can be applied ecologically to cultivate an authentic wholeness in both practitioners and patients. Notably, the book differentiates itself from the crowd through the 'organic' incorporation of autobiographical narrative which demonstrates abundant universal qualities through the most individualized perspective. I heartily endorse this book as a must-read, particularly for people like myself who are considering creating a private practice in holistic medicine.

Qi Liu, Postgraduate Diploma in Chinese Integrative Medicine, Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, China; New Zealand Registered Occupational Therapist (NZROT); Postgraduate Certificate in Mental Health (PgCertMH)

Our world currently faces great challenges that require each individual to commit to a process of growth and renewal. Kopacz's book provides a thoughtful and practical account of how to inspire greater well-being by transforming managerial medicine into a place of personal and social healing.

Guiding the reader through a wealth of insight into the history of scientific and alternative approaches, he convincingly

argues for holistically-oriented medicine that encompasses objective knowledge, compassion, and intuitive guidance.

His call for reintroducing attention to the human condition in an increasingly corporatized world has far reaching impulses, not only for medicine, but also for education, the business world and society.

Leading by example, Kopacz enriches any reader's understanding of their own responsibility to change themselves and the world.

Anke Pinkert, Ph.D., author of *Film and Memory in East Germany*; Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities Fellow 2012-2013; "Transforming the Humanities Through Higher Education in Prison;" director of Undergraduate Studies; Associate Professor of German, Media and Cinema Studies, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

I am grateful this book has been written, and a voice has been given to this vital message, reminding us of the 'care' aspect of health care, for practitioner and patient alike. Confronting, honest and transparent ... written with a wisdom rarely seen.

Chrissy Diamond, BHS NMT, Dip CST, DIP CTM, Neuro-muscular Therapist, Holistic Alignment, New Zealand College of Massage

This book is essential for establishing a refreshed approach inside medicine and brings new insights about the practice of psychiatry. Dr. Kopacz addresses different modes of involvement in patient care, all of which facilitate a therapeutic alliance and optimal treatment outcome through empathy, intuition, and spiritual awareness.

Dr. Georgiana Antoce, Fellow of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists; Senior Lecturer with University of Queensland; Private Practice, Brisbane, Australia

Re-humanizing Medicine has reinforced my own commitment to the importance of holistic leadership. I am confident that practitioners trained in biomedical and holistic health practices will feel this same kinship. This book brings both topics dynamically to the table for discussion.

I was deeply moved by Kopacz's inspiring words and reflections on his own personal experiences. There is a major cultural shift on the horizon in the fields of medicine and business to cultivate connection with the whole person and a holistic way of being. Kopacz's research on Gandhi, Youngson, Palmer and other enlightened leaders further supports the concept of a compassion revolution. I hope that *Re-humanizing Medicine* will be required reading for all future generations of physicians and health care providers. Dr. Kopacz's open mind and open heart will inspire many to 're-humanize and re-connect.'

Sara Holmes, BS RA LMT NCTMB; Complementary Therapies, Massage and Aromatherapy Instructor Parkland College, Champaign, Illinois; www.botanicalhealingarts.com

As a physician in private practice, I know first-hand the effect of long-term stress and never-ending demands on the practicing doctor—a guarantee for poor health and burnout. In *Re-humanizing Medicine*, Dr. Kopacz makes a well-argued case that doctors need to begin healing patients by healing themselves first. Preventive care is the recommended prescription for doctors who want to remain as energized and caring as they were when they entered medical school. This book illuminates a path to enjoying a long and fulfilling career as a physician who practices what he should be preaching.

Rich Berning, MD; creator of PrivatePractice.MD Website; Pediatric Cardiologist, Sandy Hook, Connecticut

It gives me great pleasure to review this informative text that will hopefully become essential reading to all medical practitioners

Re-humanizing Medicine

A Holistic Framework for Transforming
Your Self, Your Practice, and
the Culture of Medicine

David R. Kopacz, MD



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Washington, USA

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Foreword

(Internal dialogue of a busy academician)

‘Why on earth should I read this book? I’ve got five articles to write, an accreditation visit to plan for, and a large new curricular element to roll out. Who has time for this? The darn thing is so long!’

‘But you thought Dave Kopacz was one of the singularly most talented psychiatry residents you have ever had the pleasure of supervising! And you promised! And who knows what interesting things he has gotten himself into in the intervening years – after all, he made a gigantic trek to New Zealand just for starters!’

‘Fine ... fine. I’ll skim it. The touchy-feely title is a little off-putting, but hey, you promised! Let’s just do it and get it over with.’

Several hours later, so totally engrossed in the book that I asked my assistant to lock in reading time to my appointment schedule, I had totally changed my opinion about David Kopacz’s book, entitled *Re-humanizing Medicine: A Holistic Framework for Transforming Your Self, Your Practice, and the Culture of Medicine*. It should be required reading for every medical student, resident, and practicing physician.

Medical education, and medicine itself, easily becomes a dehumanizing process. There are so many facts to be learned, so many procedures to be memorized, so many treatments to be continuously updated, just *so many*. It is easy to lose oneself in the process and fall prey to the stereotype of the physician who is always available, has all the answers, and has no personal life (or for that matter existence) outside the hospital. Physicians bemoan the limitations of the 80-hour work week as the loss of the days when ‘patients came first.’ Dave’s book offers a compelling argument why losing oneself, however, is simply *not* in the best

interest of the patient, the practice, or the physician him- or herself.

The book divides itself neatly into five parts. The first points out the dehumanization of contemporary medicine through multiple examples, and the analysis of a variety of paradigms of medical models. The second part of the book describes the paradigm of holistic medicine more fully, while the third is a clearly written, step-by-step self-help section that helps the reader develop his or her deeper sense of humanity. The fourth part of the book builds on the third, describing how to take the new holistic viewpoint and put it to use in one's own practice. The fifth, closing the book, describes how the holistic paradigm, if used broadly, might re-humanize the culture of medicine itself.

Throughout the book, Dave uses very personal examples that put a real face on the dehumanization that trainees experience. Never bitter or accusatory, he is skilled at pointing out the system's many flaws without ever 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' and calling for a mass revolution in an angry tone (to which the authors of many previous books have resorted when facing the massive issues in health care today, by the way). On top of the excellent personal examples, David draws on his impressive depth and breadth of knowledge in such diverse topics as psychotherapy, medical economics, health care reform, poetry, culture, holistic medicine, pharmaceuticals, religion, and science to make very persuasive arguments. While the book at times may use terms unfamiliar to the physician, it becomes a 'cliff note' version of a huge body of literature that is deftly summarized and clearly written, something absolutely invaluable to the reader (and thus the large blocks of time currently in my schedule to read the book again more slowly, regardless of other obligations).

Particularly useful, and practical, for those already committed to the idea of a more holistic existence and practice, are Parts III and IV, full of exercises to transform elements of the self through a series of clearly described exercises, and thoughtful writing on

using this new holistic framework as a tool for transforming one's medical practice. As the Associate Dean of an innovative medical school in the United States, I am strongly considering these sections (at least) to be required reading for our medical students.

It is clear that David Kopacz is a thoughtful, intelligent, well-read author with a great deal of important messages to convey. What also comes through clearly is the *person* behind the words, as generous, kind, and human as he was even in the midst of a demanding psychiatry residency several decades ago. It was this positive impression that made me promise to (and ultimately to) read this book, and I (and perhaps several forthcoming generations of medical students) will be the richer for it.

Debra Klamen, MD, MHPE

Associate Dean for Education and Curriculum

Southern Illinois University School of Medicine

Introduction

Only connect! ... Live in fragments no longer.

E.M. Forster¹

The great error of our day in the treatment of the human body is that physicians first separate the soul from the body.

Plato²

Dehumanization in Contemporary Medicine

This book takes on the task of re-humanizing medicine. We start by recognizing that there is a problem with how medicine is currently practiced: it dehumanizes staff and clients, creating dissatisfaction, suffering, poor performance and medical errors. Dehumanization is an iatrogenic effect of the dominant paradigms in contemporary medicine – the economic/business model and the reductionist and materialistic approach of biomedicine. In the day-to-day practice of medicine, doctors are expected to see more patients in less time and to efficiently reduce people to symptoms, diagnostic codes, prescriptions, procedures and billing codes. This leaves little time or space for people – physician or patient.

Future doctors are attracted to medicine for idealistic and humanitarian reasons, but through training they often lose this idealism.^{3,4} *How can we preserve idealism and humanitarianism in medicine?* Practicing physicians have high rates of burnout and job dissatisfaction. *How can we reinvigorate the practice of medicine and make it sustainable?*

A Counter-Curriculum of Re-Humanization

In medical school, I realized that I had to engage in a parallel education process in addition to the standard scientific curriculum. We could even call this a ‘counter-curriculum’,

focusing on re-humanization. At times I found teachers, mentors, and fellow students who practiced this counter-curriculum, but often I had to seek it out on my own in order to balance my education. *This book is about that counter-curriculum of re-humanization.* Science and evidence-based interventions are one paradigm of medicine, but as human beings working with human beings, we must have a human framework as well as a scientific one.

As a medical student, the first research project I worked on was with Deb Klamen and Linda Grossman at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Our study examined symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in relation to medical training and found that 13% of trainees in the study reported sufficient symptoms (relating to their internship year) to potentially qualify for a PTSD diagnosis.⁵ The findings provide evidence supporting the need to change postgraduate medical education to reduce stress and to enhance the well-being of trainees. I went on to work with Linda and Deb on three other papers that examined medical students' beliefs and their attitudes toward the controversial issues of homosexuality, abortion, and AIDS.^{6,7,8} These papers examined how medical student beliefs can shape attitudes that adversely impact medical care. The studies also allude to the fact that people are not purely rational beings, and beliefs, fears and stigma can undermine scientific reasoning or professional ethics. Even my student research experience was concerned with the counter-curriculum of exposing dehumanization and seeking re-humanization.

To re-humanize medicine, the people who work in medicine must be well-rounded, well-developed human beings, as well as safe and effective technicians. A great deal of time, energy, and money is spent in making sure that physicians are good technicians, but are they good human beings? Being a good technician (objective, detached, unaffected by emotion, protocol-driven) can actually interfere with being a good human being. Clinicians

should not stop being technicians or scientists, but they have a responsibility to attend to their own humanity, as well as that of the client. The counter-curriculum provides a holistic framework for being a human being, for working with human beings, and for creating systems that deliver care by human beings to human beings.

A Holistic Framework for Medicine

A holistic framework is founded on multiple interacting and mutually influencing sub-systems. Scientific medicine and the objective, observable body make up just one dimension of human health. Sometimes the physical dimension is primary, for instance in physical trauma and surgery. Sometimes other human dimensions are more important. Emotion, mind, love, self-expression, intuition, spirituality, context and time all play a role in health and illness.

A holistic framework is a paradigm for understanding and interacting with human beings. It is a human systems approach and a way of being in the world. Holistic medicine is a philosophy, or a paradigm for understanding what it is to be human, to suffer, to be ill, to be healthy; what it is to change, grow and live. It helps us understand how disconnection can lead to suffering and how connection can lead to healing. Holistic medicine is not defined by using an herb instead of a medication, or by any specific technique or intervention. Being a good technician (whether biomedical or 'natural') is part of being a good physician, but being a good physician is more than just being a good technician.

It is hard work to maintain a complex identity that includes being a technician and a human being, but that is what being a medical professional involves: balancing different roles for the purpose of alleviating suffering and treating disease. Re-humanization reconnects the art and science of medicine, the heart and the mind. A holistic framework encourages integration.

When you start to connect in a different way, you change the health care delivery system in which you work. What starts as personal dissatisfaction can become personal transformation, which changes systems. Institutions will always drift toward promoting their own interests over human interests. It is the responsibility of health professionals to ensure that they stay human, help their clients stay human, and ensure that health care delivery systems promote humanization rather than dehumanization.

Intended Audience and Purpose of the Book

I wrote this book for people who are looking for different ways of thinking about and practicing medicine. Dehumanization in medicine occurs throughout the world, particularly as business models replace humanitarian models of care. Many of the examples in the book are specific to the United States or New Zealand, drawing on my experience of practicing medicine in various settings in both countries; but whether dehumanization results from the profit motive of an insurance company (as in the US) or the bureaucratic processes of a national health system (as in New Zealand), the effect is the same. Re-humanizing medicine is a universal need.

This book is written specifically for clinicians, doctors, and physicians,⁹ who face daily humanitarian¹⁰ challenges in their roles, but is of interest to any health care professional or administrator. There are many fields where the application of a trained technique interferes with human connection, so teachers, trainers, educators and business people will find it relevant too. Of course, so will anyone interested in being a whole human being!

Since holistic medicine is a philosophy and a mode of being, I do not list diagnoses and alternative treatments. There are already a number of excellent books that review various complementary, alternative, and integrative medical techniques. The foundation of a holistic medical practice is you, not the services

and techniques that you offer. Therefore, this is a book for people who are willing to change at a personal level in order to be better doctors and clinicians.

Contemporary medicine and holistic medicine are not inherently in conflict. My hope is that by defining holistic medicine as a paradigm, rather than as a specific technique, its benefits can be integrated with those of contemporary medicine. My primary argument is that the human elements of medicine need to be valued so that technical interventions occur within a human context.

Holistic Medicine, Re-humanization and the Quality Revolution in Health Care – A Convergence?

There is a worldwide trend in health care that, interestingly, overlaps with the philosophy of holistic medicine. This trend is a focus on quality, efficacy and safety, stimulated by the continual increase in the cost of health care. Experts are calling for a ‘revolution in health care delivery,’¹¹ and ‘system-wide change.’¹²

Many of the suggestions involve cost-cutting and standardization of treatment. The ‘Quality Revolution’ also raises issues related to re-humanization, such as putting the patient at the center of treatment, making decisions collaboratively, and establishing a ‘continuous healing relationship.’¹³ These are the strengths of a holistic framework – not only is it patient-centered, but it includes the concept of *healing* in addition to *treatment*, and it often encourages low-cost, low-risk lifestyle changes and preventative medicine. It may be that it is time for a Compassion Revolution and a Quality Revolution to join forces in order to make medicine more affordable, safe and effective, as well as more compassionate, caring and human.

Structure of the Book

The book is divided into five major parts. The first discusses the underlying paradigms of the biomedical and economic models of

contemporary medicine and how these models have side effects of dehumanization. This critique does not mean that there is no benefit in the contemporary paradigm; rather it is an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of the underlying paradigms of the current system. The second part describes the paradigm of holistic medicine as a way of understanding the whole person. The third part is a 'self-help' section that outlines how you, as a clinician, can develop a more holistic and deeper sense of your own humanity. The fourth part is a 'how-to' component that describes how to create a holistic practice in any setting and how to re-humanize your practice. The last part describes the benefits of a holistic paradigm for re-humanizing the culture of medicine.