

Reader Views

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The Secrets of Medical Decision Making

By Oleg I. Reznik, M.D.

Loving Healing Press (2006)

Reviewed by Kelli Glesige for Reader Views (2/06)

If you want to know why doctors make some of the recommendations they do, then here is the book for you. Speaking as both a physician and a patient, Reznik helps us to understand what motivates our physicians and why they often say the things they do. “The Secrets of Medical Decision Making” is a book we can all benefit from reading because we all need health care at some time, or we are put in the situation of needing to make medical decisions for another. Oleg I. Reznik, M.D. has a goal of making us conscious and informed in the medical decisions we must make; by doing so we could have a much better health care system than we currently have.

Reznik calls our current health care system The Health Care Machine because it has become so mechanical. So many demands must be met that it is almost like an assembly line. As patients, we need to have freedom to make our choices and to question the system. The physicians and other health care workers are placed in a position called The Medical Box within The Health Care Machine because they are pressured to have only a standard, mechanical response to any given set of problems. As patients, we need to be aware of this system and the way it works so we can be aware of the limitations. Doctors are not omnipotent, which so many of us want to believe, and they should be relieved of such a burden, but so often, they are forced to stay “in the box” to protect themselves.

To ease our understanding of the material Reznik presents, he addresses four different viewpoints with each topic. Patient/Family Perspective deals with issues that would be most relevant to prospective patients and their families. Physician’s Perspective gives the physicians viewpoint on the discussed topic. Societal Perspective gives the ramifications on the society as a whole. Spiritual/Philosophical Perspective talks about the spiritual and philosophical aspects of medical care because these cannot be taken from any attempt at trying to understand a human being. Dr. Reznik presents true stories of actual clinical studies in his book to help explain the “rules of the game” in this game of health care. He wants us to understand what drives the doctor so that we can learn to be more self-reliant.

I found the information on several different medical tests to be quite informative. We are given some questions to think about before agreeing to a test and the reasons why doctors

prescribe the tests to begin with. Reznik speaks at length about prostate screening and the treatment of prostate cancer, mammograms, and how the statistics on cancer survival have progressed. All the information he presents is quite interesting and worth one's time to read in order to be a more informed individual.

Everyone may not find all the information presented by Reznik to be relevant, but we can all benefit from the ideas presented. I personally will feel less intimidated the next time I ask, "Why?" when the doctor recommends something I am not sure about. Take charge of your health and do what is best for YOU. Reading this book is well worth anyone's time who wants to be an informed patient.

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