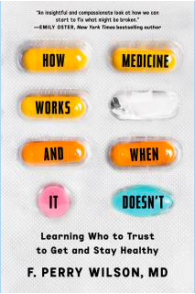
Discussion Guide



How Medicine Works
F Perry Wilson MD

Grand Central
2023
304 pages
ISBN: 978-1538723609

Health Literacy

Summary

Through stories from his own practice and historical case studies, Dr. F. Perry Wilson, a physician and researcher from the Yale School of Medicine, wants readers to understand medicine and medical science the way he does: as an imperfect and often frustrating field, but still the best option for getting well. By clarifying the realities of the medical field today, Dr. Wilson gives readers the tools they need to make informed decisions, from evaluating the validity of medical information online to helping caregivers advocate for their loved ones, in the doctor's office and with the insurance company.

Questions

1. Did this book change your understanding of the practice of medicine? If so, how?
2. What did you like most about the book? What did you like least?
3. Think of a favorite passage from *How Medicine Works and When It Doesn't*. Why did it resonate with you?
4. "Motivated reasoning" is the process of evaluating existing beliefs in response to new information. How would you approach this task if you had an existing health issue? What resources might you use or what questions might you ask?
5. Research demonstrates that loneliness has a negative effect on health, and Dr. Wilson argues that physicians should address their patients' social health as well as their biological health. What actions could health professionals take to combat patients' loneliness?
6. Why do you think the author wrote this book—what message was he trying to convey? Did he succeed? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything "missing" from this book—is there something you wish it had addressed, but didn't?
8. Dr. Wilson notes that physicians refuse some patient-requested treatments for two main reasons: the risk is too high, or the treatment isn't linked to the desired outcome. Why do you think patients request such treatments? Visit MedlinePlus to research information about symptoms, causes, treatment and prevention for more than 1,000 diseases, illnesses, health conditions and wellness issues.
9. Would you recommend *How Medicine Works and When It Doesn't* to a friend? Why or why not?
10. What questions do you have after reading this book? How could you find answers?

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