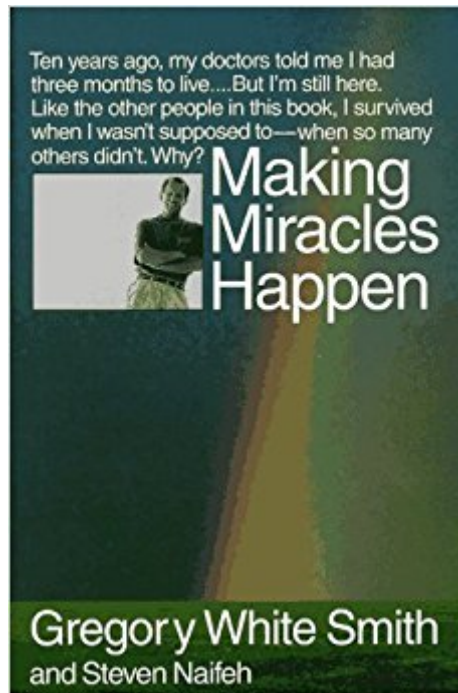




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Making Miracles Happen



Synopsis

Ten years ago, doctors at the Mayo Clinic told thirty-four-year-old Greg Smith that he had an inoperable brain tumor. They gave him three months to live. Today, ten years later, Smith is fit, symptom-free, and managing his tumor with an experimental hormone therapy--living proof that no matter how dire the diagnosis, you don't have to accept a death sentence. How did he do it? In this remarkable book, Smith draws on his own harrowing experiences, and those of other patients who "refused to lie down and die on cue," to show how medical "miracles" are made; from taking control of health care decisions to exploring experimental treatments; from finding the right questions for your doctor to finding the right doctor for your questions; from developing trust in your caregiver to developing faith in yourself; from battling insurance companies to battling the voice in your head that keeps asking, "Why me?" *Making Miracles Happen* is not just another survivor's memoir. The story of Greg Smith's return from the threshold of death is certainly inspirational--and deeply moving, and even darkly funny at times--but inspiration is only part of the story. "My purpose," says Smith in the introduction, "is to be helpful." In pursuit of that goal, he weaves the eloquence and insights of doctors, as well as the hard-won wisdom of other patients, into the compelling narrative of his own story. The result is a book that entertains, educates, and empowers at the same time; a book that inspires with information and insight, not feel-good nostrums; a book that doesn't just tell the story of how one man achieved his medical miracle, but lays out a road map that others can follow; a book that finally brings the light and air of reason into that darkest and most claustrophobic of all places in the heart: the fear of dying.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is everyone's worst nightmare: an inoperable brain tumor, a dire prognosis. At this point, one might naturally give up in despair and compose oneself for the end as best one could. But not Smith (coauthor, with partner Naifeh, of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Jackson Pollock*). From the December day in 1986 when Smith received the shattering diagnosis, the reader is taken on his harrowing quest to beat the odds. First there are the external obstacles intrinsic to medicine and medical economics. (It should be noted without surprise that Smith is particularly critical of the system of medical insurance in this country.) Smith also deals with the internal obstacles, especially the temptation of the seriously ill toward a "Why me?" self-pity and depression, to which he himself admits to having succumbed on occasion. It is this honest appraisal of his own shortcomings in the "grit and determination" department that guarantees *Making Miracles Happen* an appreciative audience. Recommended for consumer health collections. -Kay Hogan, Univ. of Alabama at Birmingham Lister Hill Lib. of the Health Sciences Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.

When you live with a brain tumor for 20 years, you learn a lot about medicine and about yourself. Smith (Naifeh is his "twenty-two-year partner and coauthor

I was recently diagnosed with a brain tumor and was looking for alternative cures - this book focuses on the writer's journey dealing with his brain tumor in the conventional medicine trap. Since time is of essence, I finally skipped through to the very end to find out what he had done to cure his tumor (a clinical trial) but it was very vague....so for me this book did not help (his detailed description of the gruesome brain surgeries he underwent actually gave me nightmares).I do appreciate Gregory sharing his experience and exposing the frustrating and detrimental shortcomings of conventional medicine. His writing is very engaging and the story is interesting so for most people it is worth reading. I got more info on treating my particular problem from *Natural Strategies for Cancer Patients* by Russell Blaylock and *Cancer, Step Outside the Box* by Ty Bollinger.

An excellent read on the importance of doing relentless research when confronted with a major health crisis; merely coming in contact with a medical professional in a white coat isn't enough. The road to better health requires getting past the egos, lots of research, a good advocate to be with

you, and a willingness to not "just settle" for the easiest or most convenient option. The book chronicles the story of the author, diagnosed with a brain tumor in 1975, through the late 1990s on his treatment quest, including multiple surgeries. Very inspirational. A great gift for family members who may have to serve as patient advocates, are new to the role, and need to understand the vital role they play when interfacing between medical professionals/insurance companies and their loved ones who need help in navigating "the system."

Inspiring story of trials, failures and successes of learning to navigate the medical industry and not giving up in the face of tremendous adversity. My wife has gone through different medical problems but many of the same challenges in finding doctors who knew what they were doing, were truly patient advocates, and were willing to "think outside the box" to help solve a series of complicated medical problems. We were both moved and motivated by this book!

Phenomenal and uplifting. That's how I would describe Smith's book. I purchased this book because I was diagnosed with a brain tumor last year, at age 22. A craniotomy and a long recovery behind me, I'm still left with part of the tumor, seizures, and daily medication. Smith's book not only led me through what he was going through physically and emotionally, so that I did not feel so alone, but it showed the other side: hope. Through many personal stories of people who had diseases ranging from emphysema to AIDS, amyloidosis to stroke, Smith shows the strength and power that hope, positive thinking, and an attitude of "I'm not giving up!" has had on these fighters. This book made me see that no matter how bad I think things are for me, someone is going through worse, but with a better attitude! Everybody knows someone suffering from a chronic disease. I recommend this book for sufferers and their families. Not only helpful emotionally, it is helpful practically, in showing that getting that second, or third, or fourth opinion may make the difference between not only horrible aftereffects of a surgery, but life and death. Most of all, this book leaves its readers with the message of "Don't give up!" I know I won't.

I can relate to this great book! See, in 2001, I was suffering from an infection of the upper respiratory tract. Next thing I know, I wake up IN THE HOSPITAL. I had a seizure. No big deal. What happened next was: While having my seizure, I sustained a burst fracture of L1 vertebra. A spinal cord injury. My neurologist said I would never walk again. So of course, I was bummed. My mother, though, would hear none of it. She told me that these doctors are not God. They do not decide your fate. Only you do. Therefore, I decided to work my butt off in rehab. Here it is 5 years later. Am I walking? Yes! Not

only that I walk as well as I did before I got hurt. I work 2 jobs and generally lead a full life. Mr. Smith's book says all the things I feel. The fight against self pity. The realization that your life will never be the same again. The hard work after. The nature of hospitals. The angels in one's life (my mother comes to mind as does the rest of my family and some good friends). I feel like I was with him the whole time I read the book. I related to all of the stories he cites. I especially like his line that doctors are like weathermen. I say it all the time. They are NOT God...and I myself am a podiatrist.

Although the title oozes with sap, Smith's book is full of original and interesting takes on the state of modern medicine as it concerns chronic and extremely life-threatening diseases. Especially relevant, I think, are his comments about being active in choosing doctors, doing your own research, and not simply accepting physicians' opinions as divine kernels of wisdom. Unfortunately, like many books in this genre, the writing tends toward the glib; patients' stories are seamlessly intercut with an enormous variety of material, from quotes from the relevant literature to interviews with leading research scientists. Good reading, though.

This book should be required reading in High School...it lets the reader know how and when to use healthcare options, and how important it is to control one's healthcare and destiny.

I am in the process of reading this book. I just finished reading Chapter 3, A Doctor Is a Doctor Is . . . The information in this chapter is extremely important. It applies to all technical fields.

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