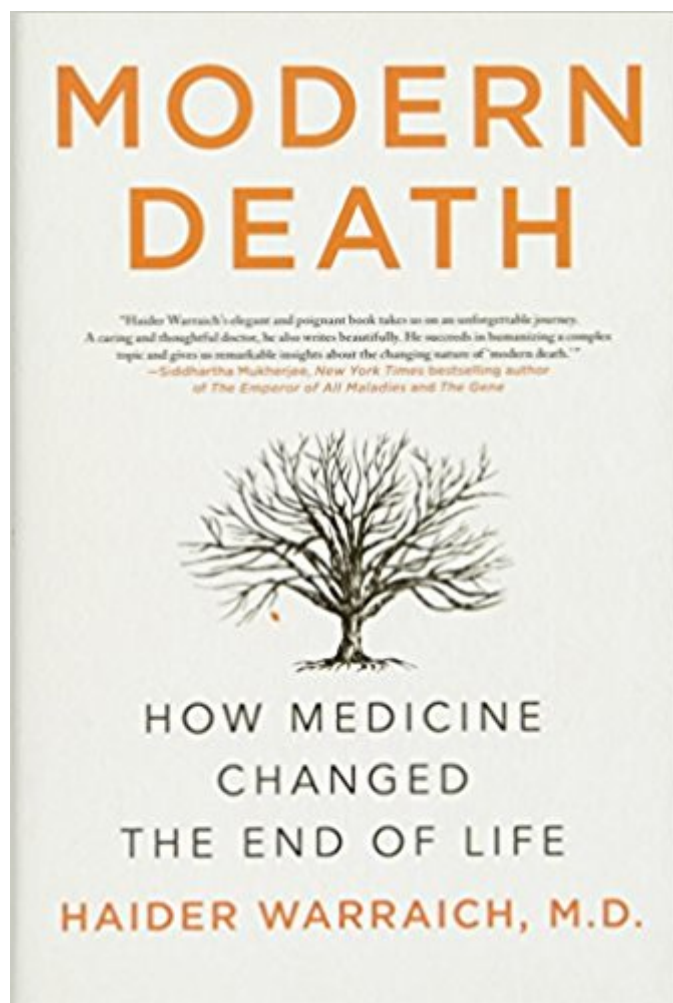


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Modern Death: How Medicine Changed The End Of Life



Synopsis

There is no more universal truth in life than death. No matter who you are, it is certain that one day you will die, but the mechanics and understanding of that experience will differ greatly in today's modern age. Dr. Haider Warraich is a young and brilliant new voice in the conversation about death and dying started by Dr. Sherwin Nuland and Atul Gawande. Dr. Warraich takes a broader look at how we die today, from the cellular level up to the very definition of death itself. The most basic aspects of dying—the whys, where, whens, and hows—are almost nothing like what they were mere decades ago. Beyond its ecology, epidemiology, and economics, the very ethos of death has changed. Modern Death, Dr. Warraich's debut book, will explore the rituals and language of dying that have developed in the last century, and how modern technology has not only changed the hows, whens, and where of death, but the what of death. Delving into the vast body of research on the evolving nature of death, Modern Death will provide readers with an enriched understanding of how death differs from the past, what our ancestors got right, and how trends and events have transformed this most final of human experiences.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Press; 1 edition (February 7, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1250104580

ISBN-13: 978-1250104588

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.1 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 38 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

"Haider Warraich's elegant and poignant book takes us on an unforgettable journey. Warraich's quest is remarkable: he wants us to confront the act of dying. A caring and thoughtful doctor, he also writes beautifully—drawing from his own patients and from statistics, medical ethics,

literature and the sciences. He succeeds in humanizing a complex topic and gives us remarkable insights about the changing nature of 'modern death'." — Siddhartha Mukherjee, New York Times bestselling author of *The Emperor of All Maladies* and *The Gene* "Warraich demystifies what is known and unknown about how cells and bodies die, while sensitively grappling with the changing cultural landscape surrounding the end of life, including patients who tweet and share the details of their decline on social media. His story is filled with compassionate accounts of the different ways he has witnessed people meet death in the modern age." — Scientific American "Medical advances have shifted the boundary between life and death, raising controversial questions for doctors and patients. Physician Haider Warraich zooms in on these issues in *Modern Death: How Medicine Changed the End of Life*, supplementing medical history with tales from the life-death border that are disturbing, bewildering, and inspiring." — Psychology Today "Daily exposure to death and the agonies of the bereaved prompted cardiologist Haider Warraich to encapsulate the recent transformation in end-of-life care. The result is rich, splicing harrowing cases from the acute admissions ward into medical history and science as he examines everything from the death of a cell to the impact of death on society." — Nature

Dr. Haider Warraich graduated from medical school in Pakistan in 2009. He did his residency in internal medicine at Harvard Medical School, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, one of the main teaching hospitals of Harvard Medical School. He is currently a fellow in cardiology at Duke University Medical Center. His medical and Op Ed pieces have appeared in many media outlets including the New York Times, The Atlantic, the Wall Street Journal, Slate, and the LA Times among others.

In this very valuable book, Dr. Warraich examines how death has changed, and discussing the implications of those changes for all of us. We will all die, and most of us will be involved in the deaths of others. But the way most of us die has changed drastically over the past century. Before then, death usually came quickly, at home, and was usually definitive -- the heart stopped, and so did life. But now death tends to be gradual, and to happen in the arms of the medical industrial complex of hospitals, nursing homes, and hospices. It is also, oftentimes, much harder to define - is someone dead when brain function cannot be detected, even if the heart continues to beat and the lungs to breathe? These changes pose problems for patients and care-givers, problems that all too often are not anticipated in advance. Dr. Warraich recommends over and over that people discuss and think about the way they want their lives to end before the crisis comes, and this book provides

an enormous amount of information. In that sense, it can be liberating -- I did not find the book at all depressing (though it is painfully sad in some places). Dr. Warraich relies on extensive research and on his experience as a physician to make his points, a deeply satisfying combination.

Well written subject matter. I didn't give it 5 stars because of one thing - the author pressed a little too hard on how patients want doctors to be like God. I think he missed the point. I don't believe he's Christian, and perhaps that is why I disagree. I found myself saying, "Get over yourself. You're my physician, NOT my savior." I expect a doctor to do everything in his/her power to fix my body. I have no desire for my doctor to be my spiritual counselor. People do need doctors who are willing to care, to discuss their fears, but at some point, the doctor should either tell the patient that a spiritual counselor is needed or just be a friend who listens. Doctors have to fight the "God Complex" image too much and this book does nothing to help that.

Where do you want to die? At home? Well, good luck. According to Dr. Warraich's well-researched statistics, it's likely to be at a hospital or care facility. Do you have an Advance Directive? It may not have been inputted into your care provider's computer because it's almost expected you'll change your mind; after all, your illness and its complexities and your thought processes are likely to have changed from one hospital or doctor visit to the next. Has modern technology prolonged life or prolonged death? What is the definition of death, and how has it changed over time? How has Karen Ann Quinlan, Terry Schiavo, Jack Kevorkian and Alex Hardy changed the conversation about how we die? What is terminal sedation, and is it legal? These and many other questions about the modern way we die are answered or not in Dr. Haider Warraich's thought-provoking and gentle treatment of a difficult subject. And he does so through poignant personal stories, statistics, history, definitions and court cases written in an easy-to-read-and-understand style. Doctors, patients, friends and families should read this book to begin the necessary conversation on modern death.

I did not agree with everything I read here, but all of it gave me food for thought. The author very thoroughly documented all his sources, and gave statistics for many of his statements. A very provocative read, and very useful for any healthcare provider, or anyone who may someday die. Thank you very much doctor, you are a brave man.

Excellent book on death and dying. Everyone should read this to make meaning behind one's passing, as death is very taboo in much of the world these days.

My wife works for hospice so our lives 10 to revolve around end-of-life issues and death. It is always seem to us that in clinging to this life we deprive ourselves of the joy which can come with making peace with one's

Thought provoking presentation of how views of death have evolved over time and the importance of having a conversation about how we prefer to die with loved ones.

fascinating read of a greatly neglected subject in our society - i'll definitely pass this on to my family members and friends

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