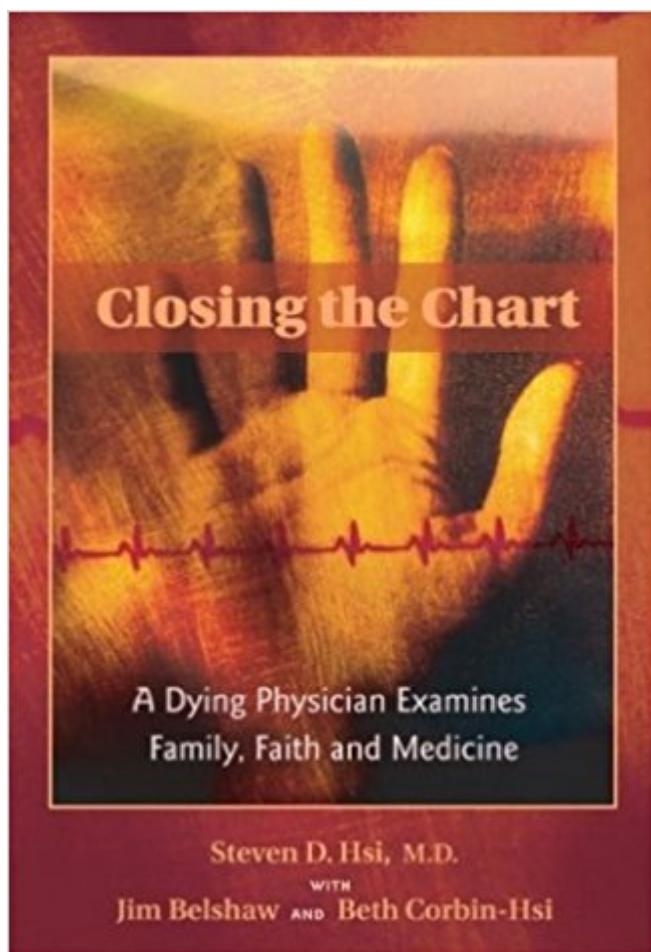


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Closing The Chart: A Dying Physician Examines Family, Faith, And Medicine



Synopsis

Dr. Steven D. Hsi, a family physician and father of two young sons, was diagnosed in 1995 with a rare coronary disease that caused his death five years later at the age of forty-four. Throughout his ordeals as a patient, including three open-heart surgeries, Dr. Hsi's outlook on the teaching and practice of medicine changed. In 1997 he began a journal intended for publication after his death. Written with the assistance of newspaper columnist Jim Belshaw and completed posthumously by Hsi's widow, Beth Corbin-Hsi, Dr. Hsi's writings urge his colleagues to become healers, to look at their patients as human beings with spiritual as well as physical lives. "Every patient should read it, if only to be made aware that they are not alone with their thoughts. Every spouse of a patient should read it. . . . Every medical student and physician should read it to learn that the biology of the disease is really just a small part of the illness." John Saiki, M.D., Medical Oncology, University of New Mexico; Dr. Steven Hsi asks his fellow doctors to be more than physicians. He asks them to be healers. He says that when he thinks of healers, he sees traditional medicine men, people who are integral parts of their communities. They are in touch physically and spiritually with the people they serve.

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Customer Reviews

"...profound and deeply moving." (Southwest BookViews)
"This is a profoundly moving story. Heartbreakingly candid. And arresting with truths." (KUNM-FM)

"Every patient should read it, if only to be made aware that they are not alone with their thoughts. Every spouse of a patient should read it. . . . Every medical student and physician should read it to learn that the biology of the disease is really just a small part of the illness."--John Saiki, M.D., Medical Oncology, University of New Mexico --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

I purchased "Closing the Chart" as a used book on and saw passages throughout underlined by yellow marker. I'd heard that the book was required reading for some medical students. As I began to read Dr. Steven Hsi's account of dealing with a disease that caused his heart to fail, I quickly understood why he had struck a vulnerable sore in medical teaching. Hsi's first-hand account, written in conjunction with his wife, Beth Corbin-Hsi and journalist Jim Belshaw, is a painful yet hopeful account of a medical odyssey in which the gurney is abruptly turned and the healer has become the afflicted. With that comes the stark realization of what Hsi had always known but thought of too little during his own successful career: that patients are both body and soul. As a patient, Hsi saw that he was far more complex than a flesh-and-blood machine needing a repair or replacement part. If the specialists to whom he'd entrusted his care had taken the time to ask beyond their questions of symptoms, to ask how the patient was feeling, how his family was coping, the outcome may have been just as dire but the journey far more benign. Before he died, Hsi had the chance to return briefly to his patients and practice what he had learned. He hoped that his writing would inspire other physicians to do the same. Someone in the medical profession had it right. This book should be required reading.

Steven Hsi was an excellent and conscientious doctor, and one of quite a few who are recognizing and speaking out about the problems associated with a purely scientific approach to medicine. This very personal account covers many of the factors related to mental as well as physical health. Scientific aspects of medicine with their many materials and methods, are only a part of the healing elements. Empathy and personal interaction go a very long way toward easing death and serious illnesses if not curing disease or saving lives for longer periods. We must remember that each individual case encompasses the lives and actions of the many other people involved. I must here commend the works and actions of Abraham Verghese, M. D. and others, whose philosophies are being wide spread for the benefit of the Medical profession as well as individual patients and their many and various care-givers. Dr. Steven Hsi's book, "Closing the Chart; A dying Physician Examines Family, Faith, and Medicine", has been recommended as important reading for Medical

students, Nurses, and other professionals in the fields of health care. Testimonials such as this one have influenced a movement toward more personal interactions among professionals and their patients. Introducing these attitudes and techniques as a subject taught earlier in the course of medical school curricula could enhance both the learning experience for students, and the care and comfort of patients who may be involved.

Worth the read, especially for those of us in the health care professions. Though the book is slightly dated, the accusations of the author are still very real, very pertinent. The well documented story of a physician undergoing his own health care crisis, written with compassion and honesty, is worthy of our attention.

Stephen was in a unique position to comment on medical care - as a doctor and a patient. The best word to describe his book is - honest. He told his story in a balanced, frank manner - still being upbeat for the most part. Much time was spent describing the effect of his illness on him and his family. He also discussed medical care - especially as relates to fellow doctors. The book has minimal technical jargon and is easily read.

Dr Hsi's story of his critical illness and his family's growth in faith and courage while dealing with less than perfect healthcare system was both deeply moving and challenging to those of us in medicine. I am a critical care physician with chronic progressive illnesses of my own. Both my professional and patient sides were deeply impressed and comforted by this wonderful book. I highly recommend this book to patients suffering from chronic illness as well as those who care for these special patients. Kent Pearson, MD

From the perspective of a physician caught up in the bureaucracy of the health care system, Dr. Stephen Hsi's story could have provided much needed advice to dying patients and their loved ones. Instead, most of his advice was directed at health care professionals, urging them to care. It's been ten years and nothing's changed.

A superb book that tells it like it is. We are creating a generation of professional caregivers that 'don't get it'. These folks don't know what holistic care is, instead, as per Dr. Hsi, patients are 're-dos',

A true testament that all nurses, doctors, and healthcare givers should learn from. No patient should receive the type of care (or lack there of) Dr. Hsi did during his treatment.

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