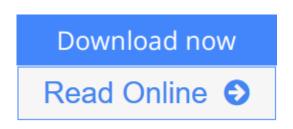


Love and Survival: 8 Pathways to Intimacy and Health

By Dean Ornish



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The Medical Basis for the Healing Power of Intimacy

We all know that intimacy improves the quality of our lives. Yet most people don't realize how much it can increase the quality of our lives -- our survival.

In this *New York Times*world-renowned physician Dean Ornish, M.D., writes, "I am not aware of any other factor in medicine that has a greater impact on our survival than the healing power of love and intimacy. Not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not stress, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery."

He reveals that the real epidemic in modern culture is not only physical heart disease but also what he calls spiritual heart disease: loneliness, isolation, alienation, and depression. He shows how the very defenses that we think protect us from emotional pain are often the same ones that actually heighten our pain and threaten our survival. Dr. Ornish outlines eight pathways to intimacy and healing that have made a profound difference in his life and in the life of millions of others in turning sadness into happiness, suffering into joy.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Many people know Dean Ornish as the doctor who proved that symptoms of heart disease can be reversed with a regimen of a low-fat diet, exercise, and stress reduction. In *Love & Survival*, he concentrates on the less tangible aspects of a healthful life. Through anecdotes and dozens of scientific studies, Ornish demonstrates that personal intimacy and other aspects of emotional well-being--all the elements that make up what we call "love"--are as important to our physical condition as to our mental health. Not only do these positive emotions motivate us to make better lifestyle choices, Ornish argues, they also have a powerful direct effect on our bodies, giving us stronger immune systems, better cardiovascular functioning, and longer life expectancies. But the benefits of opening our hearts to others go beyond curing our bodies of disease; it's also the first step toward healing our entire lives.

From **Booklist**

With best-sellers on reducing stress and modifying diet to alleviate and reverse the effects of physical heart disease to his credit, Ornish now tackles "emotional and spiritual heart disease," the remedy for which consists of "love and intimacy." Ornish argues that affection is crucial to health with research findings as well as clinical-anecdotal evidence. The second of six fat chapters presents studies demonstrating that those who give and receive love are healthier than those who don't; this is intriguing and persuasive testimony that many may find squares with common sense. Succeeding chapters present the anecdotal evidence, beginning with Ornish's account of his own life-reversal (at 40, he found he was far better at giving than living his own advice) and continuing with advice on behaving and speaking so as to foster love, the story of a middle-aged physician (Ornish's patient) learning to heal his heart disease by coming to terms with anger, and the massive final chapter's interviews with other physicians and healers about their experience with the healing powers of love. Ornish conceives love broadly, bringing in the love of God as well as of mate, family, and friends, and he presents commitment as crucial to loving relationships, especially marriage, although his is a sadder-butwiser perspective on matrimony than the never-divorced Catherine M. Wallace's in Fidelity (reviewed in this issue). With interviews in all media, a PBS documentary, a lecture tour, and a food-line launch accompanying publication, Love & Survival bids fair to be this year's Eight Weeks to Optimum Health. Ray Olson

From Kirkus Reviews

Ornish, the bestselling author known for using diet, exercise, and stress management to treat heart disease (Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease), now insists that the most powerful influences on health are love and intimacy. The founder of the Preventive Medicine Research Institute near San Francisco says he knows of no other factor--``not diet, not smoking, not exercise, not stress, not genetics, not drugs, not surgery--that has such a major impact on our quality of life, incidence of illness, and premature death from all causes." After backing up this claim with an impressive review of the literature supporting the healing role of social support and intimacy and the health-damaging consequences of loneliness and isolation, Ornish looks inward and describes his own personal journey to greater openness. He follows these self-revelations with a discussion of intimacy-enhancing strategies. In what is the book's least cohesive chapter, he presents a standard exercise in communication skills and briefly discusses the value of human touch, the meaning of commitment, the practice of meditation, and the role of spiritual practices and psychotherapy in developing the sense of self that is a prerequisite to achieving intimacy. Ornish then inserts a lengthy illustrative anecdote: the case of a patient whose heart disease begins to reverse after he accepts Ornish's urging to open his heart and give up his anger. The second and more compelling half of the book consists of Ornish's

conversations on the role of love and intimacy in health and disease with a broad spectrum of thoughtful men and women with different perspectives: a yogi, an intuitive healer, a theologian, a sociologist, a psychologist, and many scientists and physicians. A curious work, loosely structured, sometimes to the point and sometimes rambling, blending scientific findings and personal convictions. (illustrations, not seen) (\$285,000 ad/promo; TV and radio satellite tour) -- *Copyright* ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ivory Hughes:

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