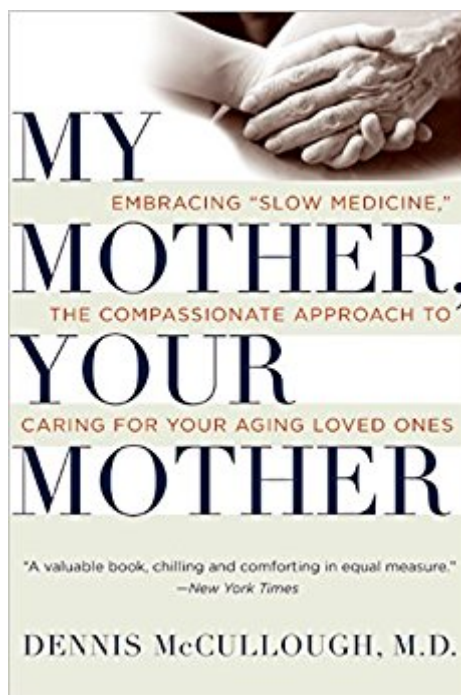


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My Mother, Your Mother: Embracing "Slow Medicine," The Compassionate Approach To Caring For Your Aging Loved Ones



Synopsis

Thanks to advances in science and medicine, our parents are living longer than ever before. But our health-care system doesn't perform as well when decline eventually sets in. We want to do our best as our loved ones face new complications—more diseases and disabilities—demanding further need for support and careful judgment, but the choices we have to make can seem overwhelming. Family doctor and geriatrician Dennis McCullough recommends a new approach: *Slow Medicine*. Shaped by common sense and kindness, it advocates for careful anticipatory "attending" to an elder's changing needs rather than waiting for crises that force acute medical interventions—thereby improving the quality of elders' extended late lives without bankrupting their families financially or emotionally. This is not a plan for preparing for death; it is a plan for understanding, for caring, and for helping those you love live well during their final years.

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Customer Reviews

"McCullough's concept of *slow medicine* is an example of that ethic of care in action—recommended for public libraries. (Library Journal) "A valuable book, chilling and comforting in equal measure. A similar book directed at fast doctors, fast hospital administrators and fast insurers might be the next welcome stride backward down the path. (New York Times) "Full of advice on how to get involved in [your parents'] care, and the kind of conversations you should have with their doctors. It's also a warning about the medical profession's alarming tendency toward

poly-pharmacy. (Maclean's) "Appreciation of...My Mother, Your Mother...will, I think, depend on where you are on life's highway. If...your parents are still living, this geriatrician's guide to stepping in as escort, caregiver and advocate for your parent's final journey will probably be comforting in its compassion and detail. (St. Petersburg Times) "As valuable a resource as any I've found. (Jane Gross, New York Times)

Dennis McCullough, M.D., has been a family physician and geriatrician for thirty years. He is the co-author of *The Little Black Book of Geriatrics*, and he lives with his wife, the poet Pamela Harrison, in Norwich, Vermont.

If I had an unlimited amount of cash, I would buy thousands of copies of *MY MOTHER, YOUR MOTHER*. Here's who I'd give them to: Every doctor, nurse, aide, medical assistant, physical and occupational therapist, specialist, psychologist, counselor, social worker, medical insurance person, Medicare and medicaid worker, pharmacist, physician's assistant....I'd give a copy to every medical student, dentist, lab tech, optometrist, and to every adult with a parent over the age of 50, with any relative or friend in frail health. I'd give it to my neices and nephews, my mailman, the funeral director over on Main Street...You get the idea. *MMYM* is practical and wise. Dr. McCullough returns something we mistakenly handed to modern medicine: how to care for our loved ones, and be part of their lives during their frail final years.

This book is a pathbreaker. America desperately needs Slow Medicine, (it's really old fashioned, wise, time-consuming, compassionate, responsible, cautious doctoring) far more than it knows. When you start taking care of aged parents and you run into our broken system, you sometimes don't know what hit you. All of the defects of our fragmented money-driven system rise up in your face and ambush you and your parents. Fragmented, rushed, overambitious care is bad for all patients, but it's especially bad for the elderly, when the law of diminishing returns kicks in and the risks of ill-considered surgeries, etc. rise. Dr. McCullough presents a calm, easily understandable road map to the stages of final decline. (The opposite of overtreatment is not non-treatment, but there's a difference in what's truly useful.) I referred to this book frequently in the seven years I cared for my parents, and in researching my own book on a related subject. (*Knocking on Heaven's Door*.)

This is a truly excellent book. Anyone supporting parents through aging and illness will likely benefit from giving this a read. It is intimate, compassionate and offers wise counsel. It clearly reflects the author's deep experience and insight. Highly recommended.

My daughter recommended this book, and it was very timely since my own mother is 88 and has gone through some of the experiences the author describes. This is both frightening and reassuring. Frightening because the path ahead looks difficult; reassuring because knowing that what we are going through is similar to what other people are going through is helpful. The author makes his points by telling stories from his practice as a family physician and also as the son of an aging, and eventually dying, mother. His advice is both philosophical (his advocacy of what he calls "Slow Medicine") and practical. As a physician himself he is in a good position to offer advice on how to work with the medical establishment rather than at cross purposes with it. If you have an elderly loved one, are approaching elder status yourself, or both, this compassionate book will help you navigate your own trip up the mountain.

Living in a community for persons 60 and older as well as being active in Hospice care this book provides much food for thought. The concept of slow medicine is well presented, fully explained and has many practical suggestions. Should be read before you yourself becomes in need of such loving and well planned care. The best takeaway: medical treatment is and should be vastly different for ages 50 and 80. Our bodies have most likely changed, therefore so should our medical care, more thoughtful consideration needs to be given and our families should be involved in decision making

I have experienced the decline and death of two in-laws, and am currently experiencing the decline of my own parents. In this book, Dr. McCullough takes us on his personal journey with the aging and decline of his own mother. He explains what is happening from his professional perspective as a doctor, from his loving perspective as a son, and from a practical perspective as a human. I have loaned this book to friends, and purchased copies for other family members. It is an invaluable guide in helping our parents maintain dignity and comfort, while helping us maintain sanity and compassion.

This is a really useful book, unlike any other I have read about caring for an elderly person. Although technical aspects are covered, such as care directives, it also covers the emotional side

from both the care giver and care receivers viewpoint. An excellent book, I recommend it for everyone who cares about another person, no matter their age. Planning cannot start too early.

McCullough has had a big impact with this book and his approach to end of life and medical treatment of older people. Somehow it seemed like old fashioned medicine when doctors knew their patients and their families. So much seemed obvious but is really not as you see the dramatic, expensive, intrusive and do not take into account the realities of the lives that are being saved. Goes well with Katy Butler's book, Knocking on Heaven's Door.

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