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White Coat, Black Hat: Adventures On The Dark Side Of Medicine



Synopsis

By New Yorker and Atlantic writer Carl Elliott, a readable and even funny account of the serious business of medicine. A tongue-in-cheek account of the changes that have transformed medicine into big business. Physician and medical ethicist Carl Elliott tracks the new world of commercialized medicine from start to finish, introducing the professional guinea pigs, ghostwriters, thought leaders, drug reps, public relations pros, and even medical ethicists who use medicine for (sometimes huge) financial gain. Along the way, he uncovers the cost to patients lost in a health-care universe centered around consumerism.

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Customer Reviews

As a person who has written about the pharmaceutical industry for years, been a pharmaceutical executive and both a critic and supporter of the industry, I highly recommend this book for its unique perspective on the practice of medicine, the drug business, and the many people (both good and bad) involved. Dr. Carl Elliott has done an excellent job of using his own background in medicine (his father was a physician), his research in philosophy and his own perspective as an MD and professor of bio-ethics, to give a very balanced overview of the many problems besieging the modern pharmaceutical industry. Please don't let all these credentials make you believe this is yet another pedantic study of medicine. The writing is superb and compelling, the stories both often funny, sad and touching and the narrative clear and straight forward. Best of all, while the book maintains a high level of scholarship, it never loses its human touch. As an example of why anyone

who has taken a drug should read this book, is Dr. Elliott's examination of the types of facilities and the kinds of people on whom drugs are frequently tested. (It is shocking, but true that drugs released to millions of people are often tested on a limited number of people who are not at all representative of the population as a whole.) Dr. Elliott also does a superb job of helping the reader navigate through what has become a vast, medical-industrial complex: including government regulators, universities, physician groups, medical journals and "continuing medical education" that is sponsored by drug companies. The reader will ask after reading this book just what the difference between marketing and science really is?

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