

Different Drummer: A Cardiologist's Memoir of Imperfect Heroes and Care for the Heart

Douglass Andrew Morrison

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The learned doctor's memoir Different Drummer covers personal contributions to coronary angioplasty revolutions.

Douglass Andrew Morrison's memoir *Different Drummer* concerns a career in academic medicine and cardiology, as well as revolutions in patient care.

Morrison grew up in Pennsylvania, but he left home at fourteen to attend boarding school. In informal terms, he shares anecdotes from his childhood, as well as his thoughts on the people around him. He later attended Harvard before entering medical school; further, he earned a PhD in epidemiology.

Morrison worked within university-affiliated Veteran Affairs medical centers for thirty-one years. His book focuses on this career, including his role in conducting The Angina With Extremely Serious Operative Mortality Evaluation (AWESOME) trial and registry, which compared plasty with bypass surgery for high-risk patients with acute coronary syndromes. But in addition to these professional successes, Morrison also sustained an injury that almost ended his career; he battled depression in the aftermath.

In detailing Morrison's career, the book engages in lengthy medical explanations—of treatment options for patients suffering from chronic cardiopulmonary disorders; and about revolutions in the care of heart attack patients. As its language becomes more academic and formal in its discussions of medicine and medical revolutions, it stands to interest and hold outside audiences less. Still, its medical discussions are made somewhat accessible via the book's extensive glossary of specialized terms.

Morrison maintains a humble tone throughout the book, attributing his achievements to hard work and commitment, rather than to brilliance, and he draws on this conviction to deliver practical advice for others. His book emphasizes studying and continued practice as a way to achieve goals and stand out in a talented crowd; encourages developing an attitude of gratitude; and suggests learning from accomplished people. Inspiring quotes are pulled forward to highlight these values; they concern seeking help and being responsible.

Dispensing with its focus on the personal, the text sometimes shifts from Morrison's career to deliver brief profiles of other renowned medical professionals whose work influenced Morrison's own. These are separated from the memoir proper—isolated in sidebars with portraits and concise summations. Many of their stories illuminate the earlier work and research that went into the procedures Morrison undertook, as do the book's excerpts from medical books and words from Morrison's colleagues, past and present.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (August 25, 2021)

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