

A Foreword



I first met Eve Wood at a Spirituality & Crisis Conference in 2003, sponsored by Johns Hopkins Medicine Institute. For over fifty years Johns Hopkins Medicine has been hosting an annual spirituality and medicine conference dedicated to the discussion of ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of patients. The conference includes clergy, physicians, surgeons, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, as well as many others who deal with the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of our culture.

I gave two talks at that conference. The first was a professional perspective on Spirituality and Crisis, and the second was a personal perspective on the same topic.

Eve Wood approached me after my first lecture. I was seated at a table with other keynote speakers, meeting and greeting the attendees. After waiting some time to speak to me, she approached to tell me how much she had connected to what I had been saying during my talk. She explained that her clinical work was about the integration of traditional psychiatric practices, as well as more avant-garde

spiritual ideas and that my lecture had resonated with her own experience. We spoke for a little while, and then she asked if I would be willing to read something she was working on, and if it was at all possible for me to give her some feedback on it.

I explained to Eve that, although I was flattered, I tended not to do that. I find it rather difficult to accommodate all the requests I receive, and have made a practice of declining those where I have not personally been involved in the work or manuscript itself. Eve, ever gracious, said she understood this entirely.

Nonetheless, we continued to talk, touching upon a number of different topics, including our respective ideas about medicine and healing. Apparently, one of the experiences I had shared in my lecture had reminded her of one of the patients she had been treating in her clinical practice.

The story I had shared was about an infant, but a few days old, whom I had treated thirty years before while I was Surgeon-in-Chief of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The parents had brought the baby to me in what seemed like a last ditch effort to save their child's life. The little boy suffered from multiple congenital abnormalities, several of them incompatible with life, and his parents had been told by four other surgeons that it was absolutely impossible to save him. Indeed, the parents were advised to let their child pass away peacefully in the corner of the hospital nursery. They were clearly distraught and devastated by the news, but still found the resolve to continue looking for a surgeon who was at least willing to try. They asked me if I would be willing to operate on their baby, and if it was possible to save his life.

I examined the infant, and realized that this was a serious undertaking. While any one of these anomalies

was repairable, there were so many of them that it did seem unlikely that the child could be saved. And yet, I wondered why it wouldn't be possible to treat the child step-by-step operating on the most threatening issues first, and slowly but surely correcting all of the abnormalities over a lengthy period of time. I explained the risks involved in such an endeavor, and how I would have to bring in other doctors to do procedures that were outside of my expertise. The parents decided to proceed.

It took over fifty operations, spanning the course of many years, but the child lived. In fact, that child went on, after college, to graduate as a minister from Westminster Theological Seminary. I have followed his education closely. I contacted as many of the surgeons who had helped me in this process as I could find. I wanted them to know the wonderful turn of events and recognize the role they had played in saving the life of that little boy.

For Eve, this story reminded her of her patient, Gillie. As you read this book, you will likely see the similarities as well. Like the little boy I treated, it seemed that few of Gillie's therapists had actually tried to cure her. Instead, they seemed to accept that her biology and circumstances were her destiny, and while surely trying to make her life more comfortable, they continued to treat her for years without believing there would ever be an end to her suffering.

As Eve told me about her experiences with Gillie—the many challenges, as well as the many rewards—I realized that she and I were very similar creatures. Neither of us was afraid to risk our reputations if it meant helping a patient; nor did we take our task as physicians lightly. Both of us tend to look past the diagnoses and illness, in order to see and realize the potential for a healthy, happy life. We do

not choose to become mired in the challenges of a task, but rather look for intuitive, creative ways to find solutions, irregardless of how daunting that task might be. Finally, Eve and I share the sense that there is something larger than ourselves involved in the healing process; and that faith belongs in the doctor's bag as much as a scalpel, a stethoscope, or a prescription pad.

In short, Eve had convinced me that this was a book worth looking at.

I have seldom been so moved by a book. You simply won't find a book like this one very often. It is written by a physician who loves her patients and has come to see that life depends not on the hand you are dealt, but on how you choose to live it. As Eve says throughout, the path to fulfillment is simple; it just isn't always that easy to achieve. Part of that responsibility rests with our cultural approach to medicine. But, there is a science for the soul as well. And if we are each body, mind, and spirit, how can we be healed if we don't treat all three together? With *Medicine, Mind and Meaning*, however, we have finally been given a model that integrates the treatment of the body, mind, and spirit. To my way of thinking, it is the only model of healing that makes sense, and I have learned more from this book than I have elsewhere in a very long time.

It has been my privilege to meet Eve Wood and let her get into my mind. Indeed, we have become good friends. Throughout our correspondence, I have consistently urged Eve to get her message out to the public. I am pleased that, with the publication of this important and inspiring book, she has finally done just that.

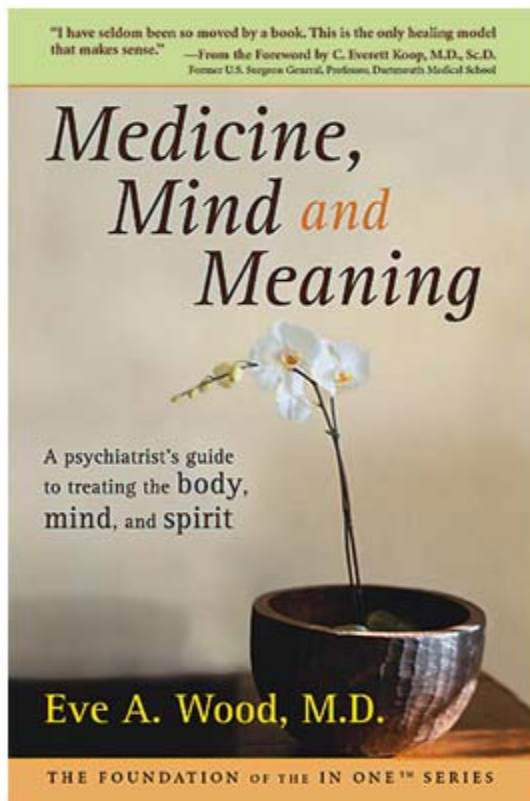
I'm not given to hyperbole, but I do feel that this book will strike a chord for a generation that sees itself in a poor

light, and all too often finds itself lost and confused. I believe this text should be part of a curriculum for any student preparing for a career as a healthcare professional—and I would especially like it to be compulsory reading for all psychotherapists. But whether you are a healthcare provider or a fellow seeker, this book stands out like a lighthouse in stormy weather.

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**Where there's a will,
there's *always* a way.**

Today, psychiatric illnesses are among the greatest causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide. In any given year, over 75 million Americans will suffer from a common psychiatric disorder. Millions will take medications, enter therapy, read self-help literature and pursue spiritual guidance—and yet, many will continue to suffer. Although surrounded by options for medical, psychological and spiritual support, we lack a unified model of healing that can truly guide us in our journeys to wellness. Thus we remain lost, suffering and confused.

Medicine, Mind and Meaning offers us hope. In it, Eve A. Wood, M.D. presents an integrative approach to healing which combines traditional psychiatric practices and universal spiritual principles. By sharing her patients' poignant, captivating and miraculous tales of recovery to demonstrate crucial lessons, Dr. Wood demystifies the therapeutic process. She provides us with the concepts, tools, and resources we need to craft our own unique paths to personal fulfillment, joy and health.

Dr. Wood's approach uses the analogy of a three-legged stool to illustrate the concept of total well-being. Just as a three-legged stool requires each of its legs in order to stand, we each need to attend to our bodies, minds and spirits in order to heal. In this step-by-step guide, we discover how to involve our biology (genetics, inborn characteristics and unique vulnerabilities), our minds (background, beliefs and behaviors), and our spirits (faith or connection to whatever gives our lives meaning) in a remarkable healing journey.

With extraordinary reverence and compassion for the human spirit, Dr. Wood demonstrates that with time, patience, willingness and hope, we can work through even the most impossible challenges in order to achieve emotional health and inner peace. Believing that each of us has a tale we are meant to live and share, Dr. Wood shows us how to find and live our own stories. Whether you suffer from a diagnosable condition, or simply want to better understand yourself, *Medicine, Mind and Meaning* will help you find *your* path to a better future.

Author Bio

Eve A. Wood, M.D. has devoted nearly two decades to the care of troubled individuals from all walks of life. Her therapeutic approach has attracted attention and acclaim from the nation's leading authorities in the fields of medicine, health and spiritual well-being. She is the author of numerous articles for medical and professional publications and is a frequent speaker at national workshops and conferences, including the American Psychiatric Association. Dr. Wood has served on the faculties of University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Thomas Jefferson Medical College and has most recently been appointed Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine at the University of Arizona Program in Integrative Medicine. She lives in Tucson with her husband and four children.

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