



How We Live

By Sherwin B. Nuland

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Having won the National Book Award for *How We Die*, his best-selling inquiry into the causes and modes of death, Sherwin Nuland now turns his attention to the miraculous resiliency of human life. For this lucid, wonderful, and wonder-filled new book explores the body's mysterious capacity to marshal disparate organs and processes in the interests of survival.

Like its predecessor, *How We Live* is filled with gripping medical case histories: a woman is pulled back from the brink of death from inexplicable internal bleeding; another patient triumphs over breast cancer; the "routine" removal of a polyp triggers a nearly lethal medical crisis. For Nuland, each of these cases serves to illustrate the extraordinary responsiveness and adaptability of the human organism. We learn how the aorta's baroreceptors monitor blood pressure and respond to its minutest fluctuations. We follow the intricate chain of electrochemical command that makes us leap out of the path of a speeding car. We discover why the stomach—which is capable of breaking down everything from porridge to pizza—refrains from digesting itself. Informed by sympathy for human suffering and an erudition that includes poetry and the Talmud as well as the medical canon, *How We Live* is science writing of the rarest kind—lucid, poetic, and genuinely uplifting.

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How We Live By Sherwin B. Nuland Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

After he won the National Book Award for *How We Die*, physician and popular medical writer Sherwin Nuland noticed that book critics kept referring to his next book, *The Wisdom of the Body*, as *How We Live*. Rather than fight the tide, he embraced the nickname and reissued the book. *How We Live* is a fascinating examination of the machinery of life. Dr. Nuland begins his meditation with a hair-raising account of a medical emergency that nearly ends in disaster: a 40-year-old woman almost bleeds to death on the operating table as he and other doctors struggle frantically to find the source of the hemorrhage. Eventually, Dr. Nuland and his team are able to locate the cause--a rare aneurysm of the splenic artery--and repair it. The patient survives. *How We Live*, Dr. Nuland tells us, grew out of the experiences of that night and his certainty that Marge Hanson lived because of her own will and the surgical team's will not to let her die. That "will to live" is what Dr. Nuland calls the Human Spirit, and spirit is very much a part of the body's wisdom.

Each chapter of *How We Live* focuses on a different biological function, from the work of the lymph nodes to the process of pregnancy and birth. The heart, the nervous and digestive systems, the sex organs, and the brain are all explored and commented on with clarity and grace. But Dr. Nuland is not content with merely providing an operating manual for the body. He is in a constant state of wonder at what a miraculous and mysterious thing the body is: a dynamic system of parts all working in concert, infused with that fierce, intangible quality--the human spirit.

From Library Journal

In this engrossing book, Nuland, author of the prize-winning *How We Die*, has turned his medical knowledge to the wonder of life. He offers a lucid anatomical and physiological tour of the human body, from cells and DNA to tissues and organs, reinforcing the sense of wonder with strategic case studies from his medical experience at Yale Medical School. Interspersed throughout is a discussion of the gnawing issue of what constitutes the mystery of life: How do biochemical interactions explain the quintessence of *Homo sapiens*? Nuland presents a formidable set of scientific facts and gives us much to ponder concerning our spirituality. Highly recommended.

-?James Swanton, *Harlem Hosp. Lib., New York*

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From [Booklist](#)

Having won the National Book Award for *How We Die* (1995), Nuland, humane physician and practical individual, now writes about life. So doing, he also pursues nothing less than the human spirit, which impels many persons' most admirable activities, although they may have little or nothing to do with survival. Nuland glories in the developments that brought *Homo sapiens* to the present stage. He considers body systems and human processes, dealing with each historically and scientifically and then bringing it to life in a detailed patient history--and the word *patient*, not the usual *case*, is apt here, for Nuland--his own patients are fortunate indeed in having him as their physician--sees living, feeling persons, not diseases, and treats them accordingly (gentleness, he points out, is necessary in dealing not only with the patient but also with himself as physician). The body, Nuland sums up, achieves its stability through being unstable. This book, a prizewinner whether or not it actually wins one, conveys much information, discusses philosophical and social questions open-mindedly, and delights us withal, thanks to Nuland's dry sense of humor. *William Beatty*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Katherine Levy:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in every way. By being competitive at this point, people have to do something to make these people survive, being in the middle of often the crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. Yes, by reading a book your ability to survive raises then having a chance to stand up than other is high. In your case who want to start reading the book, we give you that How We Live book as basic and daily reading book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Michael Hale:

As people who live in typically the modest era should be upgrade about what going on or facts even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era and that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know what type you should start with. This How We Live is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Eden Cohn:

Reading can be called mind hangout, why? Because when you find yourself reading a book mainly book entitled How We Live your thoughts will drift away through every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely can become your mind friends. Imaging every word written in a publication then become one type conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get ahead of. The How We Live giving you one more experience more than blown away your head but also giving you useful facts for your better life on this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a game. Do you want to try this extraordinary wasting spare time activity?

Carole Arehart:

Many people said that they feel bored when they reading a book. They are directly felt this when they get a half parts of the book. You can choose typically the book How We Live to make your current reading is interesting. Your skill of reading talent is developing when you just like reading. Try to choose easy book to make you enjoy you just read it and mingle the idea about book and reading especially. It is to be initially opinion for you to like to open up a book and learn it. Beside that the reserve How We Live can to be a newly purchased friend when you're really feel alone and confuse in doing what must you're doing of the time.

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