

THE POWER OF ORDINARY THINGS TO BRING HEALTH, HAPPINESS

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While Dr. Larry Dossey's book on healing was published more than a decade ago, its foundational themes about the power of ordinary things in healing are worth revisiting. In *The Extra-Ordinary Healing Power of Ordinary Things: Fourteen Natural Steps to Health and Happiness*, he dedicates each chapter to a healing agent. These include personal traits like optimism, natural wonders including dirt, bugs and plants, and supernatural elements like miracles, hearing voices and mystery. Rounding out the remaining chapters, he includes the value of forgetting, the significance of novelty, the importance of risk taking and the benefits of doing nothing. He approaches the topic of health, stressing holistic healing and wellness, not just the elimination of disease, making health relevant to anyone who desires a sense of well-being and wholeness.

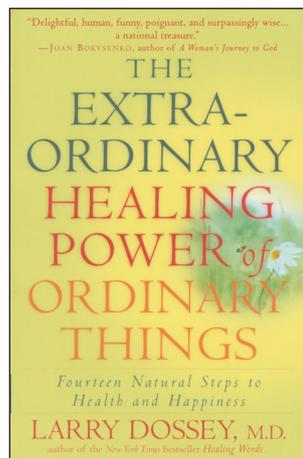
Each chapter is laid out thoughtfully, blending a combination of narrative, scientific theory and practical application. His work will appeal to the ordinary person reading for individual enrichment as well as the professional treating a patient in need of healing. He singles out physicians in particular from the clinical realm, as many may hold reservations about the named healing agents given their scientific training. While some topics presented still have limited acceptance in research circles, Dossey proposes all should keep an open mind regarding how healing is achieved and include natural means as contributors to healing. He works diligently to present

cogent cases on each topic, sharing both scientific and psychological evidence as well as personal narratives for consideration. His appeal to physicians is particularly loud, calling to them as one of their own, who underwent similar training. He writes as someone who over the years broadened

his thinking regarding some of the presented topics or returned to inclinations from before medical training. He cites his lifelong interest in mystery as one such example which medicine does not generally regard positively, but remains a particular interest to him and an important tool in the treatment of patients.

Dossey presents the work of others to provide supportive evidence for the topics he raises. From sharing cardiologist Bernard Lown's suggestion that defeatist phrases like "You are going downhill fast," or "You are living on borrowed time" counter a patient's ability to be optimistic about a diagnosis, to Fechner's Psychophysical Law that underlies why the third bite of chocolate cake never tastes as good as the first, Dossey is eager

to utilize science to support the themes of each chapter. Writers, musicians and theologians can be found as well, offering quotes that provide supporting evidence for each of the healing agents. Dossey uses everyday examples, like how superlative branding items (like fancy names for coffee sizes and oversized drinks at retail chains)



THE EXTRA-ORDINARY HEALING POWER OF ORDINARY THINGS: FOURTEEN NATURAL STEPS TO HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

BY LARRY DOSSEY, MD

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challenge our ability to gravitate toward simplicity to the unexplained blooming of plants as messages of encouragement at a time when it is needed. His cases are presented persuasively in the hopes we can see ordinary things as solutions to what ails us.

The book is rich with spiritual practices to better connect us with each of the healing “things” he covers. From using meditation to ground oneself and stave off the desire to chase after the newest thing, to letting unhappiness be an invitation to craft a more fulfilling life, he presents a multitude of possibilities in each chapter. He makes the case that classical music, letting tears flow freely, playing in the dirt and paying attention to unexplained mysteries can all bring us to a state of better health.

Some of his suggestions will not appeal to all, as patients may express disgust about utilizing maggots or leeches to treat various conditions — and may become worried about tending to the voices in their heads. Dossey’s main point, for the average reader and the physician alike, remains valid — we need to remain open to the countless healing agents in our lives each day. If you are looking for a new way to approach or encounter healing, Dossey’s book could provide new thinking and supporting evidence that there is more to ordinary, everyday things than you might suspect.

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