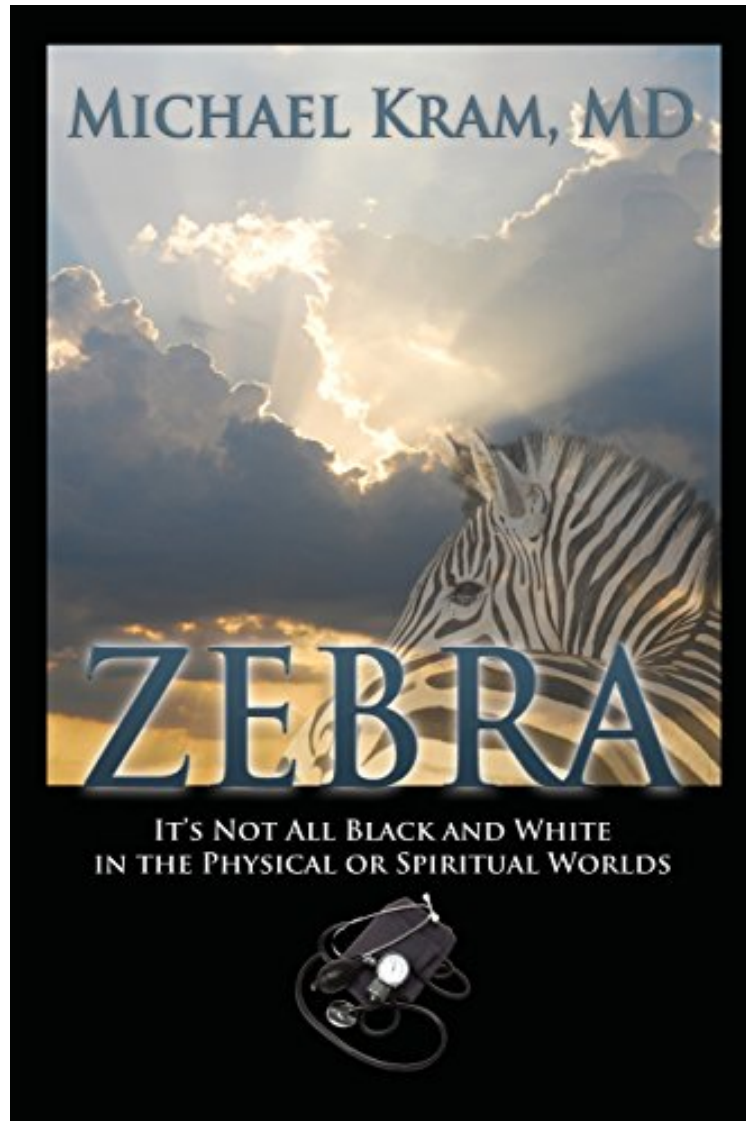


[Ebook pdf] Zebra: It's Not All Black and White in the Physical or Spiritual Worlds

Zebra: It's Not All Black and White in the Physical or Spiritual Worlds

Michael Kram MD

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Michael Kram MD : Zebra: It's Not All Black and White in the Physical or Spiritual Worlds before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Zebra: It's Not All Black and White in the Physical or Spiritual Worlds:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Zebra in the House of GodBy CustomerIn 1978 psychiatrist Stephen Bergman, writing under the pseudonym Samuel Shem, M.D., gave us a peek behind the medical curtain and

allowed us to catch a glimpse of the daily grind faced by interns and residents at the World's Best teaching hospital (Shem, S. *The House of God*. Richard Marek Publishers: New York, 1978). Now, almost forty years later Michael Kram, M.D., a contemporary of those house-officers and now a grandfather, has written an eloquent capstone to what could have been any of their stories, but was actually his (Kram, M.T. *Zebra: It's Not All Black and White in the Physical or Spiritual Worlds*. Outskirts Press: Denver, 2016). A few years ago, Kram, a well-respected Gastroenterologist in suburban New York, suddenly began to experience wild fluctuations of his blood pressure with readings well into the range of those seen in the potentially lethal malignant hypertension. He was deathly ill, and he knew it. What he did not know was what lay ahead for him as he sought a diagnosis and treatment. Unlike the patients in Bergman's book who had to survive despite the tests and treatments to which they were exposed, Kram found himself in a topsy-turvy world of "healthcare" where under the guise of cost reduction, insurance companies set the rules and minimalist medicine was the order of the day. It was only through his persistence, and that of a small group of his physician friends, that the correct diagnosis was discovered to be an unusual consequence of his years performing thousands of endoscopies. During his acute illness, Kram, a religiously devout person, took stock of himself and through his spirituality, found the insight and comfort that allowed him to survive. It is that story that will undoubtedly ring a chord with anyone facing a similar situation and for whom *Zebra* will be a must read!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Physicians, Heal Thyselves! By Douglas Winslow Cooper

What Michael Kram, MD, does here is describe his journey from his first-class medical education and outstanding career as a gastroenterologist through a topsy-turvy, scary rollercoaster of a ride of conflicting medical diagnoses of his eventually disabling illness, a trip ending in a resolution of the ambiguities of his condition, a struggle that gave him greater insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the current system of medical care in America. As was said of another author whose views were sculpted by adversity, Dr. Kram has not returned from Hell empty-handed. Dr. Kram's story is compelling, and its themes are important:

- the vastness of medical information that can obscure the answer to a rare disorder, the zebra that is not the horse doctors are trained to see and to treat;
- the difficult role of an MD, in preparation and the demands of his calling;
- the pride that prevents such experts from acknowledging ignorance, and the legal pressures not to do so;
- the tragedy of the loss of one's ability to practice one's profession, especially when it is a calling;
- the value of being in the inner circle when trying to get expert medical help, "whom you know";
- the need to be your own medical advocate;
- the importance of family and marriage;
- the role of God and faith in our lives;
- the increasing depersonalization of medical care, due to its take-over by larger and larger institutions, often due to pressures from government and insurance agencies.

Readers unfamiliar with Orthodox Jewry will find much that is new to them here, much to admire. Fortunately, an extensive glossary gives the meanings of many of the special terms used in the Jewish religion and in the medical profession. Doctors and their families will recognize many situations characteristic of the medical profession. Educated laymen will come to understand that giving up the care that the medical profession has traditionally provided in order to get treatment by institutional employees, rather than dedicated personal physicians, is frequently a bad bargain for doctors and patients. Recently, Dr. Gerard J. Gianoli wrote (in a July 2016 newsletter for the AAPS, the Association of American Physicians Surgeons) a defense of private medical practice as the breeding ground for many medical improvements and innovations; he noted: Throughout the last 70 years, the U.S. has been the greatest mover and shaker in the world of medicine. Most major medical innovations have either been born or significantly developed here. And, many of the major innovations have come from small private practices—certainly not from the government. Innovative changes do not come from out of our universities—they come from individuals who work at our universities. However, true radical, transformative innovations have often come from private practices. Dr. Gianoli cited many examples, including those from his field of specialization, otolaryngology. The Industrial Revolution swiftly brought the assembly line and its advantages: higher productivity, greater speed, more uniformity, reduced costs. In the automobile industry, we got the Model T Ford, which you could buy in any color as long as it was black. Competition soon developed, with many manufacturers, many models, many colors, much consumer choice, and with a wide range of prices. Current trends in regulation of the medical profession favor assembly-line treatment, with the personal care of the private practice physician shunted to "boutique" medical practices. For a while, some consumers and some doctors can still participate in the kind of personalized medicine they prefer, but if physicians and the public do not protest the decisions of those who are in positions of power and who arrogate to themselves the right to determine health care policy, even those exceptions will disappear. If this book helps promote a profound re-assessment of the current trajectory of the management of medical care in America, it will have made a major contribution to the future well-being of patients and physicians alike. If Dr. Kram's observations are heeded, the medical profession, with the help of concerned consumers and informed taxpayers, will have started to heal itself; at last. I had the privilege to read an advance review copy of *Zebra*, and much of these, my comments, became part of the book's Foreword.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I just finished reading this book and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it

By Customer I just finished reading this book and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I found it very very interesting and well written and following this medical saga, reading it chapter by chapter, and following the difficulties the writer, Dr.

Kram faced without being able to get a diagnosis was a very compelling read. I also liked the way he interspersed his observations on life, on health care, on the direction of medicine etc. The way that Dr. Kram described his own navigation of the hospitals and seeing doctors to get resolution, as a patient through the lens of a medical doctor, all added up to a very well written book that I related to and to be honest couldn't put down! Getting a proper diagnosis is a blessing compared to not knowing what something is and/or being incorrectly diagnosed. To take such a long journey to figure out what is wrong is not easy but according to Dr. Kram, everything happens for a reason. I think the book blended religion, medicine, science into a good memoir and combination medical mystery.

PHYSICIAN SAVES HIS OWN LIFE CRITIQUES FUTURE DIRECTION OF HEALTHCARE... Zebra: It's Not All Black and White in the Physical or Spiritual Worlds is a compelling medical mystery memoir, seen through the eyes of a successful religiously observant physician who became the patient. He was labeled as a Zebra, a fascinoma, and had to search for his own diagnosis. As he tells of his gripping journey through his life-threatening medical crisis, the author provides the reader with a long, hard look into our broken health care system. The strong undercurrents of emunah (faith and belief in a higher purpose) working hand in hand with perseverance and advocacy will resonate with all readers. Feel the anguish and emotional turmoil as Dr. Kram's chronological metamorphosis unfolds from busy gastroenterologist caring for others to stressed and sometimes overwhelmed Zebra coping with life's difficult vicissitudes. People of all faiths will find this book a source of comfort and will walk away with wise counsel in dealing with their own crises as they follow the author through his epic journey. Well written and researched, this timely book will have readers nodding their heads in agreement with many of the anecdotes along the author's roller coaster of events. As a physician, professor, congregational rabbi, former hospital CEO, and medical school Associate Dean, I strongly recommend Zebra to health care workers, patients and people of all stripes and religions. Rabbi Aaron E. Glatt, MD, FACP, FIDSA, FSHEA, Chairman and Professor, Department of Medicine Hospital Epidemiologist, South Nassau Communities Hospital Rabbinical Staff, Young Israel of Woodmere and Congregation Anshei Chesed