



BOOK SUMMARY

Open Your Heart to the Magic of Love

By Dr. Lester R. Sauvage

A collection of simple yet profound suggestions for happier, healthier living, *Open Your Heart to the Magic of Love* comes from world-famous heart surgeon Dr. Lester R. Sauvage. Subtitled *A Healer's Testament To Health, Happiness and Compassion*, this book combines sound medical advice, personal histories, heartfelt encouragement, spiritual guidance and a few metaphysical surprises. “Be Happy. Be Healthy. Be Kind,” reads the book’s back cover text, and this, in a nutshell, is what *Open Your Heart* is all about.

Opening with quotes from Jesus Christ and the Dalai Lama, the book introduces the reader to Dr. Sauvage and his life’s work as a healer of bodies and souls. Having seen thousands of sick people pass through his practice, the good doctor wants to offer his guidance to the book’s reader. “Our world,” he writes, “though rich beyond the dreams of ancient kings, suffers from literal and spiritual heart disease... And I think you deserve better than that.” Through a series of questions, answers, lists and facts, he invites the reader to look deeper for the source of ultimate health and happiness.

Despite an emphasis on spiritual inquiry, Dr. Sauvage points out that his method transcends religious dogma. “A human body needs oxygen, water and food,” he explains, and “our spiritual force... must be nourished by love, kindness, generosity, forgiveness and happiness in much the same way that our physical bodies must be nourished.” In contrast to the usual self-help advice, Dr. Sauvage’s guidance steps outside the things we can do for ourselves; to him, the greatest happiness comes from what we do for other people. His program is not an indulgent litany of goodies and disciplines for you, but a compassionate emphasis on helping yourself by helping people in need.

As an answer to the usual skepticism, Dr. Sauvage lays out several chapters of “the possible impossible”: miracles that surround us at all times... miracles that are, ultimately, everything. Dr. Sauvage explores the medical, scientific and cultural miracles that inform his premise that all things are, at their core, sacred. “During my own decades of medical practice,” he notes, “I felt myself constantly awed by the Presence of Something Greater Than Myself... I felt humble in the company of God.” Using brief but dazzling facts, he reveals the magnificent complexity of things – our own bodies included – that we all too often take from granted. But while he explains the pillars of his

own faith, he does not insist that the reader share his beliefs. The important thing, he claims, is not that we observe a religion, but that we act as though everything matters... because it does. The key to happiness, he asserts, is to live life in a sacred way, and to share the gifts of your life with other people.

After a three-part practical course in physical, mental and spiritual health, the good doctor reveals his own life's story. Using personal experiences to highlight his philosophy, he shows how a man of medicine can also be a man of God... and then shows how being both has made him a happier, healthier, more loving person. "As the years speed by," he writes, "I see, with increasing clarity, that my life's primary objectives have involved being a happy person and doing God's work here on earth." In the next chapter, the results of that work speak for themselves: Joe Forgione, a former patient of Dr. Sauvage whose life was not only saved but improved greatly by Dr. Sauvage's expertise and advice, writes about how his pursuit of money and power almost killed him until Dr. Sauvage helped Joe find a deeper purpose that has made him truly happy.

The closing portion of *Open Your Heart* offers "Directive for Living": a three-part program for living a loving, sacred life. Wrapping the book up with a coda about his appreciation for "The Mighty Prayer of St. Francis," Dr. Sauvage ends his testament with the words that have given him so much guidance and joy over the years: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Finally, a collection of Footnotes and Suggested Readings rounds out the book, offering an even deeper exploration of the subjects addressed throughout the book.

Although its topics range from the harmful effects of smoking and TV to the symbolic meanings of "light" as it's described in Genesis, *Open Your Heart to the Magic of Love* is a simple testimony to the power of positive belief in action. For all the lists and stories and facts within this book, that plaintive call to be happy, be healthy, be kind remains the soul of Dr. Sauvage's long life's work.