



# **The Scalpel and the Soul: Encounters with Surgery, the Supernatural, and the Healing Power of Hope**

*Allan J. Hamilton, Andrew Weil (Foreword by)*

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**A Harvard-educated neurosurgeon reveals his experiences-in and out of the operating room-with apparitions, angels, exorcism, and after-death survival, and shares the lessons he learned.**

*A young burn victim remains in a coma until a ghost appears.*

*A doctor discovers he can predict when a patient will die.*

*A clinically dead patient later recounts extraordinary details about the private lives of her caregivers.*

*A physician needs the help of a Navajo shaman to exorcise the spirit of his dead patient.*

These things really happened-and neurosurgeon Allan J. Hamilton was involved in every one of them, and many more. Based on thirty years of medical experience, *The Scalpel and the Soul* tells the unspoken stories behind remarkable patients and strange events, and shares the moral and spiritual lessons found in them.

For physicians, supernatural inklings and intrusions are disturbing. Doctors cannot be candid with colleagues or patients because they are trained to disregard the inexplicable and unbelievable. They're taught to discount elusive, evanescent powers of the soul. Superstition, omens, and divine spirits smack of madness.

But patients have the same experiences. Life-threatening illness or surgery frequently brings dormant spirituality to life. The soul often needs more than intensive care alone can give. *The Scalpel and the Soul* explores how premonition, superstition, hope, and faith not only become factors in how patients feel but can change outcomes; it validates the spiritual manifestations physicians see every day; it empowers patients to voice their spiritual needs when they seek medical help; and, finally, it addresses the mysterious, attractive powers the soul exerts during life-threatening events.

## **The Scalpel and the Soul: Encounters with Surgery, the Supernatural, and the Healing Power of Hope Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Scalpel and the Soul: Encounters with Surgery, the Supernatural, and the Healing Power of Hope for online ebook**

### **Brian says**

Dr. Hamilton summed up everything you need to know about this book at the end of chapter 2: "That's how it is with superstition. I choose to believe."

I have enormous respect for Allan, and his gift of storytelling is mesmerizing, but I simply cannot follow him in his choice...

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### **Katie says**

DNF

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### **Trina says**

What a great premise! What a terrible disappointment. I hate it when a book writes like it's saying something totally earth shattering when it's really just watered down personal stories. I kept waiting for this book to kick in but it never did; too bad really. I made it through just over half. My roommate that actually bought the book didn't even make it that far.

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### **Lynn Sneyd says**

I started reading this book while having breakfast at a restaurant. I don't know how much coffee I consumed, but it had to have been quite a bit, because I couldn't put the book down. The stories that Dr. Hamilton, a Harvard- trained neurosurgeon, shares about his patients and his experiences with them touch your heart, your soul, and that inherent well-spring of hope we all have. This is a physician who has learned from his patients the significance of spirituality in health and in healing. Anyone facing a serious medical condition or caring for someone with a chronic disease should read this. Every health professional should join them.

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### **Noran Miss Pumkin says**

The doctor offers little in ways of stories to support his intriguing title! His ego spreads an auto biography piece meal throughout the book, without any flow, or connections. He is a poor boy working dog kennels with a vet, then next we find him at Harvard Med school?!?! How?!? Never told. His back is injured from a fall during Desert Storm, where he was a doctor--how did he fall? Never told! Now these would have made the Boi part more interesting. Then suddenly one chapter--he is a mountain climber--done the Apls even! would have been better to do the boi all at once, or just done the book--.

The stories were related from student days and Doctor days--not that many to make the worth buying after all, nor the stories that exciting-at least to me--an ER nurse. I have seen and heard better. He admits to OCD and I think he has a couple of issues as well. to practice so long and be out of touch with your patients as he was in the stories--may be nurses see things differently since we are nurses, we are there for the patients the most.

This book just not deliver what the title promised. I am willing to discuss some of the stories even, to show how unspiritual they really are, while others might more fit the title.

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### **Vic says**

Excellent read. Easy read as well written.

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### **Karen says**

I just finished "Heaven Is For Real" and the friend I borrowed it from gave me this book to read. Sooo interesting to read a neurosurgeon's comments about spiritual and unexplained happenings in his career and in his life.

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### **Darce says**

I liked the premise of this book better than the book itself. Although I give Dr. Hamilton credit for his unvarnished storytelling (unapologetically referring to a pediatric burn unit as "Crispy Critters" or a toddler with hydrocephalus as a "pumpkin head"), it wasn't until the epilogue, when he wrote about how his own experience as a surgical patient left him physically unable to continue practicing neurosurgery that I felt any sense of connection to him. And just in case the reader missed the point of the first sixteen chapters, he includes an appendix, "Twenty Rules to Live By."

There are better written books by physician/authors (e.g., Atul Gawande, Jerome Groopman) that I would recommend ahead of this one.

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### **Mary Mahaney says**

reinforces my belief on the compatibility of science and spirituality

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### **Judi says**

I related to his feelings as a physician - this was a good reminder to step away from those jaded feelings and focus on people more. The personal stories and humility were great. As an atheist I could have done with less God talk, but still appreciated his input/perspective.

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### **Felisha says**

This was a great read. I really enjoyed it and recommend it to anyone.

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### **Stephanie says**

Neurosurgeons generally have strong egos and aim to be quite fearless, when it comes to technical, intellectual and physical challenges, giving people the impression that they are supermen and superwomen. This book was written by a brain surgeon and former department chairman who became a patient left disabled after several spinal injuries and debilitating surgery. That experience possibly solidified his understanding of what it means to be on the other side of the knife, what the impact is of the mind and psyche upon healing, and how insignificant his academic and career accomplishments became in the grand scheme of things. It makes for a good read for anyone, but I would recommend it especially for other neurosurgeons who let their egos get in the way of their humanity.

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### **Kathryn Vessel says**

Good observations, though it gets a little preachy at times. I'm not sure if I was convinced by the book, but I defiantly enjoyed reading about all the different cases and pondering the existence of the soul.

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### **Diana says**

This was interesting, but seemed somewhat naive for a neurosurgeon. I guess I'm a skeptic...I attribute the "amazing" to our lack of knowledge and understanding. That said, I think the human body and mind are VERY amazing, even without miracles or magic.

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### **Jennifer Leigh says**

It's been about ten years since I read this, so I just purchased another copy to read it again. I remembered it really stayed with me after I completed it, and it got me thinking about spirituality, supernatural, and all of life's indefinite, unanswered, and unexplainable events...such as death and the after life. I'm not a huge fan of fantasy, paranormal, science fiction or New Age material, and this doctor shared stories from throughout his career that came across as none of those genres. It was more of a well-written memoir of a neurosurgeon's personal experiences in his profession. I'm looking forward to reading it again.

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