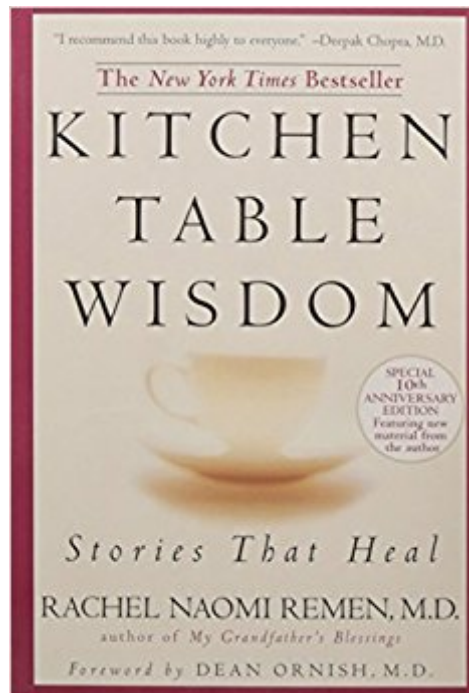




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# Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal, 10th Anniversary Edition



## Synopsis

"I recommend this book highly to everyone." --Deepak Chopra, M.D. This special updated version of the New York Times-bestseller, *Kitchen Table Wisdom*, addresses the same spiritual issues that made the original a bestseller: suffering, meaning, love, faith, and miracles. "Despite the awesome powers of technology, many of us still do not live very well," says Dr. Rachel Remen. "We may need to listen to one another's stories again." Dr. Remen, whose unique perspective on healing comes from her background as a physician, a professor of medicine, a therapist, and a long-term survivor of chronic illness, invites us to listen from the soul. This remarkable collection of true stories draws on the concept of "kitchen table wisdom"-- the human tradition of shared experience that shows us life in all its power and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Sitting around the table telling stories is not just a way of passing time," writes Rachel Naomi Remen in her introduction to *Kitchen Table Wisdom*. "It is the way wisdom gets passed along. The stuff that helps us live a life worth remembering." Remen, a physician, therapist, professor of medicine, and long-term survivor of chronic illness, is also a down-home storyteller. Reading this collection of real-life parables feels like a late-night kitchen session with a best friend, munching on leftovers while listening to the good-as-gossip stories of everyday heroes and archetype villains. Every story guides us like a life compass, showing us what's good and lasting about ourselves as

well as humanity. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Remen is one of a growing number of physicians exploring the spiritual dimension of the healing arts. "Coherent, elegant, mysterious, aesthetic," she writes. "When I first earned my degree in medicine I would not have described life in this way. But I was not on intimate terms with life then." Now Remen is awed by the vitality of the life force, which she witnesses through her work counseling cancer patients and their doctors at Commonweal, a cancer-help center in California, and through her keen eye for the depths of ordinary people. Remen tells of those who, having fallen ill, discovered previously untapped wells of fortitude and who, ironically, gained a peace of mind they had never known when well. She often turns common wisdom on its head. Discussing the meaning of suffering, she cites one woman who mourned the loss of her chest pains after corrective surgery. These pains had come whenever she had compromised her integrity; now her "inner advisor" was gone. Some of the most poignant stories here are of doctors whose professional code rejects overt displays of emotion. Both patients and doctors can come to care profoundly for one another, Remen believes. A heartfelt call for change as well as a display of compassionate and courageous thinking, this meditation will speak especially to those whose lives have been touched by illness. BOMC and One Spirit alternate selections; first serial rights to Family Circle and New Age Journal. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book came into my life in my late thirties when I was being diagnosed with a progressive and incurable illness. I would carry this book around like Linus and his blanket and I could flip to any page, read any paragraph, and feel soothed and transported. These are elegant stories. Many are no more than three pages but each is a gem and worth spending many evenings with. I recommend this book to anyone and everyone.

This is a must read--it is so full of wisdom and understanding. The author, Remen, working with those dying of cancer for many years and this consolidates much of the wisdom she learned from the dying. Additionally, she reflects upon how the generations used to shared the common wisdom of living around the kitchen table and how much of that enduring habit is becoming lost in our society today. I don't usually read a book twice but I certainly read this one twice because I wanted to absorb what she is saying. I think by the time that you finish this book, you will feel differently about life and it will help you to put many things in perspective. I did also like the way she

approached the true stories--with so much respect and dignity. But honestly the book causes us to reflect over and over again what we are doing with our lives. Definitely read this--it is no wonder it was a best seller for so long.

This is such a wonderful book, with such positive, life-affirming stories that are only 2 or 3 pages long. It's a book that I love and will never stop re-reading because of all the tenderness, love, and understanding she has of all the things that make us human. There's one other thing that's so important.. She never talked at me. She always talks about her life and her experiences and shares herself in ways that drew me in and helped make me feel good about life again.

I can't praise this book enough. Rachel Naomi Remen's sensitive renderings of her experiences as a doctor with very ill and at times dying people was a continual attention-getter for me. She herself has suffered many years with chronic illnesses, which made her more able to change from the more rigid training she had becoming a doctor into someone really seeing the patient and wanting to meet their human needs. I have given this book to young people in medical trainings who I think would appreciate all it has to offer. Remen is a pioneer in her field.

Rachel Naomi Remen fittingly dedicated her extraordinary book "Kitchen Table Wisdom" to "everyone who has never told their story." Remen, a physician and counselor, says stories "heal when they are more about who we are, not what we have done. About what we have faced to build what we have, what we have drawn upon and risked to do, what we have felt, thought, feared and discovered through the events of our lives." And about where the love that has sustained us comes from. Remen shows through her own story living with Crohn's disease how suffering and helplessness helped her to connect more deeply with others and live with an open heart. Her illness included being in a coma after a massive bleed in her mid teens, having her large intestine surgically removed and having to wear an ileostomy, and years of intensive therapy with toxic drugs. She says her experience taught her that at the heart of intimacy is vulnerability. When we see a matching vulnerability in another we know we will not be judged. That we are all more than we know and that wholeness is never lost, it is only forgotten. Her inspiring stories illustrate that the purpose in life is to grow in wisdom and love. How perfection is a booby prize. What is needed is simply to be human. How we sometimes trade wholeness for approval from others. How the way we see another may easily become the way in which we see ourselves. How "broken" is only a stage in a process. How the healing of suffering is compassion not expertise. How the healing of our woundedness lies

in reclaiming our capacity to heal others through touch, forgiveness and acceptance. That anger only becomes a problem when we become wedded to it. How fear of losing things we possess end up possessing us. How the worth of a lifetime is measured more in kindness than in competency. How inner silence reveals insight and truth. How prayer changes us not the world. How freedom comes not from controlling events but from a willingness to move with the events. How the less we are attached to life the more alive we can become. And how embracing life is more about adventure than having your own way.

So beautiful and well written, somehow capturing the magic and fragility of life without "diagnosing" it...a must-read for those in healing professions or pretty much anyone who cares to relate to people in a more empathetic and connected way. Already bought a copy for a friend...will buy more!! Thank you for sharing your stories with us, your readers. Every bit of beauty that is put into the world nourishes it that much more. Grateful.

Rachel Naomi Remen is an accomplished pediatrician who left a high power academic career and became a therapist for people with cancer. The book is comprised of brief stories about her career and people she has treated. She doesn't delve into her therapeutic techniques except to suggest that there is therapeutic benefit for the practitioner to develop a personal and maybe spiritual connection to their patient or client. Doctors and therapists are taught to keep an emotional distance from their patients which means that her techniques are out of the mainstream. The stories are often poignant, especially the ones about dying children. The stories are anecdotes and there is no data presented to support her therapeutic approach, still I think it is a worthwhile read for other practitioners and patients with serious health problems.

This is a fantastic book. I have purchased this book for many people in my life and will continue to. I've read this book many times and it brings new meaning with each reading. This is a book of stories and valuable lessons told by a reflective and wholehearted woman. I can't say enough about this book. Read it!

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