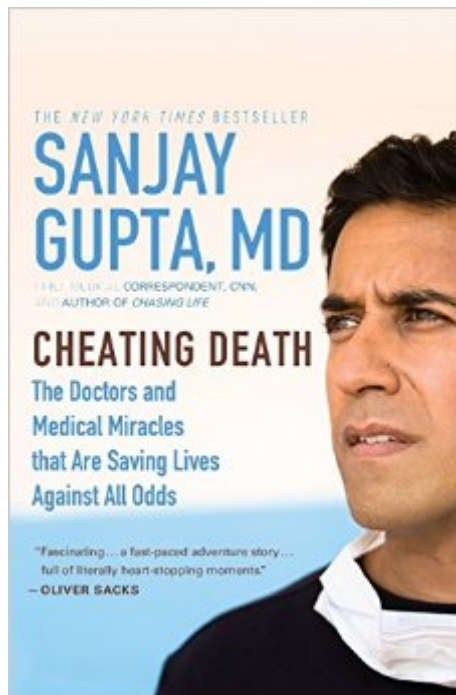


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Cheating Death: The Doctors And Medical Miracles That Are Saving Lives Against All Odds



Synopsis

An unborn baby with a fatal heart defect . . . a skier submerged for an hour in a frozen Norwegian lake . . . a comatose brain surgery patient whom doctors have declared a "vegetable." Twenty years ago all of them would have been given up for dead, with no realistic hope for survival. But today, thanks to incredible new medical advances, each of these individuals is alive and well . . . Cheating Death. In this riveting book, Dr. Sanjay Gupta--neurosurgeon, chief medical correspondent for CNN, and bestselling author--chronicles the almost unbelievable science that has made these seemingly miraculous recoveries possible. A bold new breed of doctors has achieved amazing rescues by refusing to accept that any life is irretrievably lost. Extended cardiac arrest, "brain death," not breathing for over an hour--all these conditions used to be considered inevitably fatal, but they no longer are. Today, revolutionary advances are blurring the traditional line between life and death in fascinating ways. Drawing on real-life stories and using his unprecedented access to the latest medical research, Dr. Gupta dramatically presents exciting accounts of how pioneering physicians and researchers are altering our understanding of how the human body functions when it comes to survival--and why more and more patients who once would have died are now alive. From experiments with therapeutic hypothermia to save comatose stroke or heart attack victims to lifesaving operations in utero to the study of animal hibernation to help wounded soldiers on far-off battlefields, these remarkable case histories transform and enrich all our assumptions about the true nature of death and life.

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Customer Reviews

What happens when blood no longer reaches the brain, organs begin to break down, and chemical reactions start destroying cells throughout the body? The answer is no longer as obvious as it once was. In "Cheating Death," Sanjay Gupta, a practicing neurosurgeon and popular correspondent, describes some remarkable cases in which physicians managed to revive patients whose condition seemed hopeless. Sixty-three year old Zeyad Barazanji was working out on a treadmill when he was felled by a massive heart attack. "His heart pumped no blood, his brain sent no signals, [and] he thought no thoughts." Nevertheless, he recovered and went on to live a normal life. We know now that "death is not a single event, but a process that may be interrupted, even reversed." Although this notion sounds fanciful, today there are "myriad ways that modern science is changing our understanding of life and death." Gupta tells us about a man who is diagnosed with a brain tumor that is almost invariably fatal; a fetus with a life-threatening heart defect; a skier who falls through the ice and remains trapped beneath its surface for over forty minutes; and a hiker who stumbles, hits his head, and remains on the ground for twenty-four days before he is rescued. The story of these and other individuals demonstrates "that the human body can survive far longer than we usually bargain for." There are various techniques, such as therapeutic hypothermia, that can buy valuable time for those in extremis by staving off shock, controlling blood flow, and reducing the body's need for oxygen. Are these methods guaranteed to work every time, and are they used in every hospital? Absolutely not. However, researchers are constantly investigating new lifesaving protocols, some of which hold great promise.

A Bible-based review by Don the Baptist of the text "Cheating Death" by Sanjay Gupta MD. This is a great book. If one has an interest in the "behind-the-scenes" medical efforts currently underway across the country which are fervently attempting to extend life, then this text should be considered required reading. Far more than a boring review of innovative medical practices "which would place almost anyone in snooze-mode" a variety of interesting tales are rehearsed of individuals found in the most dire of straits, who through some medical sleight of hand, get a chance at continuing life. Nonetheless, as this is a Bible-based review, herein the focus will be on two significant conflicts between the text and the Bible. In Gupta's defense, however, he openly states, "I don't spend a lot of time talking about faith. I was never formally trained in the interplay between the type of healing we think of in hospitals and the type of healing that takes place in private, deep in the recesses of our minds. Yet over time, I have come to deeply appreciate the place of prayer in the healing process." (page 211) Note the following quotes from the text: "His

heart pumped no blood, his brain sent no signals, he thought no thoughts. Make no mistake “ this is death. But maybe not the way we tend to think about it.” (page xv) “she had been clinically dead for three hours” (page 8) and later, it is noted that “she returned from the dead.” (page 15) “Mertz was back from the dead.” (page 41) “He truly was dead, and here he is, fine.” (page 56) Quoting Mark Roth, “Clinical death™ might be the loss of a heartbeat | I turn off the heartbeat so they are clinically dead. But I can bring them back.

I've always been fascinated by the vast field of medicine and new therapies/medicines/techniques for saving lives. Some of our greatest challenges include finding out just how in the world our cells work in order to fix the best we can fix things like cancer, tumors, terminal diseases, and brain swelling among many others. In Cheating Death, the reader gets a nice look at what kinds of revolutionary new techniques are being used across the world to save patients that would have normally been given a finite amount of time to live and then die. For example, hypothermia can actually be used to reduce swelling in crucial areas of the body and even the brain that can give doctors more time to work with the patient and see if there is anything they can do for them while the swelling goes down. In another instance, Dr. Gupta describes some of the bold techniques that involve actually operating in the uterus on the unborn child itself to save it from potentially fatal pre-birth defects and/or a shortened lifespan once born. As a science fan, I was the most intrigued when Cheating Death discussed the out of body experiences that people can have when they are in cardiac arrest or in some form of "brain death". I've always wondered if these experiences were just made up out of either the person's religious beliefs or something else. The answer from the book is that it's not 100% clear just what causes these episodes. Some physicians believe it is the lack of oxygen to the brain that causes these experiences while others believe cardiac arrest/brain death can induce a form of REM-intrusion sleep and that is how people have near death experiences. The big questions that this topic presents are those such as is consciousness something that can or cannot be separated from the mind? Who knows?

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