

# Foreword

Cross-culturally, the power of choice for human beings has three functions: First, through choice we can create a new experience or reality for ourselves that inspires us. Second, through choice we can end an experience or reality for ourselves that is no longer tolerable. And third, through choice we can maintain and sustain our current experience or reality as it is.

Often these choices present themselves during times of change and transition. Most people tend to support the third function: what is knowable, comfortable, and controllable. However, when we are healthy and happy, we're motivated and tend to gravitate to the first function: making choices that support what has heart and meaning. And if we can no longer tolerate the experience or reality we've created, we will choose the second option: to galvanize our actions to create change. What choices are we making that are currently health creating? What choices are we making that are health negating?

In a time when obesity, heart disease, cancer, and diabetes are at their highest rates, *Deep Medicine* provides a necessary and very palatable antidote for reducing illness and disease and enhancing well-being in our lives. How we engage in the four pillars of self-care offered in this book—nutrition, physical activity and relaxation, relationship and community, and contemplation and solitude—on a daily basis determines the sustainability of our health and healing. By engaging in our own self-care, we can truly become primary care physicians for ourselves.

As the medical director of the Institute for Health and Healing at California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, Dr. William Stewart successfully practices and advocates a holistic approach to health and

healing that combines contemporary medicine with a worldview that acknowledges the complexity of the ingredients contributing to our well-being, or our lack of it. Dr. Stewart's most compelling message is "Everything is either health creating or health negating. Everything!" According to Dr. Stewart, everything we think, feel, say, and do contributes to our health. Seeing health from this truly holistic perspective motivates us to make choices that serve personal wellness and then go further, to contribute to enduring public health and aid planetary healing.

Every day provides a new canvas on which to create health. *Deep Medicine* offers complete and thorough guidance on both practical and universal ways in which we can change our health and well-being internally and externally, mentally and emotionally, and physically and spiritually. The human spirit is always reaching for the reclamation of its own well-being. *Deep Medicine* offers a compelling invitation into a process and a way of thinking by which we can choose to make that our experience and our reality.

Dr. Stewart remains the foremost advocate and guide on this transformative, evolutionary healing path that empowers responsible health care and health-creating choices. *Deep Medicine* reminds us that eradicating disease, creating health, and preventing future illness are personal and collective sacred tasks. If we accept the premise that we have a responsibility for our own health and well-being, then it follows that we are all healers.

*Deep Medicine* is an outstanding contribution to the fields of integrative medicine and preventive medicine—and medicine in general. Dr. Stewart's call to each of us as a doctor and a healer is to actively engage our health and well-being using the concepts, tools, and practices in this book. Will we be conscious of the choices we are making and committed to the changes we desire? Let us begin our holy healing work and choose health for ourselves, others, and the world.

—Angeles Arrien, cultural anthropologist