



Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance

By Atul Gawande

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National Bestseller

The struggle to perform well is universal: each of us faces fatigue, limited resources, and imperfect abilities in whatever we do. But nowhere is this drive to do better more important than in medicine, where lives may be on the line with any decision.

Atul Gawande, the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Complications*, examines, in riveting accounts of medical failure and triumph, how success is achieved in this complex and risk-filled profession. At once unflinching and compassionate, *Better* is an exhilarating journey, narrated by "arguably the best nonfiction doctor-writer around" (*Salon.com*).

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Surgeon and MacArthur fellow Gawande applies his gift for dulcet prose to medical and ethical dilemmas in this collection of 12 original and previously published essays adapted from the *New England Journal of Medicine* and the *New Yorker*. If his 2002 collection, *Complications*, addressed the unfathomable intractability of the body, this is largely about how we erect barriers to seamless and thorough care. Doctors know they should wash their hands more often to avoid bacterial transfer in the ward, but once a minute does seem extreme. Using chaperones for breast exams seems a fine idea, but it does make situations awkward. "The social dimension turns out to be as essential as the scientific," Gawande writes—a conclusion that could serve as a thumbnail summary of his entire output. The heart of the book are the chapters "What Doctors Owe," about the U.S.'s blinkered malpractice system, and "Piecework," about what doctors earn. Cheerier, paradoxically, are the chapters involving polio and cystic fibrosis, featuring Dr. Pankaj Bhatnagar and Dr. Warren Warwick, two remarkable men who have been able to catapult their humanity into their work rather than constantly stumble over it. Indeed, one suspects that once we cure the ills of the health care system, we'll look back and see that Gawande's writings were part of the story. (Apr.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

A surgeon at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and an assistant professor at the Harvard School of Public Health, Dr. Atul Gawande succeeds in putting a human face on controversial topics like malpractice and global disparities in medical care, while taking an unflinching look at his own failings as a doctor. Critics appreciated his candor, his sly sense of humor, and his skill in examining difficult issues from many perspectives. He conveys his message—that doctors are only human and therefore must always be diligent and resourceful in fulfilling their duties—in clear, confident prose. Most critics' only complaint was that half of the essays are reprints of earlier articles. Gawande's arguments, by turns inspiring and unsettling, may cause you to see your own doctor in a whole new light.

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From [Booklist](#)

Quick. What mundane practice, regularly propagated by generations of moms, could save the lives of thousands of hospital patients? To Brigham & Women's Hospital general surgeon and *New Yorker* staff writer Gawande, that question's answer is but one way to improve a profession where a "C+" performance rating just isn't good enough. The follow-up to Gawande's critically acclaimed *Complications* (2002) is a sparkling collection of essays about medical professionals and places where "better" either has or is becoming the norm, where excellence is a journey rather than a destination. While acknowledging that varying levels of achievement are inevitable in any human endeavor, Gawande believes the medical profession must assume the burden of constant diligence to do better because lives hang in the balance. Rather than preaching about improving performance, Gawande bears witness to the remarkable levels of care that can be achieved by describing some incredibly innovative, adaptive, and even mundane (e.g., conscientious hand washing) practices in hospitals from Boston to the rural Indian village of Uti, from Pittsburgh to Iraqi battlefields. *Donna Chavez*

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From reader reviews:

Kevin Serna:

This Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance usually are reliable for you who want to be described as a successful person, why. The reason why of this Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance can be one of several great books you must have is usually giving you more than just simple studying food but feed you with information that probably will shock your preceding knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it almost everywhere and whenever your conditions both in e-book and printed kinds. Beside that this Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance forcing you to have an enormous of experience like rich vocabulary, giving you trial run of critical thinking that could it useful in your day exercise. So , let's have it and luxuriate in reading.

Angela Thomas:

In this time globalization it is important to someone to acquire information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The condition of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for you is Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance this guide consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. That book was represented how does the world has grown up. The language styles that writer require to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some exploration when he makes this book. Here is why this book appropriate all of you.

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