



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 "Piecemeal," 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.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ericka McCall:

Information is provisions for people to get better life, information nowadays can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even a problem. What people must be consider while those information which is within the former life are challenging to be find than now could be taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you obtain it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen with you if you take Better: A Surgeon's Notes on Performance as your daily resource information.

Eugene Flowers:

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