

LAUGHTER HELPS HEAL CARDIOLOGIST

New Book: BEYOND MEDICINE, by Stephen R. Yarnall, MD, CLL
www.BooksToBelieveIn.com/BeyondMedicine.htm

What would you expect a Certified Laughter Leader (CLL) to do after nearly dying from ARDS (Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome)? Answer: Write a light-hearted book including stories of how laughter and humor helped him and others recover from ARDS – a syndrome with nearly a 50% mortality figure attached to it.

How do you laugh after falling 30 feet from a ski chairlift, injuring your lungs, requiring intubation, and critical care with 92 days in the hospital? It's hard to laugh when you're in a coma for over 30 days and when the family is called in twice from around the country because you are expected to die. Laughter, in fact, was one of the "glues" that held the family together and helped hold Dr. Yarnall together.

Having a tracheotomy for over a month was not easy for someone like Dr. Yarnall, who is a professional speaker and who loves to laugh out loud. As soon as Steve could talk, he loved to share riddles which invariably provoked laughter. Beyond Medicine includes a number of riddles, such as:

Charlotte's mother had 3 children. The first two were named Penny and Nickel.
What was the name of the third? (the name of the third, spelled backwards, is ettolrahC)

One can't help but laugh at the colorful photograph of nine Seafair Clowns crowded around Steve's ICU bed in Harborview Hospital. The balloons and colorful attire of his clown comrades overshadow Dr. Yarnall's ventilator tube, IV's and monitoring wires, but his own faint smile gives evidence of the healing power of happiness.

Beyond Medicine infuses comic quotes such as Woody Allen's, "I don't mind dying, I just don't want to be there when it happens," and Dr. Yarnall's own observation, "Since I was lying supine in a coma for the first 32 days of my hospital adventure, I wasn't exactly what you would call a stand-up comic."

Another quote is John F. Kennedy's famous: "There are three things which are real: God, human folly, and laughter. The first two are beyond our comprehension, so we must do what we can with the third."

Dr. Yarnall notes that he was first introduced to the "World Laughter Tour" after his ARDS hospitalization in 1990. One of the major teachings of the World Laughter Tour is that laughter is not the same as humor. Babies and young children laugh out of sheer delight, whereas most adults, as they grow older, tend to laugh less and less. On the other hand, laughter can be a learned skill and be part of health and healing.

Beyond Medicine takes the reader through a trip from 1978, when Norman Cousins wrote Anatomy of an Illness, where laughter is described as "inner jogging", through to the present Laughter Club movement, started in India by Dr. Kataria and initiated in the U.S.A. by Steve Wilson.

Yarnall's own antics as he encounters hospital experiences are bound to bring a smile and likely a laugh. One is lead to agree with his analysis of the alphabet soup of "T's" (OT, PT, RT, ST, etc.), and that there also should be an HT= Humor Therapist in the soup!

Even the serious "elements of healing": love, prayer, touch, music and pets, are dealt with in a light-hearted manner, although many useful references are provided. Beyond Medicine is a book which is meant to be read and enjoyed, not just put on the shelf as a medical reference.

Beyond Medicine is available through bookstores: ISBN number: 0-9670242-8-5, or by mail from Thornton Publishing, Inc., 6834 S. University Blvd. #416, Littleton, CO 80122 or by calling 303-794-8888. Beyond Medicine may also be ordered directly from Dr. Yarnall. To obtain information on having Dr. Yarnall as a speaker or for a book-signing event, please email him at: yarnsy@attbi.com