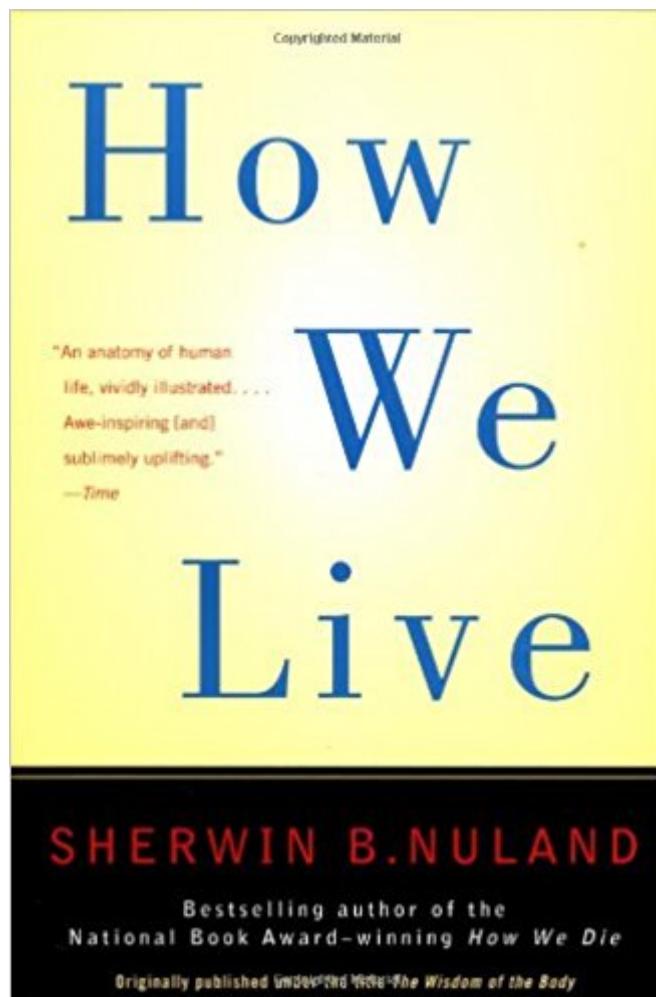


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# How We Live



## Synopsis

Having won the National Book Award for *How We Die*, his best-selling inquiry into the causes and modes of death, Sherwin Nuland now turns his attention to the miraculous resiliency of human life. For this lucid, wonderful, and wonder-filled new book explores the body's mysterious capacity to marshal disparate organs and processes in the interests of survival. Like its predecessor, *How We Live* is filled with gripping medical case histories: a woman is pulled back from the brink of death from inexplicable internal bleeding; another patient triumphs over breast cancer; the "routine" removal of a polyp triggers a nearly lethal medical crisis. For Nuland, each of these cases serves to illustrate the extraordinary responsiveness and adaptability of the human organism. We learn how the aorta's baroreceptors monitor blood pressure and respond to its minutest fluctuations. We follow the intricate chain of electrochemical command that makes us leap out of the path of a speeding car. We discover why the stomach—which is capable of breaking down everything from porridge to pizza—refrains from digesting itself. Informed by sympathy for human suffering and an erudition that includes poetry and the Talmud as well as the medical canon, *How We Live* is science writing of the rarest kind—lucid, poetic, and genuinely uplifting.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After he won the National Book Award for *How We Die*, physician and popular medical writer Sherwin Nuland noticed that book critics kept referring to his next book, *The Wisdom of the Body*, as *How We Live*. Rather than fight the tide, he embraced the nickname and reissued the book. How

We Live is a fascinating examination of the machinery of life. Dr. Nuland begins his meditation with a hair-raising account of a medical emergency that nearly ends in disaster: a 40-year-old woman almost bleeds to death on the operating table as he and other doctors struggle frantically to find the source of the hemorrhage. Eventually, Dr. Nuland and his team are able to locate the cause--a rare aneurysm of the splenic artery--and repair it. The patient survives. How We Live, Dr. Nuland tells us, grew out of the experiences of that night and his certainty that Marge Hanson lived because of her own will and the surgical team's will not to let her die. That "will to live" is what Dr. Nuland calls the Human Spirit, and spirit is very much a part of the body's wisdom. Each chapter of How We Live focuses on a different biological function, from the work of the lymph nodes to the process of pregnancy and birth. The heart, the nervous and digestive systems, the sex organs, and the brain are all explored and commented on with clarity and grace. But Dr. Nuland is not content with merely providing an operating manual for the body. He is in a constant state of wonder at what a miraculous and mysterious thing the body is: a dynamic system of parts all working in concert, infused with that fierce, intangible quality--the human spirit.

In this engrossing book, Nuland, author of the prize-winning *How We Die*, has turned his medical knowledge to the wonder of life. He offers a lucid anatomical and physiological tour of the human body, from cells and DNA to tissues and organs, reinforcing the sense of wonder with strategic case studies from his medical experience at Yale Medical School. Interspersed throughout is a discussion of the gnawing issue of what constitutes the mystery of life: How do biochemical interactions explain the quintessence of *Homo sapiens*? Nuland presents a formidable set of scientific facts and gives us much to ponder concerning our spirituality. Highly recommended.-?James Swanton, Harlem Hosp. Lib., New YorkCopyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Knowledgable author, well written, understandable. Learn how your body works and keep it tuned up and running. His companion book "How We Die" is even better. We know how many of our possessions operate, but most don't know about how our existence began and continues as a physical entity. This book puts it all together. Highly recommended.

Dr. Nuland is doctor of great depth, and a medically philosophical genius with his descriptive content of each and every aspect of the human anatomy. I would buy from the seller again.

A must read book for everyone. Written well for average people to understand. We study and try to understand all manner of things...why not understand how our own body works and survives? Truly fascinating.

I read Â How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final ChapterÂ several years ago. It was helpful, informative and downright fascinating. How We Live is more of the same, but focuses on startling recoveries, remissions and successes. Dr. Nuland writes clearly and with evident enthusiasm for his subject. I'm glad he had offered his thoughts and experiences to strangers. (I never knew I'd be so fascinated with a spleen!!) His book length essayÂ The Art of Aging: A Doctor's Prescription for Well-BeingÂ is a pragmatic yet reassuring guide, too.

I find this book to be a marvelous completion of the extremely important and sensitive work Dr. Nuland began with his previous book, "How We Die". Although I have read other works describing human physiology for the "medically untrained" general population, I have come across none that are as detailed, readable, and lively as this one. More important, it deals honestly with some of the major concepts of spirituality as related to embodiment. I will refer back to this work frequently.

great book!

great book! if it'd been around when i graduated from high school, i might have considered medicine (rather than law) for my career.

Dr. Nuland goes the whole body in such a way that a layman, like me, can understand. After finishing the book, you can understand the feeling of great awe that Dr. Nuland wants to convey how human body maintains its function.

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