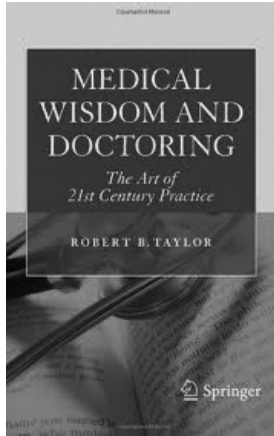


Medical Wisdom and Doctoring: The Art of 21st Century Practice

Robert B. Taylor

New York, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London; Springer, 2010, \$29.95, paperback.



Robert Taylor, MD, has been writing textbooks in family medicine for almost 40 years, an extraordinary accomplishment for someone whose 20 years as department chair kept him busy in other ways. He served as editor for multiple authored texts on clinical care and has “coached” many

writers, both young and not so young, to be comprehensive, accessible and thoughtful as they write about the changing face of clinical medicine. This book is very different and quite personal. After finishing the book, I kept thinking—and wondering—where all the stories and quotes and references had come from. The title of the book is apt since Dr Taylor brings quotes, memories, and wisdom that he has been saving over a clinical lifetime to pass along to those whose practice has begun in the 21st century. Some of the clinical references he uses will undoubtedly be superseded by new research, so that many of the specific clinical references are of less importance, in the long run. What is important, however, are

the insights into doctoring that he communicates throughout the book.

Dr Taylor uses the second person singular—“you” is the operative word—speaking directly to the reader. Many of the quotes and aphorisms he uses can be passed along to learners, just as he had them passed along to him by many of his own teachers. The book often is quite specific, not just a collection of themes, and many of the stories and quirky research that Dr Taylor has uncovered in his long career add interesting flavors to the big themes. Examples include a section called “Read, read, and read some more,” which really is a requirement for good doctoring, and another, titled “Ethics, credibility, and trust,” which captures many of the ways that Dr Taylor has learned to weave those three themes together in his own life.

The book is as close to an autobiography as Dr Taylor may get, full of personal advice and clinical stories couched in terms that seek to instruct and teach what he has learned in a lifetime of reading, practicing medicine, and writing. The writing, as one would expect from a long-time editor, is concise and includes the ideas and research and anecdotes that have guided him. The wealth of references are broad ranging, but the voice and the emotions are Taylor’s. The book gives the reader insight into the last half century of practice and shares lessons learned from a respected leader in academic medicine.

John Frey, MD

Department of Family Medicine
University of Wisconsin

Editor’s Note: Clarification regarding *Dissecting American Health Care* (Reviewed in February 2012): It has come to our attention that the binding of the review copy of this book that was sent to *Family Medicine* was not of the same quality as that of the final print edition, which is expected to have standard trade paperback binding to withstand many readings. Our apologies for any misunderstandings.

Publishers who wish to submit books for possible inclusion in *Family Medicine*’s book reviews section should send texts to Cathleen Morrow, MD, *Family Medicine* book reviews editor, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Department of Community and Family Medicine, HB 7015, 1 Medical Center Drive, Lebanon, NH 03756. cathleen.morrow@dartmouth.edu. Reviewers interested in writing reviews for publication should contact Dr Morrow as well. William E. Cayley, Jr, MD, serves as Book and Media Reviews Associate Editor.

All books reviewed in this column are available for purchase at amazon.com through the STFM portal at www.stfm.org/bookstore.