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**The DO**

## The DO Book Club

By Joan Naidorf, DO

*Contact Dr. Naidorf*

### Holistic habits

# The DO Book Club, Oct. 2025: 'Mindful Beauty' and 'Doctor Goldman's Guide to Effective Patient Communication'

*Joan Naidorf, DO, reviews two new additions to her collection of DO-written books; one is a compelling self-help book and the other is a great professional resource.*

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### Topics

self-care

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osteopathic physicians are excelling as distinguished authors in many genres as they publish books that educate and entertain their readers. As a reviewer, I have enjoyed many medical memoirs and mysteries, as well as a spicy romance, all written by our physician colleagues. Below, I review two new additions to my collection of DO-written books; one is a compelling self-help book and the other is a great professional resource.

## **'Mindful Beauty: Holistic Habits to Feel and Look Your Best'**

By Debbie Palmer, DO (published 2020)

Dr. Palmer is a New-York based, board-certified dermatologist who has penned "Mindful Beauty," which includes anecdotal evidence of the deleterious effects that stressful lifestyles, poor sleep and abject nutrition have on some of her patients. She advocates for a period of self-reflection for readers to assess their own spiritual and emotional well-being.

From there, Dr. Palmer recommends a systematic approach to reduce stress, incorporate exercise, modify nutrition and improve sleep habits. Her chapter on various types of therapies may be particularly useful for readers who don't know how to begin. The author backs up her recommendations with extensive references to the studies she cites. To make nutritional changes easier, she includes an appendix with several of her favorite recipes.

The culmination of the author's instruction is how to protect and affect the body's largest organ, the skin. She writes, "A healthy body, mind and spirit create an inner balance that results in radiant, healthy skin on the outside. This is the reason, as an osteopathic dermatologist, that I've focused on developing your spiritual self, managing stress, eating healthily, exercising and getting enough sleep *before* discussing how you can better care for your skin on the outside." (p. 133)

Dr. Palmer also shares solid science-based recommendations for skin care in one of the book's chapters. Her mix of inspirational encouragement and medically sound advice makes for pleasant and informative reading. Self-help readers will find solid guidance here to take toward healthier skin and general wellness.

## **'Doctor Goldman's Guide to Effective Patient Communication'**

By Kissinger Goldman, DO (Published 2023)

When Dr. Goldman began his career as an attending emergency physician in a Florida university hospital system, he noted that some of his colleagues and students were sorely lacking in the most basic tenets of effective communication. When he spoke to returning patients and their family members, they understood little of what had taken place or what the working diagnosis was during the first visit.

Dr. Goldman also noted that formal instruction on the basics of good communication and dialogue had not occurred during his own training. He writes, "What some teachers failed to convey was that while the right diagnosis is important, the manner in which physicians explain the diagnosis and the plan of care to our patients and their loved ones is equally as important." (p. xxii)

To remedy this situation, he wrote “Doctor Goldman’s Guide to Effective Patient Communication.” In his book, he breaks it all down and spotlights ways to talk, listen and explain things better so our patients and their families do not leave their interactions with the doctors and nurses more confused than when they started.

The author starts with the basic components of communication: maintaining a positive attitude, announcing entry into the patient’s room, making an introduction, sitting down, looking a person in the eye and listening to what the patient and the family want to say. After the introductory basics, the author recommends getting permission to touch the patient for a physical examination, all while explaining to the person what we are doing.

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Dr. Goldman then suggests giving a lengthy explanation of the testing, plan of care, medications and the next medical professional they may see. He recommends doing these steps in simple terms that the patients and their families can understand. Section four of the book is useful here—entitled “Patient Speak,” this chapter provides explanations of medical terms in a way that a layperson can understand.

The author includes a long list of imaging studies, procedures and diagnoses broken down into understandable language. Most useful are some common terms that carry a lot of nuance and misconceptions around them. For example, explaining diabetes and diverticulitis in layperson terms can be quite challenging. Many healthcare professionals slip into our own language of medical jargon that patients and their families cannot understand. In my opinion, some of the explanations of studies and procedures provided might not be simple enough for most patients to understand.

The first section, which covers effective communication, explains the connection between good communication skills and higher patient and worker satisfaction levels. Of course, he notes, patients will go out of their way to visit the office or hospital where they feel the staff cares. The staff will want to stay employed at such a place as well. Dr. Goldman includes the viewpoints of several important players at his hospital: the CEO, an emergency department (ED) nurse, a unit secretary and an ED paramedic.

These serve to reinforce the author's simple message: That all healthcare professionals on the team can improve in their patient care communication skills.

In his book, Dr. Goldman also reaches into difficult topics of pediatric care, sex and gender terminology, and he also covers managing expectations for the workers on the team, the patients and their families. Several case studies are included to probe the illustrated topics and to highlight the lessons that could be learned along the way from each provider-patient interaction.

Dr. Goldman has compiled a useful guide that details a step-by-step way to more effective dialogue in today's healthcare setting, where members of the public want and need better understanding of what actually happened or did not happen during their visit. Trainees cannot pick up on the nuance of communications techniques solely through modeling on rounds at the bedside. The guide explains all the steps involved and includes useful language and explanations for medications and many diagnoses. Physicians and all members of the healthcare team will find this guide to be an invaluable resource.

*Editor's note: The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the views of The DO or the AOA.*

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