



## Timeless Healing

By *Herbert Benson, Marg Stark*

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### Timeless Healing By Herbert Benson, Marg Stark

In this life-changing book, Dr. Herbert Benson draws on his twenty-five years as a physician and researcher to reveal how affirming beliefs, particularly belief in a higher power, make an important contribution to our physical health. We are not simply nourished by meditation and prayer, but are, in essence, "wired for God." Combining the wisdom of modern medicine and of age-old faith, Dr. Benson shows how anyone can, with the aid of a caring physician or healer, use their beliefs and other self-care methods to heal over 60 percent of medical problems. As practical as it is spiritual, *Timeless Healing* is a blueprint for healing and transforming your life.

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### Editorial Review

#### From Publishers Weekly

This carefully researched and accessible study by Benson (*The Relaxation Response*), a professor at Harvard Medical School, focuses on the power of the mind in curing illness. Benson cites a wealth of scientific data, as well as anecdotes from patients, to establish evidence that "remembered wellness"?his term for the placebo effect?is a major factor in relieving serious medical conditions. Remembered wellness can occur when a sick person calls the doctor for an appointment then feels much better, if not recovered, by the date of the appointment. The majority of research presented here deals with the strong negative or positive power of belief systems on the body. Benson argues that humans are genetically prone to attach meaning to life and then translate this predisposition into belief in a higher power. Faith in God, according to Benson and documented by recent studies on the positive effects of prayer, is as important to healing as are medical procedures. This is a thought-provoking inquiry into the mind/body connection.

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#### From Library Journal

Apropos to the world of modern medicine, Shakespeare wrote, "Oft expectation fails, and most oft there, Where it promises most." To this arena of lofty expectation and technological wizardry, Benson (Harvard Medical Sch.) again explores the healing power of the human psyche. As in his *The Wellness Book* (LJ 3/1/92), Benson illustrates via exhaustive case studies and anonymous examples the power of what has been erroneously labeled the placebo effect. Further, he cites numerous instances where the intersection of prayer and meditation have stemmed the tide of pain or disability, illuminating for the uninitiated the raw potency of the human will. Benson's academic credentials lend credence to his authoritative voice as he "demythologizes meditation" (says one early reviewer) as well as the world of wholistic healing. Somewhat overblown at times, Benson's previous works go far to cover much of what is reiterated here. Purchase where interest in spirituality and wholistic medicine is high or as an initial foray into this area.?Sandra Collins, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Lib.

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#### From Booklist

Benson pursued the relationships between medicine and belief for years before founding Harvard's Mind/Body Institute in 1988. Here, with Stark's writing help, he reports many scientific studies of this relationship, of the placebo effect, and especially of the "remembered wellness" (i.e., desire for health) effect. His three-legged stool of health and well-being--pharmaceuticals, surgery and other procedures, and self-care--helps keep him focused as he explores the reasons for the occurrence of remembered wellness and the mechanisms by which it acts. Many physicians do not want to admit the effectiveness of remembered wellness because it cannot be seen or quantified, but Benson points out that only 15 percent of medical treatments are based on "reliable medical evidence" and that emotions, feelings, and traditions must be borne in mind. In the last chapters, he looks particularly at the roles that religion, faith, and spiritual experiences play in healing. *William Beatty*

### Users Review

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**Mary Sims:**

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