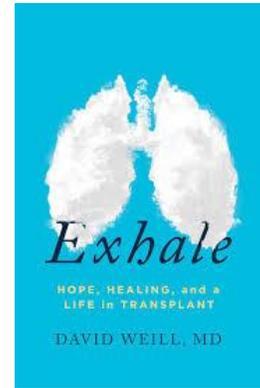


A Review of
Exhale
... Hope, Healing, and a Life in Transplant
David Weill, MD (2021)

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

Sometimes I judge a book by how long it takes to read it, and by that measure, this is one of my all-time favorites. Receiving a copy late one day, it was to be added to a growing pile of 'to be read' books that would get it read in about a month at best. I made the mistake of just opening it up and browsing the first few pages. While not a fast reader, I found myself drawn in like a victim sinking in quicksand, unable to put it down, finished reading its engaging 333 pages within one day. That's how good it is, be forewarned (smile).



David Weill is a lung transplant doctor (not a surgeon) dedicated to saving lives of patients desperate for their next breath of life suffering with any number of lung diseases, all of which are scary to even imagine. He goes above and beyond in his many years of practice personally connecting with these (too often near death when undergoing his care) patients and families which carries with it deep and strong emotions when facing a failure in losing that patient. Getting so close and connected is a dangerous practice given the human toll that takes on loved ones and, in this case, a dedicated miracle worker physician. This very human story of doctor and patient is skillfully told in one patient's journey after another, thankfully stories well balanced between successful and sorry filled outcomes. But behind all the daily patient narratives is a second even more compelling life journey, that of the physician trying to find balance in his personal career and family life compounded by a busy, stressful practice and 24-by-7 daily dedication to supporting and saving those lives.

In Dr. Weill's book the reader is invited behind the scenes, even to the point of breaking down in overwhelming tears in a hospital closet after another sad loss despite doing everything that could be done for his patient. A doctor crying? Yes, that's how transparent he shares his life's challenges and emotional toll, both in the thrill of victory and the sometimes death that comes with taking on often seemingly impossible patient cases. David takes each death (I don't read them as failures) personally especially in light of his hopeful promise to each family that he will do his best to help them survive, a promise that weighs heavily in his heart every day when things go mistakenly wrong or just are beyond human ability to save in the end.

Be forewarned, each patient story, the cases he takes on, often despite advice to not engage due to the stage of illness, will tug at the reader's heart given his skill with words in capturing even the sleepless nights when he stays at a patient's bedside, carefully watching a lung transplant surgical recovery in those all-important minutes and hours that will determine the outcome. We are drawn into those scenes, feeling the emotions of watchful hours with the family and doctor, which is what makes this such a powerful read.

Those years of leading a successful national lung transplant program led to stressful family challenges, forcing hard decisions to finally leave the program. Finding himself

and rededicating to his loving family, he eventually finds new meaning in life in forming a consulting practice, using those years of experience to now help other transplant programs overcome their own challenges. From his years of experience and this new perspective, he shares insightful views of the transplant world including hospital as a business, the impact of the insurance companies on daily practice, as well as the team dynamics that come in this high-pressure environment of strong personalities.

I join with physicians, patients and their family/caregivers in endorsing Dr. Weill's writing as an uplifting, hopeful, and forward-looking story, a gift for anyone engaged in the transplant experience.

Note: *Exhale* will become available May 11th, 2021 in a variety of reading and listening formats at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and other outlets.

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant in Oct. '94, retiring 12 years later in 2005 after 37 years with Unisys Corporation, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS, serves as president of TRIO, and is a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family can be read online at <http://gleasonjim.com>. Jim lives a healthy active life with his 'donor-mom' wife, Pam, in southern New Jersey, across the bridge from Philadelphia where he received his heart at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania over a quarter of a century ago. Jim can be contacted via e-mail at GleasonJim@aol.com