

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande

Modern medicine has done much to prolong our lives. We live longer now than any time in history. Being Mortal takes a look at the hard questions that we must ask if we want our loved ones to experience a meaningful life till the last day. Does our ability to fix a physical issue mean that the issue should be fixed?

Gawande explains the history of nursing home and assisted living facilities and why they have developed into what exists today. He tells the story of a doctor who started the Green House Project which allows the elderly or disabled to live on their own in groups. In his narrative way of writing, Gawande tells the stories of patients, both old and young, and how they spent their last days. Rather than being depressing, his words are inspiring.

What is palliative care? Hospice care? What is really important to someone when time is limited? What questions do we even ask? If we want to be able to say good-bye to our loved ones, we must ask these questions and listen for the answers. Anyone who cares for older parents or hopes to grow old themselves should read Being Mortal.

Lynn Odom

Durham Woman's Club

Small Great Things (c. 2016) by Jodi Picoult

I have read several of this author's books. I think this is one of my favorites. This novel is set in contemporary times and bravely takes on the themes of racism, prejudice, justice, choice, hope and compassion. It is a complex plot that engaged me from the start ... it would be hard for a reader not to find themselves examining their own beliefs and values as they consider the complications of this fine story. It was recommended at our ESO gathering at the 2017 GFWC- NC state convention. I am definitely glad I read it.

Linda Browne, Warrenton Woman's Club

*Linda shared her report after she recently read the book for the second time and found that the second read was even more meaningful.