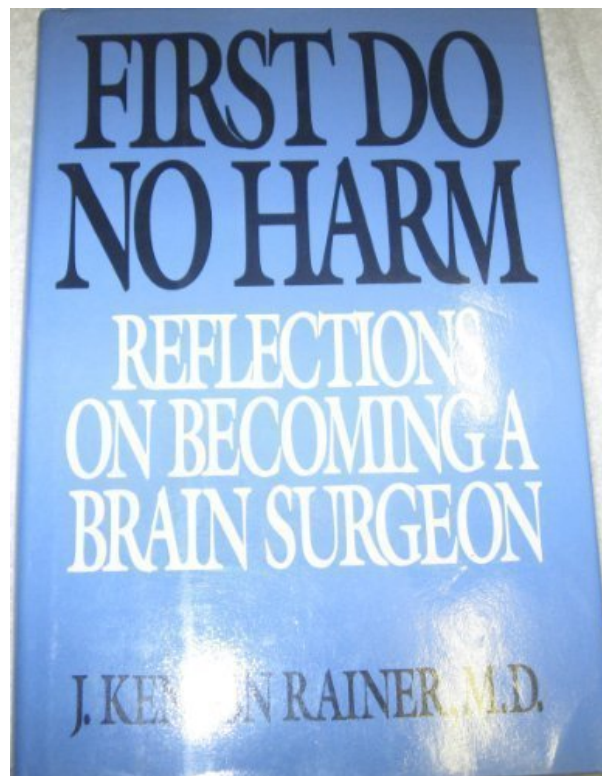
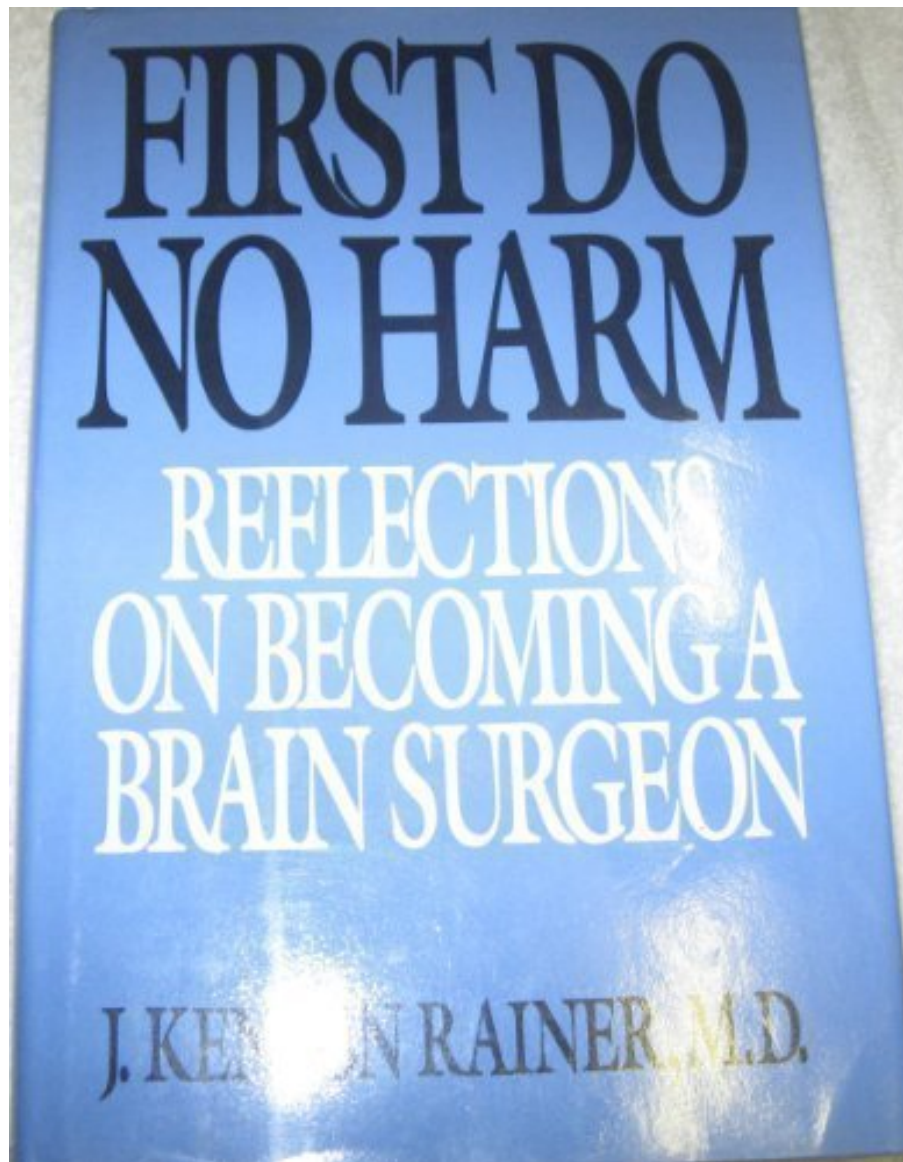


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BECOMING A NEUROSURGEON BY J.
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It takes a strong stomach to read the detailed accounts here of emergency accidents and crime-victim cases and some of the operations performed by Rainer, chief of surgery at the East Alabama Medical Center. A practitioner of the risk-filled specialty of neurosurgery, the author recalls his years of schooling and brain-numbing, marriage-wrecking internship and residency schedules. Along with discussing his professional satisfactions, he writes with candor about his mistakes, about the inadequacy of certain medical practices (such as burn treatments), and the misdiagnoses and impersonal care of patients that he witnessed in a veteran's hospital. Rainer praises the efficacy of peer-review boards and, like most physicians, he deplores what he considers excessive malpractice suits fostered by greedy lawyers. Major ad/promo. (April
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Most helpful customer reviews

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Becoming a "brain surgeon" - gruelling

By dr_sasp

Almost 30 years ago, Dr Rainer entered the medical profession as a highly trained, but extremely green and inexperienced intern. In 1987, he produced this account of his growth from new boy to neurosurgeon.

Doctors were thrown in at the deep end and - armed with libraries' worth of knowledge - were challenged to learn on the job. They would either sink or swim: taking their patients with them. Whilst the have-a-go culture is curtailed by modern expectations and medico-lawyers, the notion of "practising" medicine is no

accident. Rainer and his colleagues learned their procedures on the dead, the dying and the uninsured of the hospital. Rainer vividly describes, with another new boy, putting in a first subclavian line (a big needle into the blood vessels behind the front wall of the chest) unsupervised. This was very rapidly followed by the first chest drain, when the patient's lung was punctured and collapsed.

Rainer lived, ate and slept neurosurgery. Well, lived neurosurgery. Eating and sleeping were luxuries not afforded to a trainee. It seems that training involved a continuous cycle of operating, rounding, seeing emergency cases and just a couple of hours of snatched sleep before starting over again. Like the tale told in *The Intern Blues*, doctors learned by doing and doing and doing. Until they could almost literally perform a procedure in their sleep. Asked, "You're not going to do my patient tired are you doctor?", Rainer replied if he didn't, he'd never operate.

For Rainer and his cohort, training and operating came first, second and third; survival fourth; family were left with the scraps. It was no surprise when marriages broke down and surgeons became married to their work. It is no surprise that Rainer, after several intense years a competent operator and good doctor, left the medical profession.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

One of the best books I've ever read.

By M. Kirkland

Having a keen interest in medical subjects, I bought this book at a discount book store to read. From almost the first page, I was entranced. I have since read this book at least four times (probably more). This book is the journey of a man with a total love of the practice of medicine. He tells of the grueling hours spent as an intern and as a resident, not so you will feel sorry for him, but rather to point out how medicine was his first love, many times to the detriment of the other things in his life.

Some of the stories he recounts are absolutely hilarious, others heartwrenching. The best recommendation I can give is that I have loaned it to several people and they each have given it highest acclaim. Dr. Rainer puts a tremendous amount of himself in this book, telling not only of his experiences in medicine, but also painting what is obviously a self-portrait, warts and all.

I have spoken to Dr. Rainer in order to get my copy autographed, and he is now a malpractice attorney. If you read the book you'll understand why I mention this. Read this, you will not regret it.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

After several years, I keep coming back to this book...

By Shannon Dew

I first read an abridged version of "First Do No Harm" in a copy of Reader's Digest when I was around 10 or 12 years old. After that, I sought out and found this book in my local library. Dr. Ranier's writing is honest and straightforward...He doesn't glamorize or sugar-coat medicine or the sacrifices one makes on the path to becoming an M.D. He also reflects fondly on certain life-changing encounters with patients that I myself remember and think about. Dr. Ranier practices about 40 miles from me and I'd love to meet him and thank him for this book which has not only been an important part of my library for many years now, but also turned me toward the medical profession. Outstanding!

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