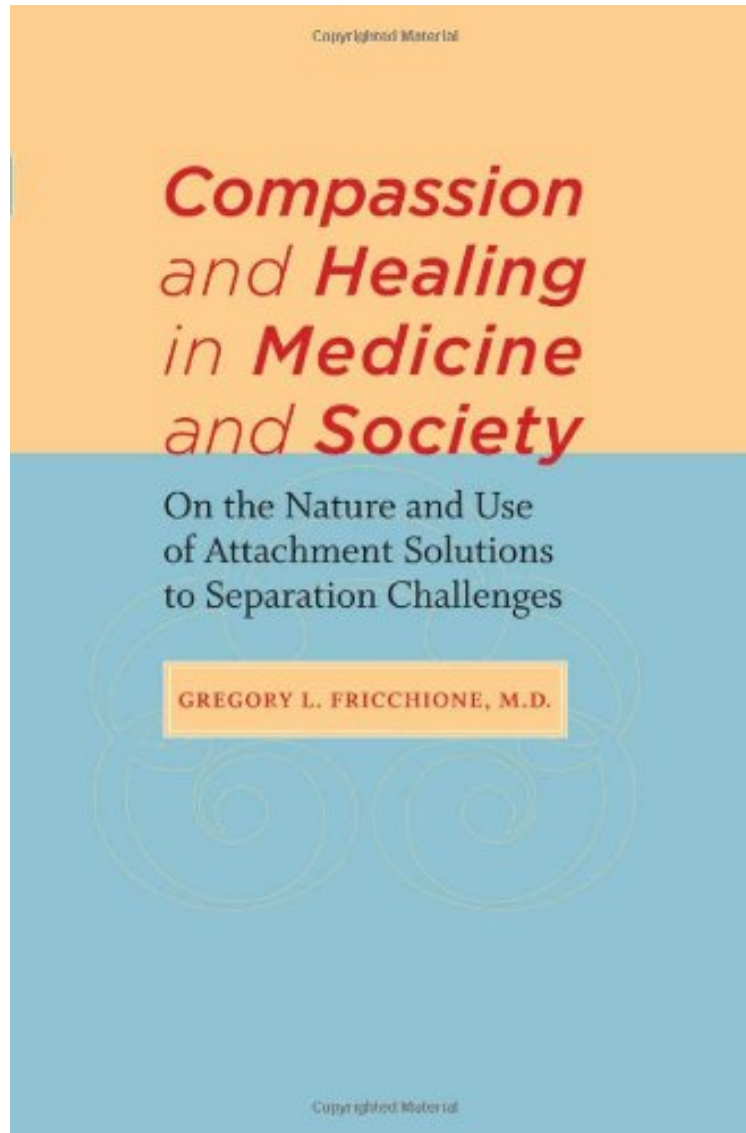


[Library ebook] Compassion and Healing in Medicine and Society: On the Nature and Use of Attachment Solutions to Separation Challenges

# Compassion and Healing in Medicine and Society: On the Nature and Use of Attachment Solutions to Separation Challenges

Gregory L. Fricchione MD

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**Gregory L. Fricchione MD : Compassion and Healing in Medicine and Society: On the Nature and Use of Attachment Solutions to Separation Challenges** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Compassion and Healing in Medicine and Society: On the Nature and Use of Attachment Solutions to Separation Challenges:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Realizing the Love that is Our Evolutionary Heritage By Joseph Bobrow With Compassion and Healing in Medicine and Society, Greg Friccione has given us a rare gift. He has not only created a remarkably useful, erudite, and meaningful book, he has harvested the deep currents within himself to bring forth a masterwork of interdisciplinary synthesis that works not only because it is so well argued, but also because it is aligned with his deep aspiration to benefit medicine and humanity by expressing the truths that matter most to him. This he does skillfully and with loving care. His synthesis of science and spirit, and of elements of himself and his life work is a genuinely integrative offering, a tour de force of mind, heart and soul. His ideas developed in the crucible of life and death, the "most spiritual place in the world" -- the bedside of patients facing serious illness and the potential of losing everything. In the face of such separation threats (made into opportunities) we humans are primed to seek healing connection with others and create a deeper sense of meaning - an attachment solution. Our brain has in fact evolved to do just this. Evolution utilizes natural selection but there is a bias, a selection preference. The law is still the survival of the fittest, but the fittest are those individuals and groups that find inclusive, connection-enhancing solutions to separation challenges. Friccione demonstrates the explanatory power of this theory across diverse disciplines including biology, psychiatry, human development, neuroscience, philosophy, spirituality, and physics and cosmology (a bit). A consummate clinician and researcher, his synthetic creativity is infused with a longstanding spiritual sensibility and characterized by brilliant theorizing in which he mobilizes the work of scores of expert resources but refracted through his own analytic, integrative, compassionate mind and heart. I met Greg in his small book-filled office at Mass General Hospital where he is the director of the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine (BHI) and a professor of psychiatry and assistant chief of psychiatry at Harvard University School of Medicine. He greeted me warmly and we talked prior to a meeting with Herb Benson, director emeritus of BHI, a pioneer in mind-body medicine and integration of Western and Eastern medical practices. Herb joined us via conference call. I must have been straining to hear Herb when Greg invited me to move my chair closer to the phone, and to him. There were the three of us, huddled up closely, Herb on speakerphone, having a stimulating and close conversation about healing, with many intertwining threads. After reading his book, I see that Greg's inviting me in closer was part of his creating an "attachment solution to a separation challenge," instinctively responding to Herb being at a distance, and my not knowing either of them. I felt very comfortable. I love it when professional and personal identities and qualities are aligned, as they are in Greg and his work. His book presented its own separation challenges as the level of scientific detail he mobilizes to buttress his thesis is significant. But I kept returning, developing my own attachment solution, buoyed by having experienced the book's thesis in the actions of its author. I skipped over some of the evidentiary detail in the science sections, awaiting the clear summary paragraphs, and relishing the integrative forays. But reading his book stretched and inspired me. I recognized my own motivations and personal and professional life path in his theory. It helped me understand more about why so many spiritual teachers have navigated early traumatic loss (philosophers too, he writes). This anguish is the experiential ground for exploration and connection with deeper experiential meaning. And connection with altruistic love, the source of meaning for Greg. Compassionate love expressed in all its particularity by real people in real situations. Liberating its expression, our full evolutionary potential, is no small part of Greg's motivation. It is this love that drives the evolutionary bus and will keep us growing as individuals and as a species if we make use of the separation challenge-attachment solution imperative. In a subsequent email exchange Greg commented on our societal struggles with this imperative: "It seems clear to me from the evolutionary saga that the answer to our challenges, which can all be understood as separation fear induced, can be found in our creative implementation of attachment solutions. This emerges from our biological pores as our spiritual imperative to be connected. However it is still an open question whether we have actually evolved far enough to actually institute more encompassing attachment solutions that mutualize the interests of out-groups as well as in-groups. I think this is the lesson the Hebrew writer of the Noah story was trying to tell. We can blow it as a species and then the evolutionary process would continue along with another "chosen" species enjoying a selection bias by accruing traits that provide attachment solutions and their attendant survival advantages. So we sure are involved in an evolutionary adventure!" This is such a momentous time for our species, with so much riding on the choices we make. Reading Greg, I feel part of a great sweeping saga, including but not limited to humans. Embedded in multiple registers of meaning, all woven together. Some time ago, a disappointment in love led me to write a poem, an excerpt from which I include. This book helps illuminate the poem and the excerpt may in turn illustrate the book's thesis. a bitter pill in a nicely wrapped package funny, originally the I-Ching said "biting through" it confused me "bites on dried grisly meat, receives metal arrows," "bites on dried lean meat, receives yellow gold" spasm into outpouring widening love, yellow gold loving the whole world and all its creatures (Hedda said: "separation can be engaging," still chewing on that.) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Eduardo Martinho Junior Great book! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. grand scope with necessary detail By D. W. Cottrell The author seeks to support a hypothesis that would be fundamental to evolutionary theory with far reaching ramifications. He seeks to irrevocably connect the intuitive and scientific quest for truth by focusing on "meaning, knowledge and healing". His illustration throughout is medical practice. He reviews scientific literature to demonstrate his "attachment solutions to separation challenges" as the key to all of evolution. It

is a staggering or perhaps presumptive attempt. It will take the serious efforts of his peers to estimate how close he has come to success. What he does do even for the simple reader like me is to uplift how vital Bowlby's work on attachment theory really was.

Reconciling the scientific principles of medicine with the love essential for meaningful care is not an easy task, but it is one that Gregory L. Fricchione performs masterfully in *Compassion and Healing in Medicine and Society*. At the core of this book is a thought-provoking analysis of the relationship between evolutionary science and neuroscience. Fricchione theorizes that the cries for attachment made by seriously ill patients reflect an underlying evolutionary tenet called the separation challenge attachment solution process. The pleadings of patients, he explains, are verbal expressions of the history of evolution itself. By exploring the roots of a patient's attachment needs, we come face to face with a critical component of natural selection and the evolutionary process. Medicine engages with the separation challenge attachment solution process on many levels of scientific knowledge and human meaning and healing. Fricchione applies these concepts to medical care and encourages physicians to fully understand them so they can better treat their patients. Compassionate humanistic care promotes physical, emotional, and spiritual healing precisely because it is consonant with how life, the brain, and humanity have evolved. It is therefore not a luxury of modern medical care but an essential part of it. Fricchione advocates an attachment-based medical system, one in which physicians evaluate stress and resiliency and prescribe an integrative treatment plan for the whole person designed to accentuate the propensity to health. There is a wisdom or perennial philosophy based on compassionate love that, Fricchione stresses, the medical community must take advantage of in designing future health care and society must appreciate as it faces its separation challenges.

"Greg Fricchione's book presents scientific proof of what we intuitively know to be true: personal connections make us feel better. I hope all health care professionals will embrace the more compassionate, attachment-based medical system that Greg advocates. The health of patients and their caregivers will benefit from genuine expressions of selfless love." (Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, Carter Center Mental Health Program) "Greg Fricchione leads the reader back to the art of medicine, indeed to its increasingly imperiled core: empathy and effective engagement with patients." (Steven E. Hyman, M.D., Former Director, National Institute of Mental Health, and Distinguished Service Professor, Harvard University) "The finest statement yet on the evolution of compassionate care and why it is so essential to the well-being of patients. Dr. Fricchione brings a lifetime of careful scientific study, clinical practice, and wisdom to a topic that is often the forgotten factor in healthcare reform and education. This book will help us understand ourselves, our needs as human beings and as patients, and what a truly healing relationship with a clinician is all about. May this become a true classic." (Stephen G. Post, Ph.D., Stony Brook University) "Gregory Fricchione leads us on his quest to untie the Gordian knot inherent in such questions as, 'Who are we? How did we come to be like this?' His epic inquiry is conducted by the light of a dyadic lens, the 'separation challenge attachment solution' that is foundational to our deepest pains, greatest longings, and, if his hypothesis holds, even our final joy. A masterwork of synthesis, it offers an epiphany in our search for meaning." (Balfour M. Mount, OC, OQ, M.D., FRCSC, Eric M. Flanders Emeritus Professor of Palliative Medicine, McGill University) "A compassionate and scholarly tour de force. With great erudition Dr. Fricchione provides an explanation of the complex neurobiology of human attachment as well as case histories so vivid they make the reader cry. Here is wise advice on how modern doctors can still bring their hearts to the bedside." (George Vaillant, M.D., Harvard Medical School) "It is not possible to give justice to such a large and complex project in a short review... enlightening and fascinating." (Riadh Abed British Journal of Psychiatry) About the Author Gregory L. Fricchione, M.D., is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and associate chief of psychiatry and director of the Benson-Henry Institute at Massachusetts General Hospital. He is coauthor of *The Massachusetts General Hospital Handbook of General Hospital Psychiatry* and *The Heart-Mind Connection*.