

# On Learning to Heal

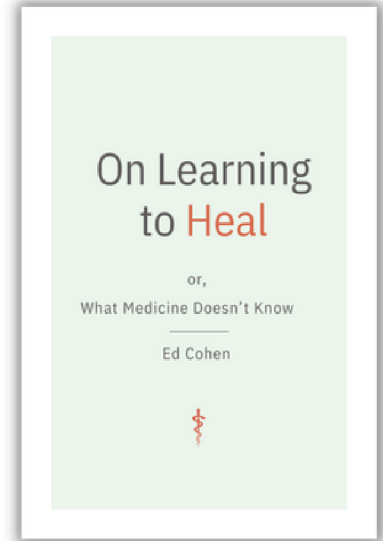
or,

What Medicine Doesn't Know

At thirteen, Ed Cohen was diagnosed with Crohn's disease—a chronic, incurable condition that nearly killed him in his early twenties. At his diagnosis, his doctors told him that the best he could hope for would be periods of remission. Unfortunately, doctors never mentioned healing as a possibility. In *On Learning to Heal*, Cohen draws on fifty years of living with Crohn's to consider how Western medicine's turn from an "art of healing" toward a "science of medicine" deeply affects both medical practitioners and their patients. He demonstrates that although medicine can now offer many seemingly miraculous therapies, medicine is not and has never been the only way to enhance healing. Exploring his own path to healing, he argues that learning to heal requires us to desire and value healing as a vital possibility. With this book, Cohen advocates reviving healing's role for all those whose lives are touched by illness.

"*On Learning to Heal* is the memoir cum medical philosophy of an intellectual with a humiliating chronic illness and his ultimately successful attempt to find a way of being both inside and outside his disease. It follows his struggles first to manage his illness, then live with it, until finally he turns his attention to the so much that was working in his body—breathing, moving, being. What he wants us to know is that if we are alive, then there is health within us. If his ideas were followed, you would be tuned instead to what is working in your body and not to what is not working, and you might find very little wrong with you and mostly right with you."

—Victoria Sweet, author of *Slow Medicine: The Way to Healing*



"With touching and incisive autobiographical accounts, Ed Cohen leads readers on a journey through his own entangling of bodily experience in relation to the limitations of modern medical thought. Part captivating story about his experience with and recovering from a devastating illness and part history and critique of the biomedical models that failed to fully comprehend his disease, *On Learning to Heal* is a compelling and beautiful book."

—Vincanne Adams, author of *Glyphosate and the Swirl: An Agroindustrial Chemical on the Move*



**Ed Cohen** is Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Rutgers University and author of *A Body Worth Defending*, also published by Duke University Press. He hosts a therapeutic practice for people interested in healing: [healingcounsel.com](http://healingcounsel.com).

**Publisher:** Duke University Press Books

**Publication Date:** January 3, 2023

**Price:** Hardcover \$99.95 / Paperback \$25.95

**ISBN-13:** 978-1478019329 (240 pages)



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