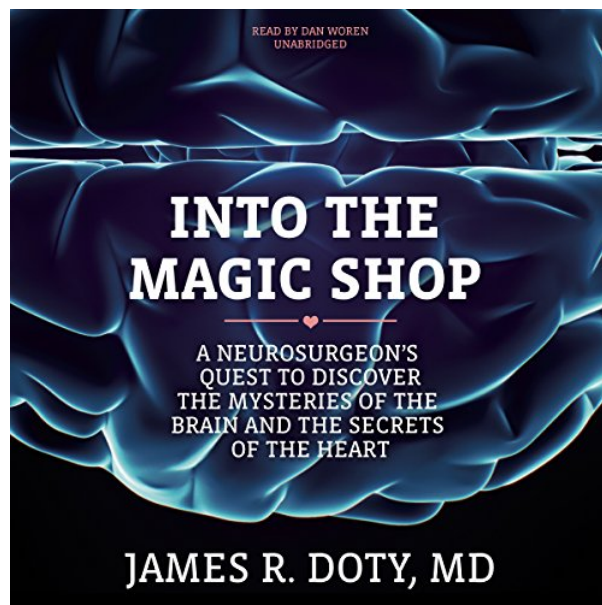
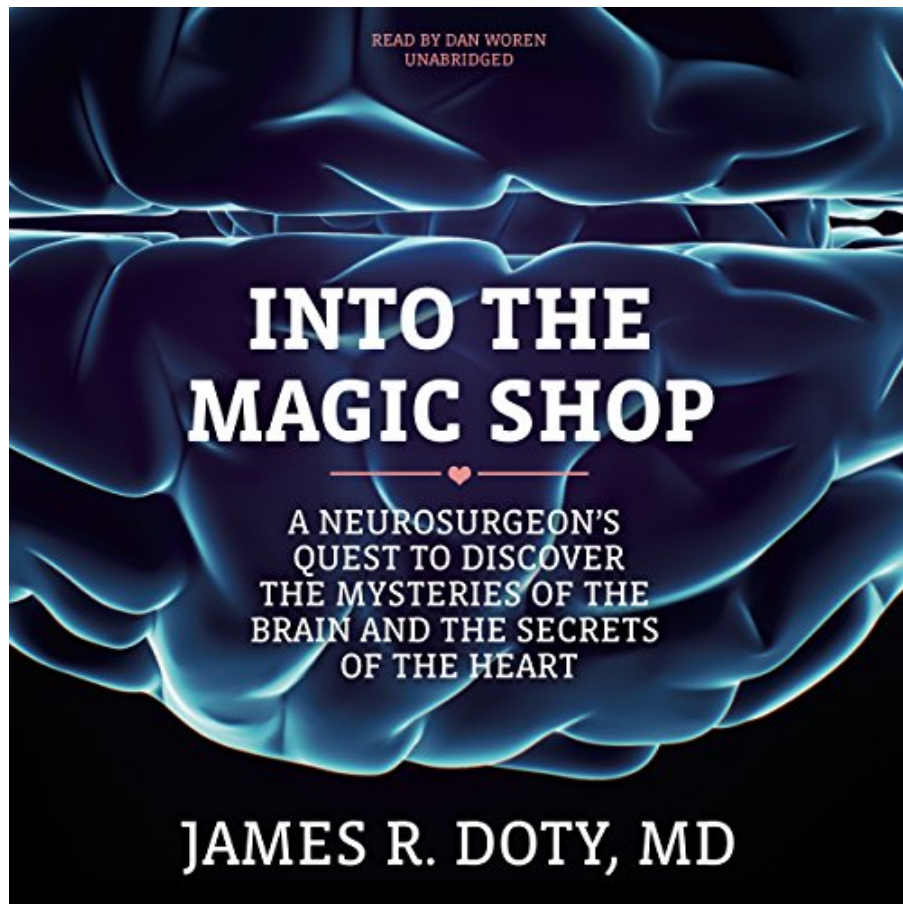


**INTO THE MAGIC SHOP: A
NEUROSURGEON'S QUEST TO DISCOVER
THE MYSTERIES OF THE BRAIN AND THE
SECRETS OF THE HEART BY JAMES R.
DOTY**



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Review

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The day I noticed my thumb was missing began like any other day the summer before I started eighth grade. I spent my days riding my bicycle around town, even though sometimes it was so hot the metal on my handlebars felt like a stove top. I could always taste the dust in my mouth—gritty and weedy like the rabbit brush and cacti that battled the desert sun and heat to survive. My family had little money, and I was often hungry. I didn't like being hungry. I didn't like being poor.

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Besides the book, my wooden box also had all my magic tricks—a pack of marked cards, some gimmicked coins that I could change from nickels into dimes, and my most prized possession: a plastic thumb tip that could hide a silk scarf or a cigarette. That book and my magic tricks were very important to me—gifts from my father. I had spent hours and hours practicing with that thumb tip. Learning how to hold my hands so it

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As a child, Jim Doty's life was at a dead end-- until he wandered into a magic shop looking for a plastic thumb. There he met Ruth, a woman who taught him a series of exercises to ease his own suffering and manifest his greatest desires. Her final mandate was that he keep his heart open and teach these techniques to others. Ruth gave Jim his first glimpse of the unique relationship between the brain and the heart, and he would go on to put her techniques to work. Part memoir, part science, part inspiration, and part practical instruction, Into the Magic Shop shows us how we can fundamentally change our lives by first changing our brains and our hearts.

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Most helpful customer reviews

106 of 111 people found the following review helpful.

Kindness Is His Religion

By SundayAtDusk

This book is an interesting one that I read in one night. It is both a memoir and a metaphysical book, and is written by a neurosurgeon. The introduction has a graphic description of brain surgery which I stopped reading long before it was over. Chapter One then goes back to Lancaster, California in 1968, where the author is a twelve-year-old who feels like he is most unlucky where his family is concerned. His father is an alcoholic with unsteady employment, his mother is depressed and sometimes suicidal, his older brother is always frightened, and eviction is always a possibility. But then he walks into a magic shop one day, where Ruth, the owner's mother, decides he would be a good candidate to teach the "magic" of metaphysics.

What she basically teaches him is meditation and visualization. Those are two topics I've read much about, since I've read hundreds of metaphysical books, but have never been truly enticed to practice. No, I'm not going to add "until now". Although if you are interested in those two things and don't want to get bogged down in "heavy" reading, this book would be an excellent one to read. What you will learn is "relaxing the body", "taming the mind", "opening the heart" and "clarifying your intent". There are step-by-step instructions, of two to three pages, about each of those techniques after they are discussed. There are also audio versions of those instructions at a website mentioned in the book. Thus, this is a bit of a self-help book, too.

Dr. Doty describes how his childhood is tremendously changed after spending six weeks learning Ruth's lessons. His family life doesn't really change, he is the one who changes. Sometimes while reading this book, it seems unreal a 12-year-old American boy in 1968 would have the patience and desire to learn those lessons, but I will believe that the good doctor is telling the truth. He then goes on to describe the rest of his life, where he beat all odds to go to college and medical school, and became a very successful and wealthy neurosurgeon. With success came arrogance, however, and there were some disastrous happenings. But once Dr. Doty realized he was listening too much to his brain and not enough to his heart, he balanced out his life and began teaching compassion and altruism. Like the Dalai Lama, he says kindness is his religion. The author has certainly come a long way from his days as an angry, envious child, who was afraid his life would always be defined by his unhappy, poor family and circumstances beyond his control. A good read.

45 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

One Doctor's Prescription for a Much Better World.

By Michael

Back in the 1970's, I took a meditation course with a well-known Hindu teacher named Swami Rama, who was one of the first yogis whose significant mental powers were studied by Western scientists. What I

learned from him about the tools of relaxation, meditation, focusing on a mantra were very effective in my life. But like so many others, my best intentions were waylaid by daily living, and after a few years I stopped meditating. This was to my detriment since the constant stress of working, raising a family and trying to keep my head above water financially created havoc with my health.

In the meantime, Swami Rama became a controversial character after being accused by several women of being sexually abused and exploited by the "holy man" in his Ashram. This kind of revelation has become almost common place as we've come to understand that great teachers can all-too-often possess a great ability to take advantage of those he or she teaches and who place so much trust and love in that person.

Today, "mindfulness" is almost a buzzword in everything from sports to business as meditation has been studied and proven to be beneficial and rewarding to those who practice it.

As I read through the first few chapters of "Into the Magic Shop", I felt a definite *deja vu* as Dr. Doty describes the "magic" he was taught by Ruth in the magic shop of his youth. I purchased the book because the blurb about Dr. Doty seemed intriguing, but I soon felt like the book was nothing more than a self-help book disguised as an autobiography, and while I understood that the magic described in the book is indeed powerful, I already knew all about what he was describing as the "magic" and was about to put the book aside; disappointed that the book never felt like it was going anywhere.

I'm very glad that I didn't, however, since once Dr. Doty began to relate the amazing journey he took from Lancaster, California to the pinnacle of financial and professional success, the book became one I couldn't put down. The remarkable arc of his journey becomes a life lesson for so many people hell bent on success at all costs.

Dr. Doty is frank about his failings in relationships and about how the magic he learned got him everything he wanted materially, but let him bankrupt in many other ways. It was only when he began to understand that only through Kindness, Compassion, Empathy and Love does a life truly become fulfilled that he understood how he had misused the magic he'd learned.

In our society, the words above are used often, but they are not taken to heart, which is the organ Dr. Doty believes be the true seat of our greatest human virtues; not the brain.

Dr. Doty's story of how the magic he learned as a child can be used toward good or ill is a vitally important one in a society that values material wealth, fame and irresponsible consumerism as the most desirable. Not one to just talk about Kindness, Compassion, Empathy and Love, he created the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University. CCARE states as its mission that it "investigates methods for cultivating compassion and promoting altruism within individuals and society through rigorous research, scientific collaborations, and academic conferences. In addition, CCARE provides a compassion cultivation program and teacher training as well as educational public events and programs."

"Into the Magic Shop: A Neurosurgeon's Quest to Discover the Mysteries of the Brain and the Secrets of the Heart" is both a fascinating journey of a successful neurosurgeon and entrepreneur as well as a remarkable prescription for creating a much happier and healthier individual so that those same benefits can be shared with the entire human population. It is an ambitious goal, but one that more and more people feel dedicated to achieving; especially in a world where hatred, injustice and intolerance seem to predominate in our media and in our politics.

43 of 50 people found the following review helpful.

Discover Real Magic

By John Chancellor

From time to time, I think everyone dreams about finding some magic formula to solve all their problems and create an ideal life. More often than not, those incidents only happen in fictional tales. But in the summer of 1968 when he was only 12, Jim Doty walked into a magic shop and it forever changed his life and the lives of countless other people.

Into The Magic Shop, by Dr. James Doty, is the amazing story of what happened by that chance encounter. Jim was only 12 years old at the time. For some strange reason, Ruth, the mother of the magic shop owner saw some hidden potential in Jim and agreed to mentor him over the summer. What follows is one of the most remarkable and magical stories you will ever read.

The story is so remarkable that about half way through the book, I Googled Dr. Doty to confirm the facts of the book.

Jim came from a terribly dysfunctional family. It would have been exceptional for him to have achieved even a modest level of success. But based on the lessons Ruth taught him, he achieved success most people only dream about.

Ruth taught Jim to meditate. She taught him how to focus, how to clear the mind, and how to set intentions. She tried to teach him to open his heart, but that was a lesson he would only learn much later in life.

Jim's dream was to become a doctor. He was barely passing undergraduate studies in college. Getting into med school seemed totally out of the question. But because of the "magic" of meditation, focus and setting intentions, he achieved the impossible. He went on to become a neurosurgeon.

One of the goals he set as a child was to become wealthy. He did that and more. But because he had not learned the most important lesson – opening his heart – he lost his fortune and had to start over. But going back to the lessons he had learned as a child, he rebuilt his life and career.

The book is a memoir, one of the most exciting and memorial I have read. The book is a real "page turner". I found it very difficult to put down. The story starts strong and finishes stronger. You are pulled along as the stories unfold, his life takes on many twists and turns.

Jim did learn the final lesson – opening his heart. He now heads the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford. The Dalai Lama is a significant contributor to CCARE.

We often judge people by predetermined criteria. By most objective measures, Jim Doty would have been turned down for medical school. The world would have been shortchanged. By his own admissions, he has made mistakes. But the good he has done and continues to do greatly outweigh any mistakes.

This is an inspiring, hear- warming story. It should help you bring more compassion for others into your own life.

One of the real outstanding books I have read this year.

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INTO THE MAGIC SHOP: A NEUROSURGEON'S QUEST TO DISCOVER THE MYSTERIES OF THE BRAIN AND THE SECRETS OF THE HEART BY JAMES R. DOTY PDF

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Review

"In this profound and beautiful book, Dr Doty teaches us with his life, and the lessons he imparts are some of the most important of all: that happiness cannot be without suffering, that compassion is born from understanding our own suffering and the suffering of those around us, and that only when we have compassion in our hearts can we be truly happy."-Thich Nhat Hahn, Zen Buddhist monk, global spiritual leader and peace activist

"Once in a generation, someone is able to articulate the compelling mystery within his or her life story in such a way that it captures the imagination of others and inspires them to align with what is deepest and best in themselves and allow it to manifest and flower...Behold what is emerging now." -Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of the Center for Mindfulness, Health Care and Society and creator of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)

"Into the Magic Shop is not only a moving testimony that keeps the reader enthralled throughout the book, but also a powerful exhortation to live a more compassionate and meaningful life. Beautiful and highly inspiring."-Matthieu Ricard, Buddhist monk, humanitarian and author of *Altruism: How Compassion can Change Your Life and the World*

"Stanford neurosurgeon James Doty shares with us his difficult childhood and how meeting an extraordinary woman in a magic shop at twelve changed everything. A moving and eloquent story that offers us a path to open our hearts and enlighten our minds." -Chade-Meng Tan, Google's Jolly Good Fellow and NYT bestselling author of *Search Inside Yourself*

"An optimistic and engagingly well-told life story that incorporates scientific investigation into its altruistic message."

—Kirkus Reviews

"Into the Magic Shop is pure magic! That a child from humble beginnings could become a professor of neurosurgery and the founder of a center that studies compassion and altruism at a major university, as

well as an entrepreneur and philanthropist is extraordinary enough. But it is Doty's ability to describe his journey so lyrically, and then his willingness to share his methods that make this book a gem."

—Abraham Verghese, MD, Author of *Cutting for Stone*

"This book tells the remarkable story of a neurosurgeon's quest to unravel the mystery of the link between our brains and our hearts. From the moment in his childhood when a simple act of kindness changed the course of his own life to his founding a center to study compassion at Stanford University. Jim Doty's life illustrates how each of us can make a difference. We can make the world a more compassionate place. I'm sure many readers will be moved by this inspiring story to open their hearts and see what they too can do for others."

—His Holiness the Dalai Lama

"Into the Magic Shop offers a gripping, well-told journey into the mysteries of the human mind and brain. Neurosurgeon James Doty has written a heartwarming tale of courage and compassion."

—Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., author of *Emotional Intelligence*

"Into the Magic Shop is a captivating journey of discovery. Neurosurgeon Jim Doty's well-told personal story illuminates for us all the power of insight and empathy to transform our lives and enhance our world. Read it and you too may find magic in the mystery and majesty of the mind to bring health and healing to our individual and collective lives.

—Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Author of *Mindsight*

"Part memoir, part scientific exploration, *Into the Magic Shop* is a powerful work of emotion and discovery, showing that we all have within us our own small magic shop, a place of calm and beauty we can return to whenever we need it. As James Doty compellingly shows, we simply have to open the door, and let ourselves in."

—Arianna Huffington, author of *Thrive*

"A moving memoir on the power of compassion and kindness. Neurosurgeon James Doty shares his inspiring story of growing up with seemingly insurmountable challenges, receiving a gift that changed his life, achieving remarkable success but then losing it all, and discovering that the mind is shaped as much by the heart as the brain."

—Adam Grant, PhD, author of *Give and Take*

"A powerful, eloquent, deeply spiritual and exquisitely beautiful book. Real magic!"

—Dean Ornish, M.D., author of *The Spectrum*

"This is one of the most compelling and inspiring books I have ever read. We're with Jim at each step, as he struggles with poverty and trauma, becomes a world-class brain surgeon, gains and loses a fortune, and learns deep lessons about the magic in each person's heart. Gripping, profound, extraordinary."

—Rick Hanson, Ph.D., author of *Hardwiring Happiness*

"Dr. Doty's powerful book, *Into the Magic Shop*, is a testament to how faith and compassion extend beyond religion, race and nationality and can help an individual overcome adversity and personal limitations. It is an inspiration."

—Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, spiritual leader and founder of the Art of Living Foundation

"Into the Magic Shop will literally rewire your brain. A candid and personal story about a life transformed by a chance encounter in a magic shop. It is a truly optimistic and inspirational testament to the power of

compassion and the ability to overcome adversity and discover your true potential.”

—Glenn Beck, nationally syndicated radio host and founder of The Blaze

About the Author

James R. Doty, MD, is a professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at Stanford University and the director of the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. He is also a philanthropist funding health clinics throughout the world and has endowed scholarships and chairs at multiple universities.

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The day I noticed my thumb was missing began like any other day the summer before I started eighth grade. I spent my days riding my bicycle around town, even though sometimes it was so hot the metal on my handlebars felt like a stove top. I could always taste the dust in my mouth—gritty and weedy like the rabbit brush and cacti that battled the desert sun and heat to survive. My family had little money, and I was often hungry. I didn’t like being hungry. I didn’t like being poor.

Lancaster’s greatest claim to fame was Chuck Yeager breaking the sound barrier at nearby Edwards Air Force Base some twenty years earlier. All day long planes would fly overhead, training pilots and testing aircraft. I wondered what it would be like to be Chuck Yeager flying the Bell X-1 at Mach 1, accomplishing what no human had ever done before. How small and desolate Lancaster must have looked to him from forty five thousand feet up going faster than anyone ever thought possible. It seemed small and desolate to me, and my feet were only a foot above the ground as I pedaled around on my bike.

I had noticed my thumb missing that morning. I kept a wooden box under my bed that had all my most prized possessions. A small notebook that held my doodles, some secret poetry, and random crazy facts I had learned—like twenty banks are robbed every day in the world, snails can sleep for three years, and it’s illegal to give a monkey a cigarette in Indiana. The box also held a worn copy of Dale Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, dog-eared on the pages that listed the six ways to get people to like you. I could recite the six things from memory.

1. Become genuinely interested in other people.
2. Smile.
3. Remember that a person’s name is, to that person, the sweetest and most important sound in any language.
4. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
5. Talk in terms of the other person’s interest.
6. Make the other person feel important—and do it sincerely.

I tried to do all of these things when I talked to anyone, but I always smiled with my mouth closed because when I was younger I had fallen and hit my upper lip on our coffee table, knocking out my front baby tooth. Because of that fall my front tooth grew in crooked and was discolored a dark brown. My parents didn’t have the money to get it fixed. I was embarrassed to smile and show my discolored crooked tooth, so I tried to keep my mouth closed at all times.

Besides the book, my wooden box also had all my magic tricks—a pack of marked cards, some gimmicked coins that I could change from nickels into dimes, and my most prized possession: a plastic thumb tip that could hide a silk scarf or a cigarette. That book and my magic tricks were very important to me—gifts from my father. I had spent hours and hours practicing with that thumb tip. Learning how to hold my hands so it wouldn’t be obvious and how to smoothly stuff the scarf or a cigarette inside it so that it would appear to magically disappear. I was able to fool my friends and our neighbors in the apartment complex. But today the thumb was missing.

Gone. Vanished. And I wasn’t too happy about it.

My brother, as usual, wasn't home, but I figured maybe he had taken it or at least might know where it was. I didn't know where he went every day, but I decided to get on my bike and go looking for him. That thumb tip was my most prized possession. Without it I was nothing. I needed my thumb back.

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