

Profile

Mehmet C. Oz, MD: Outstanding Heart Surgeon, Author, and Television Personality

I have had the privilege of mentoring Dr. Mehmet C. Oz, the prominent heart surgeon and physician. Dr. Oz is vice-chairman and professor of surgery at Columbia University, while also directing the Cardiovascular Institute and Complementary Medicine Program at New York Presbyterian Hospital. He performs more than 300 heart operations annually. His research interest includes heart replacement surgery, minimally invasive cardiac surgery, complementary medicine, and health care policy.

Dr. Oz also is well-known by those outside of the medical community. He has made numerous appearances on television network morning and evening news programs. He is featured regularly on "Oprah" and has guest hosted the "Charlie Rose Show." He is chief medical consultant to Discovery Communications and has hosted several television shows including "Second Opinion with Dr. Oz" and "Life Line". He also was medical director of the movie "John Q", starring Denzel Washington.

Outside of television, Dr. Oz has authored New York Times best sellers written for the layman, including "You: The Owner's Manual, An Insider's Guide for Getting the Best Treatment"; "You: The Smart Patient, an Insider's Handbook on How to Obtain the Best Treatment"; and the award-winning "Healing from the Heart: A Leading Surgeon Combines Eastern and Western Traditions to Create the Medicine of the Future." He has regular columns in *Esquire* and *Reader's Digest* magazines. His professional works include 400 original publications, book chapters, and six medical books.

The World Economic Forum elected Dr. Oz as one of the Global Leaders of Tomorrow. In addition, he won the prestigious American Association for Thoracic Surgery Gross Research Scholarship and has received an honorary doctorate from Istanbul University. He was voted "The Best and Brightest" by *Esquire* magazine and was elected one of the "Doctors of the Year" by *Hippocrates* magazine and "Healer of the Millennium" by *Healthy Living* magazine. The Castle Connolly Guide, as well as other major ranking

groups, elect him annually as one of the best physicians in the United States. He belongs to every major professional society for heart surgeons. He has received four patents.

Dr. Oz was born on June 11, 1960, in Cleveland, Ohio, of Turkish parentage. His father, Dr. Mustafa Oz, a cardiac surgeon, is a native of Konya, Turkey. Dr. Oz received his bachelor of arts (magna cum laude) from Harvard University in 1982 and obtained a joint doctor of medicine and master of business administration in 1986 from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and Wharton Business School. He was awarded the Captain's Athletic Award for leadership in college and was class president, followed by president of the student body during medical school. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and their four children.

He is traditional in that he honors his teachers and elders. He honored me in his book "Healing from the Heart" (Dutton Penguin Putnam 1998; pp. 144 and 194). I praise him not because he has praised me, but because he always struggles for excellence and perfection. His art is perfection, and his thoughts are universal. Such is the caliber of this young Middle Eastern man, one of the world's best surgeons who saved the lives of many heads of state as well as the indigent. May God of all civilizations and all nations whom he loves be with him and his family and continue to inspire him always.

To me, Dr. Oz is a man of great intellect with a great heart. He has inexhaustible energy and is a hard worker who can still create time to be a wonderful husband and father. He has raised good children, done innumerable good deeds, and has accomplished



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great works. Thus, he has already obtained a share of immortality on this Earth. As Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "When a man dies, all of his acts come to an end except three: recurring charity, knowledge by which people benefit and righteous children who supplicate on his behalf."¹ Dr. Oz has one other honor: he is a follower of Mevlana Rumi, a philosopher and mystic of Islam whose doctrine advocates unlimited tolerance, positive reasoning, goodness, charity, and awareness through love. Andrew Harvey, a world-renowned scholar and teacher and author of the critically acclaimed *Son of Man* and *Journey to Ladakh*, said: "Rumi combined the intellect of Plato, the vision and enlightened soul-force of a Buddha or Christ, and the extravagant literary gift of a Shakespeare." You know a person by his works and people he admires.

When asked what advice he had for medical students and trainees, he responded by defining success:

"Am I headed for success and what will get me there? Let me share my vision. By the way, the difference between vision and hallucination is that other people can see your vision. I do not think knowledge for knowledge's sake is the key. I am reminded of my

freshman year in medical school when a prominent professor confirmed that half of what we would learn that year would be proven wrong in our careers. Of course the problem is that we did not know which half. It turns out that the search for what is important in life is the purpose of life. The adventure should lead you to physical challenges, religious epiphanies, and sometimes confrontational dialogue (both internal and external). Success is moving one's life toward an understanding of its purpose."

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Reference

1. Saḥīḥ Muslim, Book 11, Kitāb al-waṣīyya, Chapter 1, Hadith 1631. [online] Available from: <http://www.muhammad.org>.