



*Review of **The End of Medicine** by Andy Kessler*

Andy Kessler made a boat-load of money in the technology explosion of the 1990s. He cashed out near the peak in 2000- closing a hedge fund that went from \$100 million to over \$1 billion in assets. He wants to discover if the same technological innovations that has made personal computers, cell phones and I-Pods smaller, lighter and cheaper will do the same to diagnostic testing in medicine. His findings are provocative and exciting as we enter what could be the dawn of a great age in medicine.

Kessler believes the focus will shift from chronic care to early detection. He writes this book in conversational style as he interviews many of the top medical researchers on the West Coast- most of his dialogues come out of Silicon Valley, Stanford University and the “Hutch”- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle.

Kessler envisions a time in the next 5-10 years where silicon chips can be implanted in toilets. Diagnostic tools can be hooked up to personal computers. Molecular imaging can be combined with a drug that is ingested. All of these tools can be used to determine if there are potential cancers or heart disease at an early stage. Heart disease, strokes and cancer are the big three killers in the US each year- claiming over 1 million lives annually.

Americans spend on average \$5400 per person on health care. \$1.8 trillion is spent annually which represents 15% of national GDP. 70% of the \$1.8 trillion is spent on chronic care. Kessler asks the question- what if early detection can cut those chronic care expenditures dramatically? What if the technology for early detection already exists but because of all the money and vested interests at stake acceptance will be slow?

What if money was re-deployed from drugs that had mediocre results and treatment of already deadly diseases to some cheap diagnostic procedures that every individual could self-administer? This could be big- from a quality of life standpoint and an investment opportunity.

Dr. Amato Giaccia is quoted in Kessler’s book, “There is not a single cancer that is truly resistant to radiation. If we can find it early enough, we can eradicate it.” Wow- imagine loved ones not having to suffer through the insidiousness of cancer because medical advances have provided a way to detect cancer early enough to kill it before it becomes deadly.

This book will stimulate your thinking in these areas. You will have to get past Kessler’s constant use of profane language, his belief that technology replaces people (i.e. doctors) and his love affair with his own mind (don’t we all?).

Andy Kessler keeps a blog that will help you stay on top of recent changes in this field at andykessler.com. I recommend reading this book. It will keep you informed about some of the important changes coming in the area of health care and how the doomsday scenarios of cost may be wrong. Technology may drive health care costs cheaper and make the whole system more efficient. These improvements (lower costs and greater efficiency) are something turning the system over to government bureaucrats will **not** be able to accomplish.

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