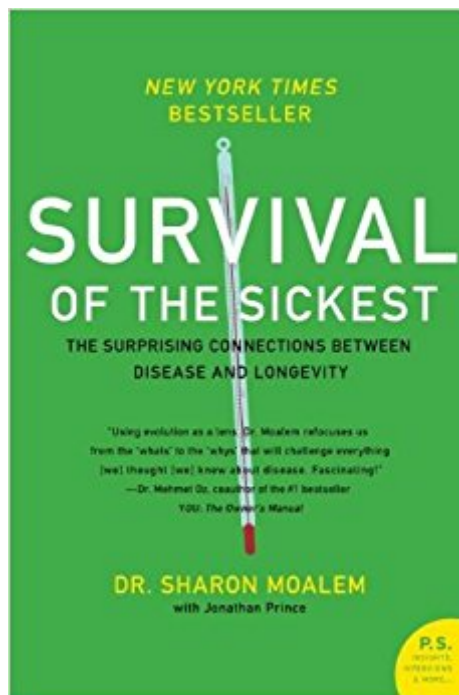




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Survival Of The Sickest: The Surprising Connections Between Disease And Longevity (P.S.)



Synopsis

Joining the ranks of modern myth busters, Dr. Sharon Moalem turns our current understanding of illness on its head and challenges us to fundamentally change the way we think about our bodies, our health, and our relationship to just about every other living thing on earth. Through a fresh and engaging examination of our evolutionary history, Dr. Moalem reveals how many of the conditions that are diseases today actually gave our ancestors a leg up in the survival sweepstakes. But *Survival of the Sickest* doesn't stop there. It goes on to demonstrate just how little modern medicine really understands about human health, and offers a new way of thinking that can help all of us live longer, healthier lives.

Book Information

Series: P.S.

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; 1 Reprint edition (March 18, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060889667

ISBN-13: 978-0060889661

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 290 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #6,704 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > Clinical > Diseases #6 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > Basic Sciences > Genetics #11 in Books > Textbooks > Medicine & Health Sciences > Medicine > General

Customer Reviews

Dan Ariely on *Survival of the Sickest* MIT professor Dan Ariely has become one of the leaders in the growing field of behavioral economics, and his bestselling book debut, *Predictably Irrational*, has brought his ideas--and his ingenious experiments and charming sense of humor--to a much wider audience. With the simplest of tests (often an auction or a quiz given under a few conditions) he shows again and again not only that we are wired to make irrational decisions in many situations, but that we do so in remarkably predictable ways. I have always been puzzled by the way in which genetic diseases have managed to survive throughout the ages. How could it be that these diseases were able to withstand the evolutionary process, where only the most fit survive, and

continue to be transferred from one generation to the next? *Survival of the Sickest* provides a thought provoking yet entertaining explanation to this puzzle. In this insightful book Dr. Sharon Moalem demonstrates how conditions that are considered unhealthy (such as hemochromatosis, diabetes, and high cholesterol), or even deadly in extreme cases, might actually put their carriers at an advantage in combating other life-threatening illnesses. For example, he explains that hemochromatosis, a disease that, if left untreated, will kill you, may have actually been a defense against the deadliest pandemic in history--the bubonic plague during the 14th century. It turns out that this genetic mutation, which continues to be passed down through generations, actually helped spare many lives at one point. Throughout the book, Dr. Moalem draws many connections between seemingly disparate subjects, such as the accidental invention of ice wine and cold diuresis, in order to illustrate the basic mechanisms of genetics and medicine in charming and intuitive ways. He skillfully interweaves his knowledge of history, genetics, and medicine not only as they relate to specific medical conditions but also in a way that addresses important challenges of modern society and our future evolution. In the most general terms, Dr. Moalem's description of the human body and its complexity left me in awe of how far we have come in our understanding of biology and medicine, while also being reminded that the road to understanding ourselves is still wide open with much more to learn in the decades, and even centuries, to come. It is a fantastic journey on which he leads us and Dr. Moalem is a kind, knowledgeable, humorous, and helpful guide. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Moalem, a medical student with a Ph.D. in neurogenetics, asks a number of provocative questions, such as why debilitating hereditary diseases persist in humans and why we suffer from the consequences of aging. His approach to these questions is solidly rooted in evolutionary theory, and he capably demonstrates that each disease confers a selective advantage to individuals who carry either one or two alleles for inherited diseases. But very little is new; the principles, if not every particular, that Moalem addresses have been covered in Randolph Nesse and George Williams's *Why We Get Sick*, among others. Whether he is discussing hemochromatosis (a disorder that causes massive amounts of iron to accumulate in individuals), diabetes or sickle cell anemia, his conclusion is always the same: each condition offers enough positive evolutionary advantages to offset the negative consequences, and this message is repeated over and over. Additionally, Moalem's endless puns and simple jokes wear thin, but his light style makes for easy reading for readers new to this subject. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is probably one of the most significant books I have ever read. Sharon makes it for even Layman to understand the complex world of evolution and our role in the grand scheme of things. Many obscure things make sense after reading this great work. Thank you so much for writing something so great!

I love how my brain go through this journey while going through this book. how the author is like a tourist guide, guiding the reader along the way, connecting all the dots, leading to some really interesting perspective. I would recommend this book to my friends

This is going into my list of favorite books. Sharon does an amazing job of cutting through eons of science narratives to give practical insight into what "we" really are the why behind our evolution. Read this book along with "Human: The Science Behind What Makes Us Unique" by Brian Gazzaniga and "The Selfish Gene" by Richard Dawkins and you'll see more doors of curiosity open up in your own biology than you may be prepared for. I highly recommend this book to anyone who appreciates good scientific research and theory.

Such a cool book. Makes you think about evolution and survival and how things we think of negatively, because they are now, may have affected us in a positive way to aid in survival in the past. Fascinating.

Great great great read. I am a future PA student and I found this interesting to read before school starts. If you love medicine and history and actually have a decent vocab extent this is for you. Written well and kept me focused and wanting to read chapter after chapter.

Recommend for sex education before puberty. Why? In the light of modern technological techniques of planned parenting and ability to log the nuances of both parents DNA, a new consideration in the education system highlight the workings on the history of genetics and its shaping by environmental selection before reaching reproductive age. 4 instead of 5 stars for the work I had to do to check a few things such as genetic material in red blood cells and fingernails. As outrageous as it seemed to me, some local breast cancer researchers confirm that modern techniques can find extremely small amounts of DNA and if caught at the right time even red blood cells MIGHT contain DNA. Moalem did not make the nuances of this in his writings. Particular kudos

goes to him, IMO, for getting to epigenetics relationship to jumping genes. Pretty complex areas he covers for this coal miner, but I do have a problem with his reasoning for selecting of genetic tendencies to diabetes. Readers can make up their own minds.

A great read. The DNA, RNA and protein sequences were old hat by the 70s. This book is well-written and should be read by all with a science background. He is a great writer. I could not put it down until it was completed. Then I went back to do a quick re-read in a couple of areas. Kudos !J Dorman, MD

A thoughtful viewpoint, thought provoking.

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