

# Eau Claire physician's thoughts conveyed in *The Other Side*

Russell Lewis, MD

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*The Other Side*

Ralph F. Hudson, MD

268 pages; Heins Publications; November 2002

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In *The Other Side*, retired Eau Claire surgeon Ralph Hudson, MD, draws on his experiences as a surgeon and a patient to convey his philosophies of life.

When I read the book the first time, I was preparing for a total hip replacement, something I discovered Dr Hudson knew well. In this book, he talks not only about being a physician, but he shares his experiences on “the other side”—as a patient, having had six hip surgeries himself.

I expected *The Other Side* to be another physician autobiography—my favorite subject. And I understand that the book was originally intended for Dr Hudson's children and grandchildren. But he never really attempted an autobiography. In fact, while this book does contain a brief outline of Hudson's life, it is primarily a conversational account of his sense of values for a better life. My initial reaction was that he should have written two books—one of his life story and the other about his feelings. I also was left with the impression he was not the humble man he professed to be. However—after my own surgery and with more time on my hands—a second reading challenged all of my previous conclusions, and I enjoyed the book very much.

One area of particular interest for me was Dr Hudson's discussion of the physician's role with a dying patient. He believes that role is to aid the patient and comfort him or her, not to sustain life at all costs. It was a wonderful chapter that I wish he would have expanded.

Another topic he addressed exceedingly well was the rapidly increasing cost of care today. The reasons are clear; the solution is not.

Readers may question or even disagree with some of Dr Hudson's ideas, but that makes *The Other Side* more interesting. For example, his opinion about the “flu” vaccine will not cause believers like myself to cease what we have found to be very valuable prevention.

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Doctor Hudson must have kept an excellent diary to recall his many diverse patients. He uses real people and their experiences to make his points so well. And while he is a bit younger than I, Dr Hudson's sense of values, thoughts, conclusions and philosophies correspond to mine, which made this book most enjoyable.

*The Other Side* deserves to be read at least twice—to get the most out of the content and Dr Hudson's subtle humor. He is to be congratulated on an interesting book and life. He has covered an amazing multitude of subjects in this very readable, well-written volume.

*Editor's Note:* *The Other Side* may be purchased for \$17.95 at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

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Doctor Lewis is a retired OB-GYN from Marshfield.

# Wisconsin Medical Journal

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