



The Pursuit of Perfection: The Promise and Perils of Medical Enhancement

Sheila Rothman, David Rothman

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What does it mean to live in a time when medical science can not only cure the human body but also reshape it? How should we as individuals and as a society respond to new drugs and genetic technologies? Sheila and David Rothman address these questions with a singular blend of history and analysis, taking us behind the scenes to explain how scientific research, medical practice, drug company policies, and a quest for peak performance combine to exaggerate potential benefits and minimize risks. They present a fascinating and factual story from the rise of estrogen and testosterone use in the 1920s and 1930s to the frenzy around liposuction and growth hormone to the latest research into the genetics of aging. The Rothmans reveal what happens when physicians view patients' unhappiness and dissatisfaction with their bodies—short stature, thunder thighs, aging—as though they were diseases to be treated.

The Pursuit of Perfection takes us from the early days of endocrinology (the belief that you are your hormones) to today's frontier of genetic enhancements (the idea that you are your genes). It lays bare the always complicated and sometimes compromised positions of science, medicine, and commerce. This is the book to read before signing on for the latest medical fix.

From the Hardcover edition.

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