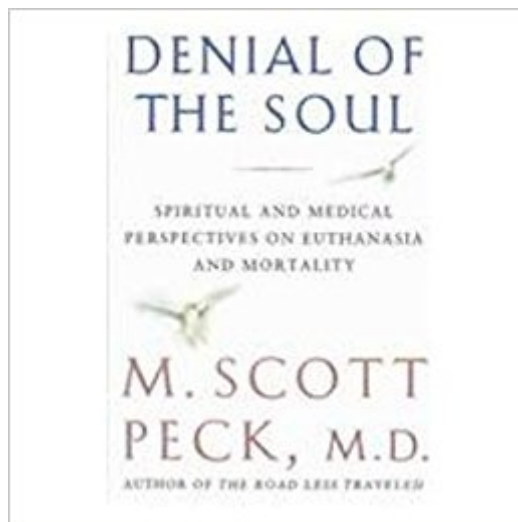




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# **Denial Of The Soul: Spiritual And Medical Perspectives On Euthanasia And Mortality**



## Synopsis

Explores the issue of euthanasia & the right to die. Poses the questions we should all ask ourselves & helps us determine the spiritual lessons that dying is meant to teach us. The Hippocratic Oath decrees that physicians prolong life & relieve suffering. However, technological advancements have blurred the lines between these issues. He rails against the inadequate treatment of physical pain & gives sensible medical & spiritual perspectives on chronic & terminal emotional & physical pain. Discusses the deeper meanings of life, death, suicide, & euthanasia. Asks whether we have the right to kill ourselves even though we have the power.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The author of several best sellers, including *The Road Less Traveled* (which at last count has been on the New York Times Best Sellers list for 687 weeks), Peck here discusses a complex and timely matter?euthanasia. Peck wants to address the "spiritual" aspects of the decision, which he feels have been ignored in this too-secular world. He's taken on a huge task: to define physical and emotional suffering, to come up with guidelines for considering physician-assisted suicide, and to foster further dialog by society as a whole on these issues. This is not a book of answers; Peck instead encourages discussion about "learning through dying," what a soul consists of, and choosing hospice care when it's clear the end is near. Peck is a wonderful writer, engaging, intelligent, and full of stories from his long psychiatric practice; as usual, he takes on big issues with seriousness, sensitivity, and balance. Highly recommended.?Barbara O'Hara, Free Lib. of PhiladelphiaCopyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or

unavailable edition of this title.

Peck, very productive of late, may never have written a timelier, more cogent, more fluently readable book than this one. He believes that no current ethical-legal issue is more important than euthanasia and that there is not enough discussion of and even contention over it. He presents and considers the medical, spiritual, and social issues of euthanasia. Medicine, though it has finally conceded that "pulling the plug" on the terminally ill is a moral accession to the naturalness of dying, has yet to grant the necessity of fully relieving physical pain--that is, even to the point of eventually lethal doses of painkiller--and has barely begun to acknowledge hellish emotional pain as a condition from which suicide may be a wholly natural release. Spiritually, Peck insists that suicide done out of the individualistic desire to control one's life and to deny one's God-given soul must be discouraged, for life is a learning experience that ought to be fully realized, even through suffering. Yet Peck cites circumstances in which assisted suicide seems morally justified (one great strength of the book is the cases from which Peck educes the complexities he discusses--all of them real, drawn from his and other physicians' practices). He concludes, however, that at present society isn't spiritually strong enough to legalize physician-assisted suicide, which is perhaps the greatest reason that euthanasia must become the subject of a great and completely open debate, one that he has masterfully and engagingly begun. Ray Olson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

There currently is a debate going on about how to live the end of life and when it is appropriate to call it quits. Dr. Peck provides all aspects ... moral, religious, medical, and family considerations for whether or not people should consider ending their life when their health has dramatically declined. The book is extremely thought-provoking and well written. I think all doctors and those people at the end of their life should educate themselves by reading this book.

I bought it fr my brother as a birthday gift, and he has read it with zeal and likes the style and presentation of the author. My brother is an ordained clergy person and is very well read.

As a former trainer for Scott Peck's Road Less Traveled Seminars, I am not an objective voice. I love the way Scott attacks difficult issues with generosity and compassion. On the other hand, he doesn't shy away from putting forth an unpopular perspective to stimulate discourse and encourage you to challenge your values.

Scott Peck at his best - his perspectives on process of dying and euthanasia and how they represent our culture today are alarming. This is a subject that needs open honest discussion.

Do you fear death or the dying process? This book will address that. Are you young and in relatively good health, and have a hard time feeling compassion on people who are older and/or less agile? This book can increase your compassion and patience. Are you entering the last few years of your life and want to "finish well"? This book can help you do that. This book is for everyone; because everyone will deal with death and dying in their life. Denial of the Soul demonstrates Peck's medical knowledge combined with his understanding of people and how we deal with and fear physical pain, and this book forces its reader to think about their own mortality, grapple with it, and hopefully come to accept it. Peck shows that death isn't something to live in fear of, but that the dying process is a beautiful way to learn how to depend on other people and on God--and that the dying process doesn't have to be wrought with physical pain. It's really worth it for everyone to read this book at some point, and I would agree with the other reviewers that it should be sooner rather than later.

No other author has touched me as deeply as Dr. Peck has about Life, Death, and Grace. I recently completed a marathon ordeal with my Dad. He had Alzheimer's, PTSD, and heart disease. He passed away in a Skilled Nursing facility after 17 years of battle. "A brave man can live and die in defiance of fortune" Seneca "Love is both selfish and unselfish" Dr. Peck. Dr. Peck's writings allowed me to endure the uncertainty and stress of this difficult situation. My hope is that anyone who undergoes an ordeal like this is touched by Grace.....Peace and eternal blessings to all.....

There's a reason Dr. Peck is one of my favorite authors, and this book once more demonstrates why. Denial of the Soul is a brave and important book that carefully and objectively explores the entire issue of euthanasia from both a medical and spiritual standpoint. Frequently touching and always well reasoned, once again he has produced a masterpiece that should give the thoughtful reader plenty to digest as he or she struggles to decide for themselves how they feel about the idea of terminating a human life-especially their own. This is much more than simply a book about the pros and cons of "pulling the plug" on the terminally ill, but explores a whole range of questions regarding hospice care, suicide and mercy killing, doctor assisted euthanasia, pain management, and quality of life issues (his chapter on pain management alone should be required reading for

every first year medical student and nurse trainee.) His spiritual perspective on the issue-which he covers in some depth in the second half of the book-is more subjective and problematic, but he does manage to successfully bring God into the debate, for which I consider him among the bravest of medical professionals. His no-nonsense approach and personal antidotes make this one of those books you'll be thinking about long after you've read the last words. As is true of all of Peck's books, however, I found myself enthusiastically agreeing with 95% of everything he wrote and vehemently disagreeing with the remaining 5%. He approaches the spiritual aspect of the debate from a purely liberal Christian perspective (and the political elements of it from a similar perspective) and so makes some statements that I couldn't help but challenge. For example, he considers the purpose of life to experience the emotional and physical pain necessary to mature us spiritually and, hence, considers any effort to end one's own life an attempt to short-circuit the process. He considers the dying process to be an important part of the learning process and gives many examples from his personal experiences that show the positive results of doing the "hard work" involved in dying. However, he admits himself that many people-in fact, perhaps most-seem to gain nothing from the experience and leave this world kicking and screaming, seemingly challenging the notion that the process of dying is inherently useful as a tool of spiritual growth. Also, his contention that the soul "belongs" to God since he is its creator not only clearly betrays his thoroughly Christian perspective, but is unsubstantiated by anything more than his own assumption. I was a co-creator in the creation of my sons but I never considered them my property because of it. As a consequence, I don't follow his logic in this regard. My only significant criticism of the book is the ending, in which he seems to waffle all over the place. After 200 pages of building his case, I was disappointed to see him retreat with the excuse that he was going to let the reader decide for themselves on the issue, but then I guess that's the point of any work of this nature. The decision when and how to end one's own life is a personal choice that can be made only by those who find themselves in that situation. It can't be made by religion or government or even by science, and that, after all, is the truth of all life. Peck gives us something to think about, but we must ultimately make the final decision which is, I suspect, exactly the way God wants us to play it. In any case, thank you Dr. Peck for another little gem of light to help us illuminate an otherwise horribly confused world.

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