



“Waking the Spirit: A Musician’s Journey Healing Body, Mind, and Soul”

ABOUT THE BOOK

Andrew Schulman, a 57-year-old professional guitarist, had a close brush with death in July 2009. Against the odds – and with the help of music – he survived: a medical miracle.

Once fully recovered, Schulman resolved to use his musical gifts to help critically ill patients. In “Waking the Spirit,” you’ll learn the astonishing stories of the people he’s met along the way – both patients and doctors – and see the incredible role music can play in a modern hospital setting.

Schulman weaves cutting-edge research on neuroscience and medicine with what he’s learned as a professional musician to explore the power of music to heal the body and awaken the spirit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Guitarist and author Andrew Schulman has performed throughout the United States and Europe. After his life was saved by music while in a coma, Mr. Schulman developed a new specialty as a medical musician. He is a member of the critical care staff at Berkshire Medical Center.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE Each book guide follows the weekly Connect: 21CM Book Club discussions led by Sylvia Yang on Facebook [@21CMBookClub](#). Feel free to follow along with other book club members in real time or go at your own pace.

Welcome to the 10th meeting of Connect: 21CM’s Book Club. Join us as we read “Waking the Spirit: A Musician’s Journey Healing Body, Mind, and Soul” by Andrew Schulman. A guitarist and member of the critical care staff at Berkshire Medical Center, Andrew Schulman has written an inspiring memoir that explores music’s ability to heal the body and awaken the spirit.

BEFORE YOU READ...

Recounting his personal experience in the ICU as both a patient and a medical musician, Schulman’s writing is a testament to music and its ability to inspire hope and guide people through personal challenges. As you read Schulman’s story, think about the times in your life when music helped you reconnect with joy, recover from something or face a difficult situation.

AS YOU READ...

We offer a few questions for each chapter so you can dive deeper into your reading.

CHAPTER BREAKDOWN:

OCTOBER 5-11: PAGES 1-74

“She was here now, in this room, and not wherever she’d been for the past few hours. Something was connecting. We were just ten seconds into the music.” (p. 3)

Schulman writes about a difficult-to-reach patient in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit that he finally connected with through music. You’ve probably also experienced this sudden feeling of instant and direct connection through music when nothing else seemed to work.

In the comments, share a moment when music reached you. What happened? Did you get goosebumps? Were you moved to tears?

OCTOBER 12-18: PAGES 75-166

“I found a new path to express myself as a musician, one that was unlike anything I’d done before. It was about making music solely to help others, and it felt really good.” (p. 79)

21CM embraces the idea of expressing your unique self as a musician. Schulman found that he could express himself by being a medical musician. How do you feel your music helps convey who you are?

OCTOBER 19-25: PAGES 167-250

“Why does Bach’s music balance the brain so well? My thought was that the perfect counterpoint in his music (voices that are interdependent harmonically yet independent in rhythm) balance the brain as there is always more than one important focus of attention, and his inventiveness in every phrase means that you’re never certain how something will resolve until it does – but when the resolution occurs it’s always completely satisfying.” (p. 176)

Schulman puts on his critic’s hat in this passage, proposing why technical aspects of Bach’s music connect with us on an emotional level.

Do you agree? Could you propose why or how the techniques in some of your favorite music allow you to connect to the music emotionally? Let us know in the comments!

OCTOBER 26-NOVEMBER 1: PAGES 251-290

“I’d gone back to the SICU to avoid survivor’s guilt and to give thanks for a great gift after having my life saved. I stayed because I found I loved this new experience of helping and healing others through music.” (p. 233)

Schulman’s memoir is a testament to the endless benefits of music and its ability to invigorate the mind, heal the body and nourish the soul. In the comments, let us know how music has impacted you, and how it has made your life a healthier one.

QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTHOR?

We hope you enjoyed October’s book club selection and the dialogue with colleagues on 21CM.org. Do you have a question for the author? Send us your questions via email at bookclub@21cm.org or message your questions on Facebook to [@21CMBookClub](#).