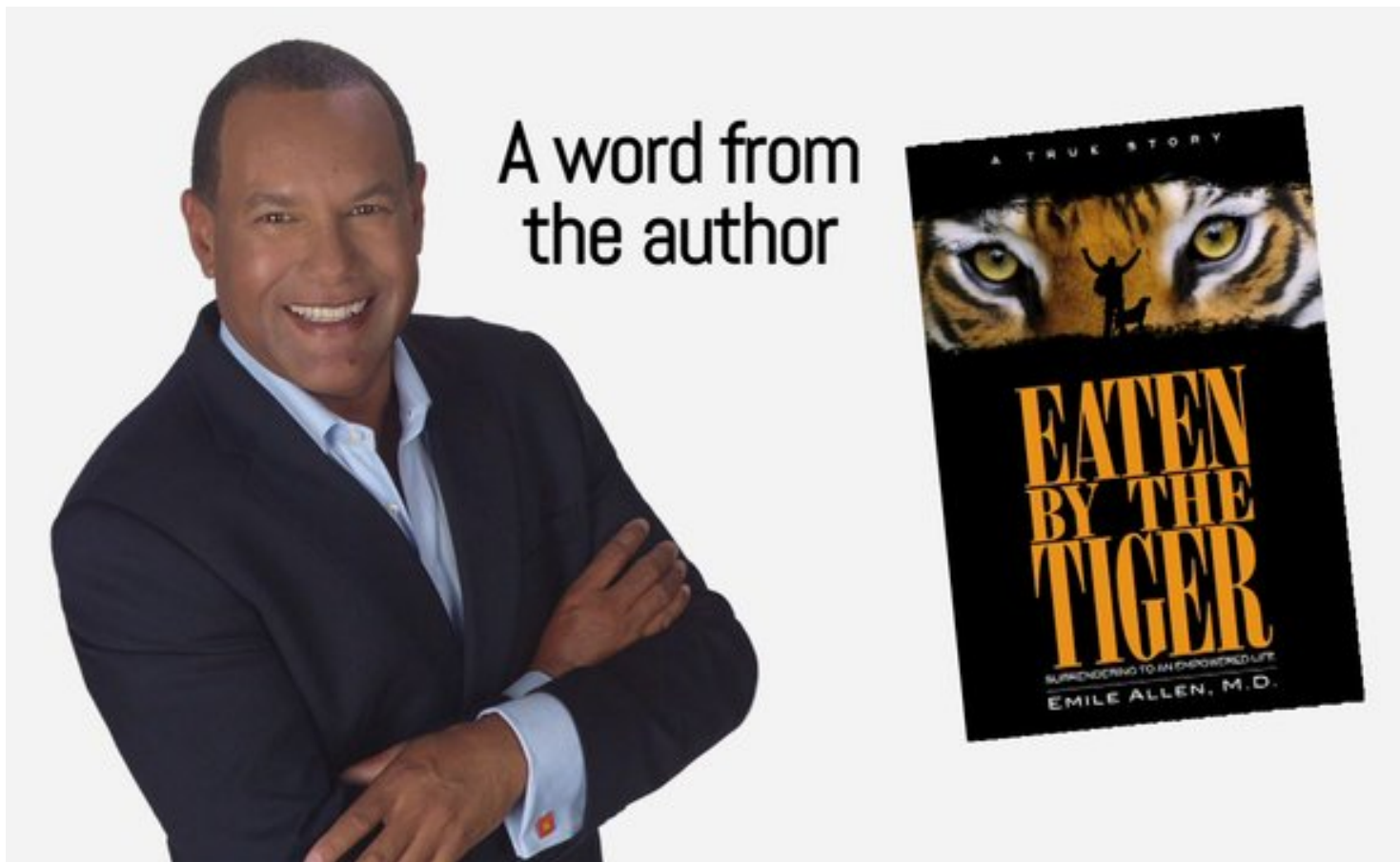


Written by Patricia Turnier
Monday, 04 November 2013 17:56



Dr. Allen is a multiple specialist physician born in the United States. His late parents were a urologist (father) and a registered nurse (mother). Dr. Allen grew up on a farm and shares a passion for animals. He was seriously thinking to become a veterinarian. Thus, he went to University of California and obtained a B.S. in zoology in 1982. Eventually, he switched his orientation and enrolled in medical school. He earned his medical degree in 1986 from Northwestern University-Feinberg School of Medicine, in Chicago. He subsequently did his general surgery and urology residency at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics in Iowa City, Iowa. He specialized in urologic oncology and was the awarded chief resident in 1991. Hence, he became a urologist who specialized in cancerous diseases of the urinary tract. He coordinated efforts with State Boards and Pennsylvania Health Departments in order to assure patient safety. As of 1986, he provided acute and chronic care in response to life-threatening medical emergencies, routine healthcare and patient education. He conveyed three successful practices.

In 1998, an unfortunate accident occurred while Dr. Allen was operating on an elderly patient

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who had a large kidney tumor amongst other medical complications. During the removal of the patient's kidney, Dr. Allen's life dramatically changed in a split-second (after years of hard work) and he had a near-death experience. He got electrocuted by a cautery device used to seal off blood vessels. He suffered a traumatic brain injury (including memory loss, concussion, chronic lethargy...) and had to get the appropriate health professionals to help treat his condition. It was a very difficult road. As a patient, Dr. Allen was prescribed multiple medications (taking a total of 36 pills per day), which created side effects. He suffered many other injuries, including hand and arm nerve damage, heart damage, and post-traumatic stress disorder, to name a few. He also experienced petit mal seizures, his left arm muscles atrophied almost to the bone, etc. It took him years to recover. He needed to go through physiotherapy and psychology sessions among the many treatments.

It is important to mention that, when the accident occurred, at 38, Dr. Allen was at the height of his medical career. He served as Chairman of the Department of Urology and Vice Chairman of Surgery for Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, California where he led over 400 physicians and gained experience in corporate-style management and operations. He was also running a very successful private practice in a small community in Pennsylvania when, suddenly, everything changed.

Eaten by the Tiger chronicles Dr. Emile Allen's journey. He candidly shares many aspects of his life, including what his parents meant to him. He writes about moving moments, among others such as when he inhaled his father's last breath, who was dying from cancer. Readers discover that the physician transformed himself as a driving force which reframed his mindset, to find the value behind his hurdles (for instance, at least four years went by before he was able to find work). This led him to discover a beneficial impact he never knew existed. Dr. Allen refused to allow his spirit to be crushed by negativity, in spite of the huge obstacles that he had to overcome after the injury. The author offers in his book precious lessons and provides a philosophical perspective of life's purposes. He encourages the readers to find their inner gifts. Dr. Emile Allen gives a clear approach to combating the tiger in all of us and makes us see the importance of letting go our life wounds.

Overall, after the accident Dr. Allen was impacted on many levels: physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. In his book, we learn about the different phases he went through: denial, grief, and acceptance of the situation with his willingness to reposition himself. This powerful autobiography talks mainly about his losses and the means he undertook to recover. The book reminds us that we should not take our health for granted, and it represents a precious gift all humans share. The author provides his unique perspective as both a physician and a citizen.

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Dr. Allen has almost recovered from his brain trauma, but he still struggles from a peripheral neuropathy and reflex sympathetic dystrophy, also called Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS). However, Dr. Allen has learned to live with it. He sees these challenges as gifts. He became active by working as a medical consultant. He also delivered live webinars which gave physicians the opportunity to participate in question-and-answer sessions. As a motivational speaker, the following are just some of the themes he covers: how to sharpen intuition to become a better leader, how to connect on a deeper level with employees to achieve higher productivity, how to create a map that guides you to success in one's professional and personal aspects of life. Dr. Allen is a member of the National Speakers Association. Furthermore, he writes for a number of publications.

He traveled to Haiti in 1989 to provide care, and this was part of his medical training. A hospital was built there with his team. In his book, he shares the great values he learned from the Haitians: gratitude, conviviality and so on. Dr. Allen also visited the Fiji islands to provide care and, later, for a ten-day spiritual retreat. This trip became a catalyst to transform and rebuild his life.

This year, Dr. Allen visited the following cities for his book tour: Atlanta, GA, Chicago, IL, and New York, NY. He did radio and TV interviews, even abroad like in Trinidad and Tobago: <http://www.cnc3.co.tt/news/cnc3-ems-2013-02-25-life-lessons>

. His compelling autobiography is part of our fall top 20 books:

<http://www.megadiversities.com/books/251.html>

and I had the honor to write a quote published in his memoir. The book, rich in content, should be translated in several languages. As a female, it was nice to see that the book was published on the International Women's Day, March 8th, 2013. The author became this year a *Silver Medal Winner in the Readers' Favorite International Award contest* and got a 5 Star Rating. Dr. Allen will receive the Award at the *Miami Book Fair International*

on November 23rd , 2013 where illustrious authors attended in the past such as Toni Morrison, Nikki Giovanni, Edwidge Danticat, Walter Mosley, Al Gore, etc.

As mentioned, Dr. Allen wears many hats. As a Medical Director, he was involved in product definition, corporate strategy enhancement, as well as business and alliance development, which resulted in an accretion in corporate profits from \$3.5 million to \$5 million in less than one year. Dr. Allen is currently establishing business alliances with healthcare providers, in order to improve patient care by preventing or reversing chronic diseases through proper nutrition. Dr. Allen currently lives in Florida.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE PROMINENT PHYSICIAN AND AUTHOR: DR. ALLEN M.D.

Written by Patricia Turnier

Monday, 04 November 2013 17:56

Dr. Allen has an incredible tale of tragedy, faith, hope and victory. We had the pleasure to talk with him. He spoke about his inspirational memoir and shared his advice for aspiring physicians among other themes. Dr. Allen was really generous with his time during our conversation. This is his first interview from Quebec.

Our visitors can watch the hot book trailer below before we begin the interview:



PATRICIA TURNIER LL.M TALKS TO DR. ALLEN M.D.:

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P.T. Why was it important for you to share your story in a book?

Dr. A. It was only fourteen years after my injury that I felt ready to write a book. As you know, many people go through struggles in life, and some have stresses that occur on a daily basis. This can create anxiety in some, while in others paralysis related to fears might always come up in their lives. These fears started long before we were adults. In fact, it often began during our childhood, even before we commenced to talk. It started frequently with stories narrated by our parents and related to lions, bears, tigers, Snow White with her mean step-mother, the Wizard of Oz with the witch, etc. It can stay with us and, as adults, we watch news which are often fear based. We see tragedies and so on. In some ways, since our childhood, we have been programmed to have dreads. Whatever hardships we have in our lives related to financial crises, health scare, divorce, job loss, fears kick in. I call that fear the tiger. I had to face my own tigers when I had my accident. I needed to deal with these tigers and learn how to get past this. I am sure that you heard this terminology before. **FEAR** is actually false evidence that appears

r
eal. Struggles are part of life and we have to go through them. We need to learn how to deal with it on a daily basis. It is also possible to see the positive sides of it. I mean, sometimes, hardships can be a blessing in disguise. In my case, my difficult experiences allowed me to reach to many more people than I could have done if I had remained solely a medical practitioner. So, some setbacks can be an opportunity to reframe our outlook on life. When we are at the core of the crisis, it is difficult to notice the positive side of it because we have blinders at that moment. However, once you step away and look at it with a different perspective, gifts might show up.

Progressively after my accident, I recovered and re-entered the workforce by doing consulting work. I started traveling and doing interesting things with my life. It was like a rebirth and I wanted to share my experience hoping that it could inspire other people who are struggling with their own difficulties. I realised with times that I utilized the same technics I used with my patients to counsel them and their families when they had serious diseases. I employed the same principles for myself.

It was a journey. I went to spiritual retreats, I enrolled in self-help courses. I read self-help books. I combined all these things together. My insight increased after my accident. It helped me to go forward in life. I realised that it became important for me to write a book to share these insights if this can aid other people to deal with their own life crises.

P.T. Please, explain to us what lies behind the title of your book Eaten by the Tiger? In

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other words, talk to us about the metaphor in this title. You touched on this topic in your last answer, but you can elaborate.

Dr. A. Sure! The tiger is the metaphor for fear. Many years ago, I was on a spiritual retreat in the Fiji Islands. I had a spiritual guide called Dasaji who would take us to meditation sessions, and after, we'd have spiritual lessons. I explained to my Dasaji that I felt stuck in my life after my accident. I had difficulty at that point in knowing what my life's purpose was after my injury. He told me that I needed to be eaten by the tiger. I didn't understand. All the Dasajis came from India. I responded at the time that I wouldn't drink this cool aid, and tigers are in India [laughs]. A few days later, I was in a deep meditation state. I was in a thorough level of spirituality, as I had never expected. Everything slowed down. I was appreciative for the things going on in my life and felt at peace. I later walked toward a beautiful garden of an ashram and I met Dasaji Rajesh, a spiritual guide. I shared with him the great meditation experience I just got with a smile on my face. He told me "you have finally been eaten by the tiger". I said to him that I didn't understand his point of view. He responded that the best way he could explain it was the fact that I had been running away from my fears for so many years. I fell down from a mountain and half the way of it, I grabbed on to a branch but I didn't end up to the bottom. I had been holding on to that branch for the last few years of my life. I didn't climb to the top of the mountain because of my fear of falling and I didn't let go of the branch because if I fell, I would be scared that the tiger would be down there waiting for me. However, today, I finally let go of the branch and I allowed God to catch me. When he said it that way, it totally made sense to me because after my electrocution injury, I have gone from surgeon to patient for three years. Physicians, my family and friends were taking care of me to the point where they drove me around because I needed to go to the store for instance. I had been in the victim mode for so many years and it had become comfortable for me.

P.T. You were allowed to have difficulties in accepting your situation and even be angry.

Dr. A. Yes and I needed to grieve. It was important to do my best not to stay in the anger phase because I wouldn't want this to hold me back. I also had a lot of fears about moving forward in my life and see how I could transfer my medical knowledge to another career. I was in some ways paralysed, and it held me back from living my full potential. Today, I realised that holding to my past identity as a surgeon kept me from moving forward. This is where the title "eaten by the tiger" comes from. It is about surrendering my past life. When you abandon your fears, your tiger or you learn to face them, this is how you become empowered. With time, you can even become cunning enough to confront your tigers faster. What is holding us back is our attachment to the past. It is important to let go of these restraints. So, I learned how to abandon my branches and to have faith that God would catch me.

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P.T. You said these powerful words to the media: "My accident was actually the best thing that ever happened to me". "I believe my life was saved that day, so I could help the millions of people in the world who are struggling." Can you elaborate on that?

Dr. A. Yes! As a surgeon, I was only able to help two or three people at a time in my office or in the operating room. I may have a positive impact on some individuals but not on a community. After the recovery of my injury and after I went through the process of rebuilding my life, I realised that becoming an author and a speaker was a gift. I believe that God gave me these opportunities. Now, I have thousands of people who listen to me as a motivational speaker and who read my book. It seems that I am touching more lives now than I did as a surgeon. Besides, I am not leaving any scars on the patients' bodies which will remind them of the procedure. I am leaving words of wisdom that they can use to apply in their lives in a way that will benefit them. My accident was like a curse which became a blessing because I found a way to rebuild my life. It gave me a second chance.

P.T. You are a very independent man and your identity changed suddenly after the accident. How did you cope with all this and how was it for you after the injuries to go back as an adult to your parents' house, who were aging?

Dr. A. [Silence] That was the hardest part. I had been living with my parents for almost three years. I was incapable to perform the most basic of tasks. In addition, I was deeply affected by the fact that I could not maintain my medical practice. With the loss of my career, my identity shattered. Being an independent, highly functioning adult before, and all of the sudden, to be in a position where my parents had to care for me was very difficult. I went from being a specialized physician to become a patient. It was heartbreaking.

Again, because of my brain injury I could not do a simple activity such as reading a book or count change. In addition, people including my parents had to drive me around. It was very challenging and this ordeal had an impact on my self-esteem. The emotional trauma was far more difficult than the physical trauma. I was confident that I would heal from the physical trauma. I had no idea how long it would take me to heal from the psychological scars. This happens to many people. The emotional wounds can last for decades in some cases, and even a lifetime. That was one of the reasons why it was important for me to write the book. I thought it was crucial for people to be aware of these issues. I wanted to show that emotional trauma is not necessarily depression. I was grieving, which is a normal process because I had the loss of my identity. It is like the loss of a loved one. Usually, it takes a year to overcome this; after that period, it can become depression if the person is still mourning. For me, grieving was a continuous process, and what helped me was to find a new meaning in my life.

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P.T. I also guess that, during this process, you discovered and assessed who really cared about you, who your true friends were (being drawn to you just because you were a physician and who appreciated you as a human being), and so on.

Dr. A. Absolutely! When you reach the rock bottom, you really learn who your friends are. Some people among my old friends stayed in my life and I got new friends. I love them so much. I feel blessed to have them. I had to reframe my fears, my tigers, into something constructive and positive. Without comparing my situation to that of others, we all have to deal with our hurdles and find ways to adapt. For my part, it was important to become hopeful by taking my blinders off and believe that opportunities can appear. It was helpful for me to remain grateful with what I had. It was cathartic for me to write on a daily basis all the things I should be grateful for in life. This process shifted the perspective and the views I had about my injury.

P.T. Did you also create a vision board?□

Dr. A. Definitely! Everything on my vision came true. I believe this method is extremely powerful and I highly suggest people to use it by picking inspiring colorful pictures where you see yourself at least a year from now. This represents a GPS of your life direction.

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