



Flexible Bodies

Emily Martin

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Emily Martin traces Americans' changing ideas about health and immunity since the 1940s. She explores the implications of our emphasis on 'flexibility' in contexts from medicine to the corporate world, warning that we may be approaching a new form of social Darwinism.

Flexible Bodies Details

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Filipa says

Very interesting take on current notions on immunity and health, which are decisive for broader fields (such as employment) and determine our approach to our own health and life at large.

Nicole says

Emily Martin reviews the concept of immunity in a cultural construct. That part was interesting. She postulated we are embarking on a period of social Darwinism? in which society elevates the belief that some immune systems are better than others. Contemporary Western society does seem to have a fixation on how the elite who can afford super foods, alternative care (coffee enemas come to mind) and the like can have such a good immune system they are invincible. Of course infectious diseases don't care that you drink kale smoothies. The big disappointment and confusion I have with this book is her short half chapter on vaccines. The bulk was statements from anti-vaxxers, with little discussion on their value. I found this curious as her brother died from Polio. All in all, interesting book that could benefit from a re-write for what is now occurring, particularly with regards to HIV knowledge. The science and medical community have given us an incredible upgrade in understanding since 1994 and this undoubtedly? influences societal view on immunity.

Miquixote says

Read this in my Sociology of Medicine class. In a nutshell, (metaphorically) even elastic breaks if you stretch it too much.
