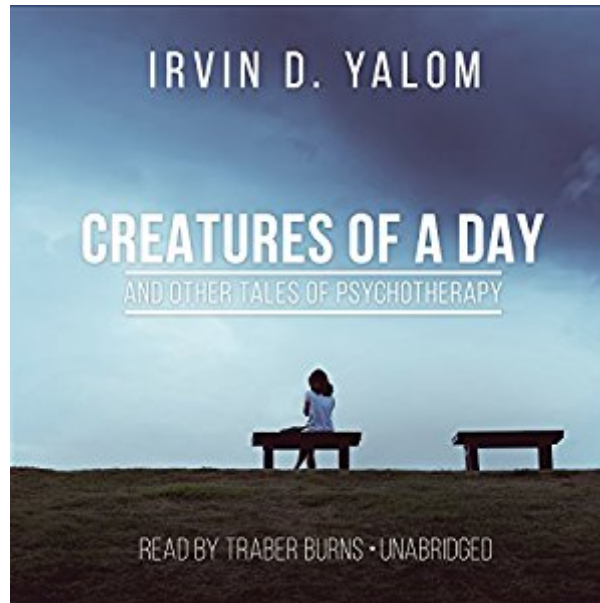


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# Creatures Of A Day, And Other Tales Of Psychotherapy



## Synopsis

In his long career, eminent psychotherapist and author Irvin Yalom has pressed his patients and readers to grapple with life's two greatest challenges: that we all must die, and that each of us is responsible for leading a life worth living. In *Creatures of a Day*, he and his patients confront the difficulty of these challenges. Although these people have come to Yalom seeking relief, recognition, or meaning, they discover that such things are rarely found in the places where we think to look. Like *Love's Executioner* and Yalom's other writings, *Creatures of a Day* lays bare the necessary task we each face every day: to make our own lives meaningful.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a trained psychotherapist that has taught graduate school and mentored hundreds of other therapists- I can't recommend this book highly enough. I was struck by how clearly he is able to convey the spirit and feeling of being in the therapy room, and how much each story teaches about the complexities of clinical interaction. While many therapists today are trained to create clinical distance, here is a mentor and expert in the field sharing stories where clinical connection is used effectively, powerfully, and ethically. If you are therapist, educator, supervisor, or a partner of a therapist- I highly recommend delving into this book. I've even started a book club for mental health professionals to dig in and explore the themes and lessons in this book together.

Though I knew of Irvin Yalom's books, I somehow missed reading any of them before, during or after my licensure as a mental health professional. "Creatures of a Day" is my first Yalom book, but

with certainty, I can say that it won't be my last. For if his previous books are half as good as this one... they'll all be worth reading. *Creatures of a Day* contains ten "portraits" of clients and Yalom's work with them. Portraits is the right word since the descriptions are so vivid and compelling that one might actually feel they're in the room watching Yalom and the clients do the dance of therapy. The topics of death and meaning in life connect the stories as one might expect from a humanist/existentialist therapist. More than one of the stories were sadly sweet and brought tears to my eyes as I read... yet I could not put down the book and read it within just a few sessions. As a therapist, who also eschews diagnosis and manualized treatments, seeing a master therapist at work was invaluable. And surprisingly, Yalom doesn't gloss over the "mistakes" he makes or focus only on his expertise. This book more than anything shows the power of moments that matter, the healing connection that can happen when one person fully meets another where they're at. All therapists should read this book, but it shouldn't be limited to professionals. Everyone will relate to these stories and the people they depict so humanly well... Don't miss out on Yalom's work, especially "*Creatures of a Day*."

Another gem! I've been a huge fan of Dr. Yalom's work since my undergraduate days. Once again, he shows us with grace and acceptance, a most honorable profession based in dialogue and trust. It's been a joy to read his books through the years, with stories that bring existential themes to the forefront with intelligence and wisdom. His chapters (rooted in real client stories and changed to protect confidentiality) in "*Creatures of a Day*" show once again that reality can often be stranger than fiction. With limitations of aging, he finds ways to get to the heart of client's issues quickly, sometimes with help from his clients who have read his books, which reveal his essence as a clinician. I find his focus on the human needs at hand and his pure desire to help uncover each story, refreshing and hopeful. It's the connection in the relationship that truly matters. Thank you, "Irv", for your remarkable example as a mentor and a human being. Sure hope you'll have many more stories to tell. Inspirational!

Dr. Yalom reminds me of a great vintage port. The older the fine wine gets, the richer and tastier it becomes. And so it is with Dr. Yalom's books. I have read most of them and have enjoyed few as much as his most recent, *Creatures of a Day*. It is indeed ready for drinking, and reading. And like a rich port, the taste will linger on and on and on. *Creatures of the Day*, like the author's *Love's Executioner*, consists of stories about cases Dr. Yalom has handled (of course disguising the patient's true identity in the

stories). Like the earlier book, the stories are uniformly riveting and engrossing. Dr. Yalom's considerable talent as a therapist manifests itself in numerous different settings. Although the stories may differ in subject matter, Dr. Yalom's skills as a practitioner are ubiquitous. So is his gift as a story teller. In this book, unlike *Love's Executioner*, the mature Dr. Yalom tends to share his own personal insights about the course of the analysis more openly with the patient. This clearly has a veritable impact in the healing process as described in the stories. I wonder if this openness is shared by therapists operating under more orthodox approaches to psychotherapy. In this new opus, we also seem to find another dimension in Yalom's therapy; namely, Yalom's inclination to examine the existential side of the patient's illness. The subject has long fascinated the author. The young Dr. Yalom faced it continually in his treatment of terminal cancer patients. It is also a subject Dr. Yalom has written on extensively. We, of course, see it up front in *Existential Psychotherapy* and *Staring at the Sun*. But in this new book, it comes into play at all stages of the treatment of his patients, in virtually all of the stories told. You can anticipate the important role of the existential theme in the book's introductory quote from Marcus Aurelius: "The Meditations" where the Roman philosopher urges the reader to "always reflect that soon you will be no one, and nowhere." This theme is brought dramatically to fore in the last chapter appropriately called "Creatures of the Day" where the patient becomes a student of Marcus. I, of course, understand that Marcus Aurelius and the other enduring existential thinkers, such as Dr. Yalom, will in a physical sense one day be "no one and nowhere" (if these thinkers are not already there). However, for many of these great thinkers there will be a life after death. Their ideas will live on, and on. Dr. Yalom's new book, *Creatures of the Day*, appears to have been written principally to teach future therapists how to come to grips with the fear of death in all of their patients, and in the therapists themselves. I believe that this book will join Dr. Yalom's other books in being very much here when Dr. Yalom is, in the words of Marcus Aurelius, "nowhere".

Dr. Yalom is one of the most gifted writers to grace the earth. This book, along with all his others, absolutely floored me. Each time I read his work I wonder how it is possible to be SO honest, SO brilliant, so funny, charming, such an inspiration. Twice I had to put the book down and cry because of its unfathomable greatness. I have never reviewed a book in my life but for Irv, it's my pleasure. Don't miss this beautiful gem of humanity. Love, Jenny

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