Advance Praise for *A Nation of Unwell*

"If you want to understand and know why people get sick and the road to healing and recovery this is the book to read. Dr Kristine Gedroic has done a great service to all of us by clearly defining the common origins of modern chronic illnesses and their cures. This book contains the most comprehensive summary of the connection between genes, epigenetic activity, microbiome, neuroplasticity, metabolic activity, inflammation, and more. I recommend it to all who are interested in preventing illness but also finding common solutions to their reversal and return to total wellbeing. I will use it myself as a guide and suggest it as a must read for patients, health care providers, medical students, and anyone who wants to understand the scientific basis of the emerging paradigm for health at all levels of experience: physical emotional, societal, and spiritual."

— **Deepak Chopra, MD, FACP,** co-founder of the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, founder of the Chopra Foundation, world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation, and author of numerous books including You Are the Universe and Quantum Healing

"A groundbreaking book, *A Nation of Unwell* offers a new roadmap for healing. Dr. Gedroic explains why the body succumbs to disease and exactly what needs to be done to restore balance and health. I recommend it as a must-read for anyone who wants to live a life of wellness."

— **Andrew Weil, MD**, founder and director of the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, founder and chairman of The Weil Foundation, world-renowned leader and pioneer in the field of integrative medicine, and author of numerous books including Mind Over Meds and Fast Food, Good Food

"Dr. Gedroic offers thoughtful explanations and game plans for chronically unwell people who should be thriving in life rather than desperately coping with symptoms."

— **Mehmet Oz, MD**, attending physician, New York Presbyterian/Columbia University, host of The Dr. Oz Show, and co-author of numerous books including Food Can Fix It

"As Americans continue to suffer from chronic illness, inflammation, and stress at alarmingly increasing rates, this book provides an inspiring tool for patients to reclaim their health and begin to understand the potential underlying causes of their conditions, so that they can start on the road to feeling well."

— **Ray Chambers,** World Health Organization Ambassador for Global Strategy

"Dr. Gedroic has written the go-to book for patients and their families who are suffering from chronic illness and don't know what to do. It provides a clear understanding of not only why they are sick but also provides a roadmap of what they can do to get better. A Nation of Unwell provides a comprehensive overview of our dysfunctional medical system and all of the areas that need to be addressed to allow the body to heal. This book is a must-read for those who are ready to embrace their journey towards healing, and for those who wish to be proactive in not allowing their bodies to become ill."

— Neil Nathan, MD, author of Toxic, Heal Your Body

"All humans have one thing in common ... we want to FEEL good. Dr. Gedroic has written a must-read debut book for anyone looking to achieve optimal wellness. Her clear and detailed explanations of why we have become a nation of unwell offers readers a fresh perspective on how they can take steps to reclaim their health and discover the root causes of their ailments."

— **Jesse Itzler**, entrepreneur, New York Times bestselling author of Living with a SEAL and an owner of the Atlanta Hawks

"I came to Dr. Gedroic as a patient after being told by experts at several leading research hospitals that there were no treatment options available to me until the symptoms of my diagnosis became more severe. Dr. Gedroic not only identified the root causes of my condition, but she offered a course of treatment to address these underlying issues that gave me hope and, more

importantly, a pathway to complete recovery and health. This book belongs in the hands of every person truly seeking to become advocates for their own health and wellness. Reading it will inspire, educate and empower us all."

— **Rachel Gerrol**, Co-Founder & CEO, NEXUS

"I've watched Dr. Gedroic work her magic with some of my closest friends. She has a unique approach to healing and staying healthy. If you're interested in your health, her book is a must read!"

— **Danny Wegman**, Chairman, Wegman's Food Markets

"I love every word of *A Nation Unwell*. Dr. Gedroic cogently explains why taking care of our insides like we do our outsides is the path to alleviating the suffering brought on by chronic disease. Understanding how the gut microbiome, liver, and gallbladder work to nourish and detoxify us is something we all should have been taught but most weren't. Following her clear, step-by-step nutrition and self-care plan is a prescription for feeling vibrantly well in body, energy, and mood while preventing and reversing chronic conditions—without relying on the long-term use of prescription medications. We can do this ourselves, and Dr. Gedroic shows us why and how to do it."

— Nancy Weiser, MBA, Certified Health Coach, Founder Weiser Choices

CONTENTS

A Letter from Lauren	xiii
Introduction	xv
Part I: A Nation of Unwell or Diagnosis Failure?	1
CHAPTER ONE	
Chronic Sickness on the Rise, Despite Medical Advances	3
How We Diagnose = Diagnosis Failure	6
Symptoms: How Our Body Communicates	9
Ryan's Story	15
Michael's Story	16
My Own Story	18
Empowered to Stay Healthy	22
CHAPTER TWO	
The Evolution of Medicine: How We Got Where We Are Today	25
Genetically Wired to Be Healthy	26
Plant-Based Medicine = Early Pharmaceuticals	27
The Modern Causes of Illness	30
The Body as Our Guide	35
Part II: What Does It Mean to Be Healthy?	37
CHAPTER THREE	
How Do We Stay Healthy? Optimizing Our Inner Ecosystem	39
Our Health = A Seesaw	41
The Body = A Flow System	43
The Gut = The Body's River	45

A NATION OF UNWELL

The Microbiome = The Gut's Riverbed	45
The Liver & Gallbladder = Our Filter & Pump	62
The Immune System = Our Riverbank Guards	72
The Lymphatic System = Our Border Defense	75
The Vagus Nerve = Our Telephone System	77
Thoughts & Feelings = Our Energy Field	81
Part III: What Does It Mean to Be Sick?	85
CHAPTER FOUR	
How Disease Takes Hold: When the Seesaw Starts to Tip	87
A Healthy Cell Fifty Years Ago	87
An Unhealthy Cell Today	88
Taking Out the Trash: How We Stay Well	89
Lack of Balancers: A Precursor for Disease	90
Too Many Stressors: Tipping Our Seesaw	95
The Growing Toxic Burden on the Body	116
Same Stressor = Different Symptoms	119
Chronic Inflammation on the Rise	121
Part IV: A Nation of Well	125
CHAPTER FIVE	
Balancing the Seesaw: What Keeps Us Well	127
1. Eat Farm to Table	129
2. Drink Clean Water	132
3. Get the Right Nutrients	133
4. Eat Fermented Foods	140
5. Keep the Liver Healthy	141
6. Respect Your Immune System	142
7. Get Some Fresh Air	144

8. Detox Every Single Day	144
9. Take a Food-Based Multivitamin	147
10. Get Plenty of B Vitamins	148
11. Believe in the Power of Your Body	149
EPILOGUE	
New Medicine, Better Results:	
Balanced Seesaws = A Nation of Well	151
Appendix: Your Two-Week Health-Boosting Plan	155
Acknowledgments	169
Resources	173
Index	191

A Letter from Lauren

Dr. Gedroic,

During the first drive to your office, I tried desperately to put the recurring negative thoughts out of my mind that you would be like every other medical professional I'd seen, glazing over my symptoms and quickly prescribing a strong medication without hesitation. Part of me knew that somehow this wouldn't be the case, but I couldn't completely deny the deep fear inside me.

As a little girl, I aspired to be a physician, as they were the true superheroes to me, coming in and "saving the day" by figuring out the mysterious cause of someone's migraine or the obscure rash sprawling across one's leg. That is, until I became sick. It is then that I realized that so many physicians would rather push medications than spend time to find the root cause of an issue like mine.

I still remember the first words you ever said to me: "Wow, you have quite the story." This was the first time a doctor recognized what I had gone through, acknowledged it, and validated it. It was then that I knew I was in good hands. After I left that first appointment, I cried with relief because, for the first time in two years, I knew I would survive.

I clearly remember the day I started to turn the corner. Walking past a box of my school papers, I noticed a sticker I bought when I toured Stanford University. I thought that if I could come out of this process whole and stronger than I had been going into it, I surely could attend Stanford. It was the first time in almost six months I thought again about college and the future.

I now have only my final exams left before I am officially done with high school. Less than four months ago, given the state of my health, I questioned whether or not I'd finish in time to prepare for AP exams and graduate. And yet, here I am cured, free from a lifetime of medications—and feeling, finally, like my old self.

Words cannot convey the gratitude I have for all that you have done for me. You are a true doctor and what all doctors should strive to be. Not only have you restored my health, but you have also helped restore my faith in myself by helping me to understand that I can and will do whatever I set my mind to. I had lost my way and couldn't see beyond my illness and the darkness that consumed me, but you became my white light.

Thank you for finding the root cause of my sickness and for not just prescribing more pills. Thank you for listening to me. Thank you for being my superhero.

Thank you for everything.

Lauren K.