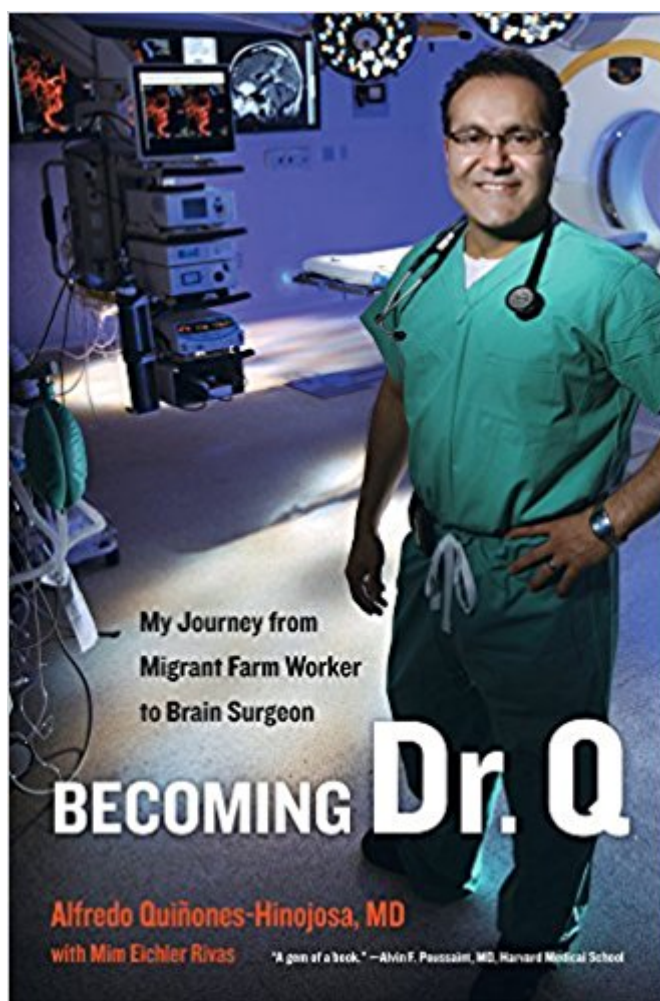


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# Becoming Dr. Q: My Journey From Migrant Farm Worker To Brain Surgeon



## Synopsis

Today he is known as Dr. Q, an internationally renowned neurosurgeon and neuroscientist who leads cutting-edge research to cure brain cancer. But not too long ago, he was Freddy, a nineteen-year-old undocumented migrant worker toiling in the tomato fields of central California. In this gripping memoir, Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa tells his amazing life story—from his impoverished childhood in the tiny village of Palaco, Mexico, to his harrowing border crossing and his transformation from illegal immigrant to American citizen and gifted student at the University of California at Berkeley and at Harvard Medical School. Packed with adventure and adversity—including a few terrifying brushes with death—Becoming Dr. Q is a testament to persistence, hard work, the power of hope and imagination, and the pursuit of excellence. It's also a story about the importance of family, of mentors, and of giving people a chance.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A passionate hymn to the power of the American Dream.” (Kirkus Reviews 2011-09-01)  
“The real-life story of Dr. Alfredo Quiñones-Hinojosa is so amazing and seemingly unbelievable that your first reaction is to think it's a Hollywood movie script. . . . But it's true.” (Luis Torres Sgvtribune 2012-06-21)

“This is a spell-binding story of a champion who harnessed the power of passion and dogged determination to triumph over adversity. Be prepared to laugh, cry and to come away enlightened

not just about the human brain and its miraculous capacities but also about the human heart.~;Venus Williams, author of Come to Win"Ever since I first heard Dr. Q's story, my main question was: how does a migrant farm worker with no money and no English overcome the odds and pursue his aspirations at the highest levels of the medical field? Wow~;not only is it the stuff of which fairy tales and Hollywood movies are made, but it's also much needed prescription for the soul.~;Chris Gardner, author of The Pursuit of Happyness~;When I first met Dr. Q, I thought he had an angel watching out for him~;defying death more than once and overcoming the odds of class and racial discrimination. After reading his truly inspirational memoir, I can say that Dr. Q doesn't have an angel. He is simply one of us~;a human being who chooses to believe in the capacity of people. And now, every time I see an ~;invisible~; undocumented immigrant, I see a potential brain surgeon. This is a book about humility, being a dreamer and the power of esperanza~;hope.~;Maria Hinojosa, award-winning NPR/PBS anchor and author of Raising Raul and Crews" Becoming Dr. Q is a book that should be read by all highschoolers and college students--it's about how to overcome hardship, about how to believe in our heart's hope, about not allowing your dreams to be co-opted by mediocrity. This should be a handbook for never giving up on your dreams, and if followed, the world would become a greater place for peace, respect and love. Read it~;laugh, cry, share in Dr. Q's magnificent journey!" ~;Jimmy Santiago Baca, author of A Glass of Water~;Becoming Dr. Q is a gem of a book~;an amazing journey of a young man who entered the United States at age 19 as a non-documented migrant farm worker. Through brilliance and hard work, he gained entry to the top-rated Harvard Medical School. Now at Johns Hopkins, he is recognized as a world-renowned neurosurgeon. It was a pleasure to know Alfredo when he was a trailblazing student at Harvard. Everyone who reads this book will be enriched by his inspiring story.~;Alvin F. Poussaint, MD, Harvard Medical School~;The life of Dr. Q is a testament to the power of poverty to motivate social ascent, of intellectual prowess to scale academia's heights, and to the power of altruism to give back through the most highly developed medical treatment and creation of new knowledge, through mentoring the next generation, and through his own unique family.~;Joe L. Martinez, Jr., Professor Emeritus, UC Berkeley~;Quite simply, Dr. Q is a hero to many people in the Hispanic community. He went from the farm fields in California to the most advanced operating rooms in the country. He earned \$3.35 an hour cultivating tomatoes and chili peppers in the San Joaquin Valley. What makes his journey unique is that the same hands that picked vegetables are now touch the brains of his patients and saving lives. He did, in just one

life, what usually takes two or three generations. I can't think of a better example of what an immigrant with ambition and dedication can do in this great country of opportunities. He is, no doubt, a real hero.

—Jorge Ramos, Senior News Anchor, Univision News; This is the most amazing success story you'll ever read. Be it fiction or non-fiction, there is not another book out there that competes with the rags to riches tale of Dr. Q. If you are an illegal, Mexican, migrant farmer, it's hard enough to make it from paycheck to paycheck in America, let alone from paycheck to crew supervisor to community college to medical school to brain surgeon. Really, the only thing more amazing than how far he has come, is how far he is likely to go. Who better to find a cure for cancer than a man who knows no obstacles? If I were an immigrant to this country looking to find my way, or a young person looking for motivation, or anyone looking for inspiration, this book would become my bible.

—Steve Hartman, CBS News correspondent; I used to think that Superman was an American who went by the name Clark Kent. Now I know that he is a Mexican-American who goes by the name Dr. Q. Read it to believe it.

—Katrina Firlik, MD, author *Another Day in the Frontal Lobe: A Brain Surgeon Exposes Life on the Inside*; Even as a little kid, Dr. Q dreamed really big dreams, and no matter what the obstacles, he never gave up. I know firsthand that if you don't dream it, you can't become it. Now as a man, not only has he become it, but even more importantly, he is helping others to realize their dreams. Young people around the world will identify with and be motivated by Dr. Q's story. This book is a slam dunk! Rock on, Dr. Q! Rock on!

—Jason McElwain, author of *The Game of My Life*; This is a poignant and timely story that needs to be told. Dr. Q is a heroic and resilient man, whose odyssey should make it more difficult for pundits and others to demonize immigrants from Mexico and Central America. He goes far beyond his obvious technical abilities as a surgeon and demonstrates what an exemplary human being he is; modest, intelligent, and compassionate.

—Paul R. Linde, MD, author of *Danger to Self: On the Front Line with an ER Psychiatrist*

How wonderful it was to read such an awe inspiring life story written by such an amazing person. Dr. Q reminds me of the meek lamb who turned into the ferocious lion, while at the same time being as cuddly as a kitten because of the way he treats everyone around him. I have come to know him in a way that I never knew was possible. And that was just from reading the first 2 chapters! I now understand why he treats all of his patients in the manner that he does and why he has such empathy for everyone. I came to know Dr. Alfredo-Quinones-Hinojosa a/k/a/ Dr. Q on February 3, 2009 after finding out that I had a brain tumor late December of 2008. When Dr. Q walked into the

room there was a bright light emanating from him that assured both me and my husband that we had found the right Doctor for us to have managed my care. He not only reassured me that he would do his best to help me, but he also assured my husband that he would help us both by doing the best he could. Just like his fierce determination to come to the United States to find a better life for not only himself, but for his whole family, Dr. Q has made his life's goal to find a cure for the abominable disease known as Brain Cancer just as vehement. It has been both an honor and a pleasure to be associated with a doctor whose fervent goal is not only the eradication of brain cancer, but the high demand he makes of himself not only to be a good doctor, but a magnificent person in general. Dr. Q takes this journey of his life above and beyond the likes of anyone else you will ever know. Read his story to find out why we patients love him so much! I am now, more than ever more adamant about my ability to do what I can to help him in his cause.

I met Dr. Q in June 2010. I had a Chiari Malformation w/syrinx (which is a tumor inside my spinal canal) Dr. Q is the most gentle soul and the best Dr. I have ever come across. He cares about his patients and takes the time to listen to you. When he operated on me June 10th 2010 he became my hero and still is. I have the pleasure of seeing him every 6 months for my usual 3 hr MRI's and then for the read it's always a hug and how are you doing. It has been a long journey with Dr. Q and my brain and spine issues. But we will have the pleasure of meeting again in the OR. Unfortunately my Chiari has returned along with the tumor in the spine. But the one thing that doesn't scare me is that I have Dr. Q by my side in that operating room and my life for a lot of years to come. Get this book. It is a great read that is very inspirational. Dr. Q is a great man, husband, father and Surgeon. I trust him with my life.

Without a shed of doubt, this book is one of the most inspirational stories I have read. The book offers a glimpse into the real character and backbone of Dr. Q. It captures the moments and circumstances that have defined and molded him into an ambitious, selfless, intelligent, hard working, determined, and humble individual. The most astonishing part of his story is that it is all non-fictional. I witness it everyday! As a student, I am blessed to be a part of his team - whose mission is guided by the hopes and dreams of our patients to understand and fight brain cancer. His story will certainly serve both the young and the old with the simple wisdom that it is possible, it is attainable, and that it is only a dream waiting to be metamorphosed to reality with dedication, enthusiasm, motivation, persistence, and courage.

Dr. Quinones memoir is an excellent read. I know Dr. Quinones as a wonderful brain surgeon as I am a "wait and see" patient. In reading his memoir, I now understand why I respect and like this man so much. He is what he writes. And his challenge of balancing work, private life, and family is real but as a patient I never feel as though he isn't spending time with me. He is as compassionate and passionate about his work as he writes. His love of his family is apparent as he has said to me many times, I treat my patients as though they are my family and I wouldn't do anything unnecessary to my family. And his job is to operate on brains. I am so lucky to have Dr. Q as a doctor. I would highly recommend this book. For those of you who might have had negative experiences with doctors, this book will lift your spirits. Dr. Q is the kind of doctor everyone should have. The book is well written, reads very fast (I read the book in a day and a half) and is truly a remarkable story. The American dream has been achieved by Dr. Q though his passion lies in finding a cure for brain cancer. I am convinced that he will win a Nobel Prize someday for finding a cure for brain cancer. He will not rest until a cure is found.

You see...if Alfredo had not 'Jumped Twice' there would be no Dr. Q. as we know of. I just finished reading this much anticipated autobiography. On the surface 'BECOMING DR. Q.' is a Very Interesting Book about how an energetic, strong-willed young fellow from Mexico became the admired, energetic, and respected Dr. Q. at Johns Hopkins. The truth is... he followed his calling. Alfredo did what all of us should do...listen. Not the divide between two great countries could stop him. He listened to God's calling and he acted upon his words!!! I know this for a fact...and I'll briefly explain. My wife and I first met Dr. Q. in 2008 when the door opened to our examination room at Johns Hopkins. We were both scared to death as I needed a brain tumor removed ASAP. I had a terrible headache, my vision was blurred, and we had just driven 250 miles for the appointment. Oh, and Quinones...how did the nurse pronounce his name??? I felt embarrassed too. I forgot his name right before the door opened. He shook our hands. "Mr. Kressley, and you must be the beautiful Mrs. Kressley" he said. "I am Alfredo Quinones-Hinojosa but you can call me Dr. Q." At that moment words can not even explain the peace he brought to us. At that moment I knew he was the surgeon for me. God told me. We all hugged each other after our meeting and do so to this day. I always wondered how he became a doctor in the United States. Now I know. I read the book slowly because I didn't want it to end. I recommend it to everyone. It is such a Wonderful Feel-Good Story!

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