

# When Life Comes to a Standstill: The Surgeon Who Touches the Hearts of His Patients Dr. Ehsan Natour

## About the Book

Internationally renowned heart surgeon, Dr Ehsan Natour is hitting the U.S. and English speaking markets with his heart-felt book about patient recovery, growth and life after surgery. When Life Comes to a Standstill: The Surgeon Who Touches the Hearts of His Patients, first published in German (February 2022) and Dutch, is captivating readers who have been through the healthcare system. Whether having been a patient or a loved one, Dr Ehsan Natour's book encompasses every stage of the patient process, from diagnosis to recovery. Creating a virtual tour to spread awareness on what a typical healthcare process looks like and to support changes to the system, to better the lives of all patients.

Building a better doctor-patient relationship is Dr Ehsan Natour's goal with this book. He hopes to change what it means to be a healthcare professional and to shed light on what it means to be given the reins to someone's life, how it is not only their occupation, but their responsibility to assist those in need. Natour hopes for healthcare professionals to establish strong bonds with their patients, and to value their emotions and feelings with more extent. Natour also explains his key concept on how he believes that anything that has been through a crisis, will never be the same as it was before. Rather, it will be a better version of itself for it allows itself to heal. He says, It is important not to expect that after a crisis everything will be as it was before. If we understand this, we will fare so much better as individuals and as a society."

**Dr Ehsan Natour** is an internationally recognized heart surgeon who grew up in Israel. After completing his medical studies in 2007, he went off to work in Maastricht and Aachen, where he is currently working today. He is the co-founder of the Dutch foundation Stilgezet, which supports patients and their relatives through numerous activities and art projects – with the aim of initiating sustainable change in our “sick health system”. [stilgezet.nl](http://stilgezet.nl)

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# Dr Ehsan Natour Announces the Release of his book "When Life Comes to a Standstill: The Surgeon Who Touches the Hearts of His Patients" English Edition

*New York - Available on June 28, 2022 wherever books are sold. Translated from the original German by Gert Reifarh, based on the book published by Scorpio Verlag München.*

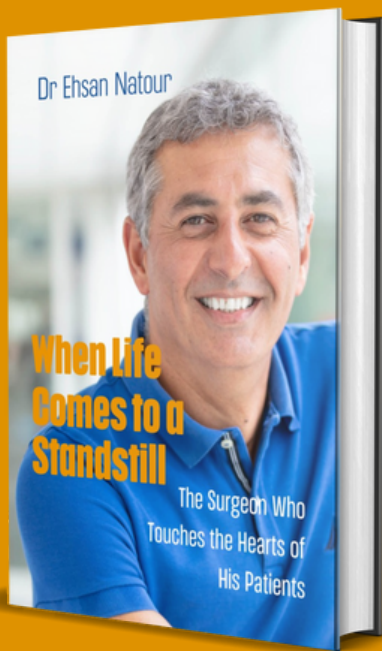
Internationally renowned heart surgeon, Dr Ehsan Natour is hitting the U.S. markets with his heart-felt book about patient recovery, growth and life after surgery. *When Life Comes to a Standstill: The Surgeon Who Touches the Hearts of His Patients*, first published in German (March 2022) and Dutch, is captivating readers who have been through the healthcare system. Dr Ehsan Natour's book encompasses every stage of the patient process, from diagnosis to recovery. A virtual tour is created to spread awareness of a typical healthcare process and to support systematic changes, to better the lives of all patients.

Through this book, Dr Ehsan Natour strives to portray the importance of building a strong doctor-patient relationship. He aims to redefine what it means to be a healthcare professional as well as shed light on how being given the reins to someone's life is not only their occupation, but their responsibility. Natour encourages healthcare professionals to establish strong bonds with their patients and value their emotions and feelings with more extent. Natour discusses his key concept on how anything that has been through a crisis, will never be the same as it was before. Rather, he believes it will be a better version of itself, for it allows itself to heal. Natour states, "It is important not to expect that after a crisis everything will be as it was before. If we understand this, we will fare so much better as individuals and as a society."

Dr Ehsan Natour is an internationally recognized heart surgeon who grew up in Israel. After completing his residency training as heart surgeon in 2000, he went off to work in Cologne, Germany. Since 2008 he has been working in Maastricht, the Netherlands, and Aachen, Germany. He is the founder of the Dutch foundation Stilgezet, which supports patients and their relatives through numerous activities and art projects – with the aim of initiating sustainable change in our "sick health system". [stilgezet.nl](http://stilgezet.nl)

*When Life Comes to a Standstill: The Surgeon Who Touches the Hearts of His Patients*, English manuscript published by © 2022 Dr Ehsan Natour. Paperback, ISBN: 979-8-9862751-1-6 eBook.

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## Dr Ehsan Natour's Interview

(Translated from the German by Gert Reifarth. First published in the publishing program of Scorpio Verlag München, Spring 2022, p. 8 and 9)

### Dr. Natour, what was your motivation for this book?

For many years I have investigated how people deal with diagnoses, looking at which behaviour is beneficial and which is harmful. For example, as of last year, we at the clinic in Maastricht have been examining how anxiety impacts on the healing process. We classify the patients into different categories and offer them tailor-made therapy – personalized medicine. Anxious patients require a different therapy than those who are emotionally stable. The more patients prepare for their operation and particularly for the time afterwards, the more they will be able to regain their quality of life.

### How did you arrive at this insight?

At the Christmas market in Oldenburg! A patient had died after a successful operation in intensive care. His death touched me. I thought about the professional distance which I should maintain. Then I met a colleague, an experienced nurse, to whom I described my feelings. He said this to me: “You don’t have to be sad, something like that is not in your hands. It is in the hands of God. He sent this patient to you.”

From this moment, I never again toyed with the idea of locking my own heart in order to save lives with a cool head. I understood that I could do that with a feeling heart, too. I sought an active connection, similar to the heart-lung machine during an operation. Today my connection with a patient begins long before an operation, and does not end with it. On the contrary, I am passionately interested in the situation after the intervention, when I have already done “my job”. Doing this I notice again and again that the stages which the patients go through are not restricted to heart operations but can be transferred to any illness, any crisis.

It is important not to expect that after a crisis everything will be as it was before. If we understand this, we will fare so much better as individuals and as a society.

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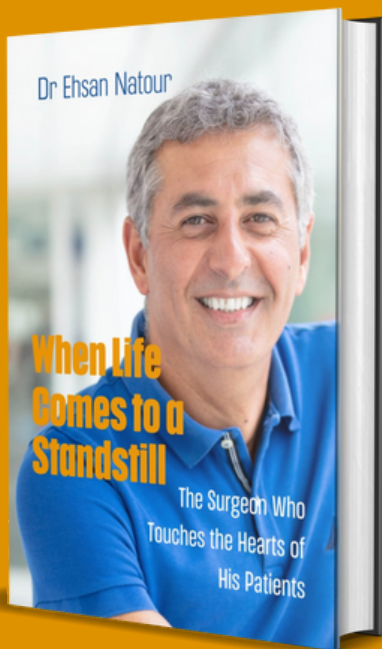
# Dr Ehsan Natour's Interview

## What do you mean by this?

Well, since COVID-19 we are generally in a kind of crisis mode. We hope that everything will return to normal as quickly as possible. Only by and by the fact seeps into our awareness that there is no normal which we have a right to – even that this insistence on a normal hurts our lives enormously. If a society as a whole is primarily interested in smooth proceedings and in everyone functioning again as quickly as possible, we have no blueprint for how matters could be different. And yet there is a better and much healthier way: to adapt courageously and flexibly to the challenges of the new situation. If we are successful, things will be easier for everyone.

## What do you want to achieve with your foundation?

We intend to convey to a broad international public everything we just discussed, as well as many more aspects described in my book. That is why in 2019 I initiated the foundation Stilgezet in the Netherlands. The Dutch word stilgezet describes a temporary standstill of life. We intend to support people around the globe in crisis situations. The book is one of our tools, and others will follow. For example, art enables us to describe many things for which science lacks the means of expression. The arts can express the unsayable, find images for it and transpose them into music, for example. Love and death, fear, rage, sadness, helplessness – none of this can be operated away by a heart surgeon. But – and this is really important for me – a surgeon can have an understanding of the emotional situation of patients and their relatives during or after an intensive and often life-saving medical treatment. Some medical professionals are not even aware that good contact with their patients is one of the supporting pillars of their profession. That is despite our knowledge from psychoneuroimmunology (which examines the interdependence between body and soul) as to how important trust is for the stimulation of our self-healing powers.



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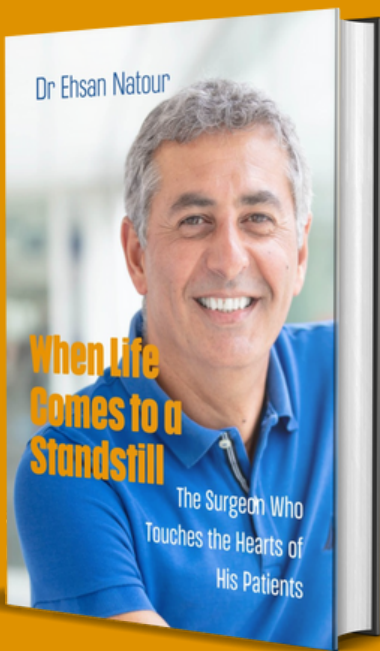
## Dr Ehsan Natour's Interview

### What can we learn from a heart operation for dealing with crises?

In an emergency situation, we are beside ourselves. If, however, we had created a “crisis checklist”, we would not be “out of it” for too long and could reconnect with ourselves and our resources. An operation is unthinkable today without a checklist. I am convinced that checklists serve us very well during crisis situations – but one has to compile them in advance. Dealing with crises can be practiced by not getting too cozy in one’s comfort zone but instead reminding oneself every now and then that there is no right to one’s normal and that crises are part of life. They rarely ever occur out of the blue, which means that most of them have a prehistory. To notice this history as early as possible is part of crisis management. Thus one dot point on your checklist could be to ask regularly: How am I? What is good for me? What is not going so well at the moment? And what can I do today to confront unforeseen events which could unsettle my life? How can I forearm myself, how can I prepare for tomorrow today and protect myself – so that we live more healthily and happily, both individually and together.

### And finally, what is your book’s intended audience?

My book is a step-by-step guide. It takes the reader through what happens if you become a patient needing heart surgery – from the diagnosis to the operation to rehab. In this way, it is intended as a companion for these patients, and also for their relatives and friends who will be their support team during the illness and recovery.



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