

WEEK 1 MEDICINE & THE ARTS - THE HEART OF THE MATTER: A MATTER OF
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Welcome to this first week of Medicine and the Arts, in which we go straight to the heart of the matter, and that is the matter of being alive, the matter of being human. We're going to use the extraordinary medical intervention of the heart transplant as a means of understanding a central theme of this course, and that is interdisciplinarity. As I mentioned in the introduction, I'm a family physician, but I'm also a musician. And that has helped me to understand health and health care in a much more complex and nuanced way.

Now, as you may or may not know, the world's first heart transplant was done here in Cape Town in 1967, which was an extraordinary feat for Africa. And we want to present this idea or this concept of the heart transplant from three very different perspectives. An interdisciplinary approach allows us to understand something much more completely by illuminating different aspects of the same phenomenon using different disciplinary backgrounds and language.

It helps us to appreciate the whole as more than just the sum of the parts. So what is it that makes us alive, that keeps us alive? To help me answer these questions, I'm going to be joined by three colleagues. First of all, a cardiac surgeon, Professor Johan Brink, who himself has been involved in more than 250 heart transplants here at Groote Schuur Hospital.

Secondly, my colleague, Peter Anderson, from the English Literature Department, who is a poet and regards the heart from a literary perspective in terms of metaphor. And finally, bringing it together to a certain extent is Stan Henkeman, who himself was the recipient of a heart transplant some years ago, and he has an extraordinary story to tell. And I hope that by understanding these different stories, these different views, these different perspectives, they will help us to answer the question what is it that keeps us alive.



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