

Steve Klasko is *Feelin' Alright*

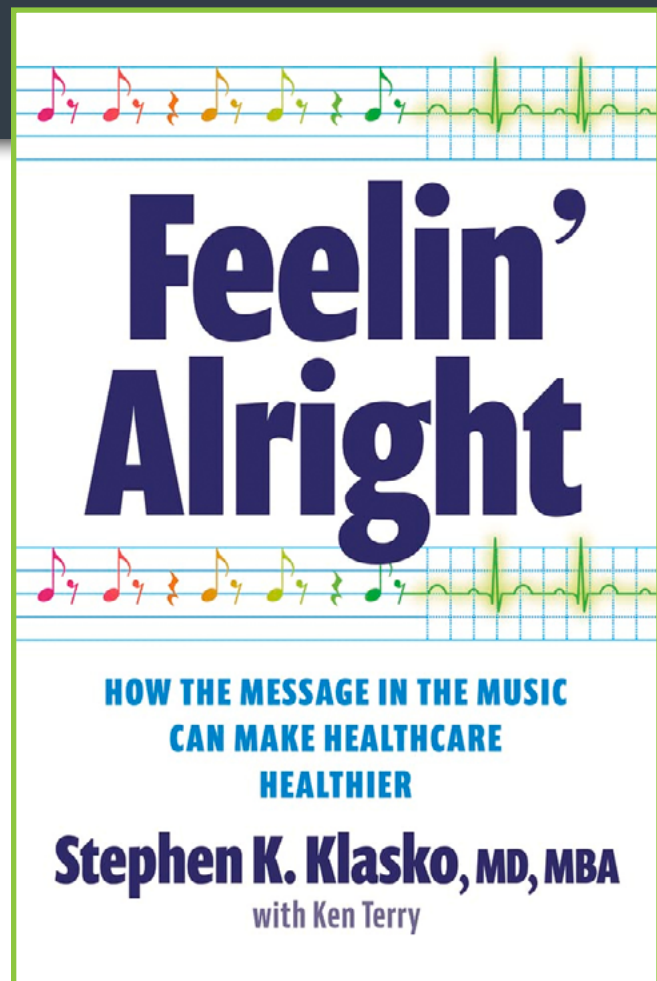
By David W. Johnson

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In the summer of 2022, Steve Klasko asked me to write a preface for "Feelin' Alright," his book that will publish on April 2, 2023. What an honor! We've all got a soundtrack for our lives. As a lifelong disc jockey, Steve's soundtrack is much larger than most of ours. In his book, he uses music to untangle healthcare's complexity and make a compelling case for revolutionary change. Steve's insights and soundtrack definitely got me groovin'. With Steve's permission, I'm sharing my preface to "Feelin' Alright" with our 4sight Health community. I hope it gets you groovin' enough to order a copy of Steve's timely, informative and entertaining book.

It's tough out there for hospital and health system leaders. The COVID adrenaline rush has ended. There's no more pandemic funding. Labor is in short supply. Supply chain and drug costs are skyrocketing. Red ink is everywhere. High-cost and often-deteriorating facilities limit strategic flexibility. Worst of all, American consumers are losing faith. They fear paying medical bills more than contracting disease. How did it ever get this crazy? It's easy to give up and move on.

Into this dystopian mess marches Stephen Klasko with his remarkable new book *Feelin' Alright*. Just because you're deadly serious about healthcare transformation doesn't mean you can't have some fun. In *Feelin' Alright*, Steve is a happy warrior who takes readers on a whirlwind tour of healthcare's complex and often incomprehensible landscape. Healthcare is complicated. Steve makes it accessible. He uses song lyrics from a massive playlist to explain healthcare's problems and inspire solutions. For Steve Klasko, lifelong DJ, the music is the message.



The book itself is a memoir, manifesto, pep talk, policy primer, and how-to manual all rolled into a compelling and comprehensive narrative. Better yet, it lays out a cogent plan for reinventing US healthcare. Looking forward to 2035, Steve envisions universal "health assurance" through "healthcare at any address" that is "delivering kinder, smarter and affordable care for all."

The last quote is not from Steve's work; it's the subtitle of my 2019 book, *The Customer Revolution in Healthcare*. I share it to convey the philosophical and practical alignment that Steve and I bring to transforming America's bloated sick-care system. We're fellow healthcare revolutionaries. I'd jump the barricades with him anytime.

We met several years ago at a Health Management Academy conference. He was reinventing Jefferson Health System, and I was a former healthcare investment banker turned writer doing penance for my part in funding an overbuilt acute-care delivery system.

Our jujitsu idea exchange resulted in a coauthored and widely read commentary, "[A Second Coming: Medical Education's Desperate Need for Another Flexner Revolution](#)." I was blown away by Steve's dissection of the four biases that afflict medicine and the concrete steps he took to address them in the hiring and training of doctors at Jefferson.

The esteemed political commentator Thomas Sowell astutely observed, "When you want to help someone, you tell them the truth. When you want to help yourself, you tell them what they want to hear." In the best sense of the term, Steve Klasko is a truth-teller intent on helping a dysfunctional industry help itself. But Steve does it with compassion, understanding, and encouragement. He knows and believes we can do better.

After dissecting the industry's dismal current state, *Feelin' Alright* briskly covers consumerism, artificial intelligence, human-machine collaboration, population health, payment reform, performance ratings, social determinants of health, patient safety, and medical education and training. The range and breadth of the book's analysis are impressive.

While *Feelin' Alright* will resonate with all healthcare audiences, the book's title and content carry special significance for healthcare providers and administrators. These are Steve's people. He offers them not only sympathy and hope but also actionable strategies for navigating healthcare's troubled waters and building tomorrow's health system today.

Throughout, Steve is alert to the roles that disruption, private investment, technology, new competitors, breakthrough science and pro-consumer regulatory policies can and will play in transforming healthcare. In Steve's mind's eye, the industry will undergo more change in the next decade than it has in the last century. Unsustainable sick care will become affordable healthcare.



Top 40 Style: Watch author and DJ Steven Klasko in his element talking about his book in this short clip.

Steve's chapter on health inequity crackles with righteous intensity. It's my favorite. He has no tolerance for a system where people's health and well-being are more influenced by their ZIP codes than their genetic codes. He blames structural racism and he's right. Healthcare must work for all Americans. He amplifies these points through the lyrics of Curtis Mayfield's "Choice of Colors," which premiered in 1969:

*If you had a choice of colors
Which one would you choose my brothers ...
People must prove to the people
A better day is coming, for you and for me
With just a little bit more education
And love for our nation
Would make a better society.*

Mayfield's words still resonate. Like healthcare today, the late '60s was a time of massive social upheaval and change. If you catch Steve Klasko's vibe, a better healthcare day is coming for us all. I'll end with lyrics from "Get Ready" by the Temptations. They prep *Feelin' Alright's* readers for their full-on encounter with revolutionary healthcare.

*So tiddley-dee, tiddley-dum
Look out baby, 'cause here I come
And I'm bringing you a love that's true
So get ready, so get ready.*

America's ready Steve. Your country needs you.

Order [Feelin' Alright](#) from Amazon here for an April 2, 2023 ship date. American College of Healthcare Executive members get a discount when they [order here](#).

AUTHOR



David Johnson is the CEO of 4sight Health, a thought leadership and advisory company working at the intersection of strategy, economics, innovation and capital formation. Dave wakes up every morning trying to fix America's broken healthcare system. Prior to founding 4sight Health in 2014, Dave had a long and successful career in healthcare investment banking. He is a graduate of Colgate University and earned a Masters in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School. Employing his knowledge and experience in health policy, economics, statistics, behavioral finance, disruptive innovation, organizational change and complexity theory, Dave writes and speaks on pro-market healthcare reform. His first book *Market vs. Medicine: America's Epic Fight for Better, Affordable Healthcare*, and his second book, *The Customer Revolution in Healthcare: Delivering Kinder, Smarter, Affordable Care for All* (McGraw-Hill 2019), are available for purchase on www.4sighthealth.com.