



Virtue And Psychology: Pursuing Excellence In Ordinary Practices

Blaine J. Fowers

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Virtue and Psychology: Pursuing Excellence in Ordinary Practices issues a clarion call for psychologists and other mental health professionals to recognize the reality of virtue in social interaction. Virtues are character strengths - such as generosity, loyalty, and honesty - that make it possible for people to pursue worthwhile goals. The author explores the current terrain of psychology, a field that actively avoids discussion of virtue while it implicitly endorses values such as independence and mastery. Some of these implied values derive from and feed into the individualism and instrumentalism of modern cultures, often to the detriment of individual and communal well being. Virtue and Psychology describes an alternative framework that not only acknowledges virtue, but also shows how values that we already hold in common may be incorporated into psychological practice, and into our lives as a whole. Indeed, according to the virtue ethics framework proposed in this book, professional and personal lives cannot be separated - at least if one is to lead the best possible existence. Fowers examines the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and social components of virtue. optimal human living and how to attain it to clarifying the best professional practices and how to teach them. Virtue ethics provides a way to transcend the limitations of individualism by demonstrating the importance of shared goods (such as friendship) as well as the shortcomings of a strictly means - ends approach to goal-seeking by highlighting the concept of internal goods: virtuous goals that are inseparable from the actions needed to attain them (e.g., to be generous, one must act generously). The author also discusses how practical wisdom - the ability to choose one's actions wisely - illuminates therapeutic practice, research, and professional ethics. Virtue and Psychology will prove to be a valuable resource for practitioners and researchers seeking to integrate their life with their work in a way that is rewarding personally, for those around them, and for society at large.

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