

B O O K R E V I E W

Jewish Relational Care A-Z; We Are Our Other's Keeper
Rabbi Jack H Bloom. PhD. editor

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Rabbi Bloom has edited a great resource book for rabbis, ministers, therapists, and folks who just want to relate better and more effectively. I wish this book had been in existence when I was in seminary. It would have answered so many questions and given such practical useful steps. It is the type of book that you may want everyone to read because it would be so helpful. It is no small wonder that clinician, author and presenter, Stephen Gilligan, called it, "An exceptional book on a relational approach to professional caring relationships." Even a scholar such as Rabbi Neil Gillman, PhD, Professor at Jewish Theological Seminary, praised the book for its exhaustive perspective and then captured a primary theme when he said. "It the book has one central message it is that before we care for all the others we must learn to care for the 'others' within ourselves."

One of the things I have found so refreshing is the way in which Jewish wisdom and tradition are integrated into a psychotherapy perspective that enriches both. Neither was sacrificed. In fact, they seemed to enhance and expand relational concepts for anyone reading the text.

Just mentioning some of the topics and how they are addressed can provide a flavor of the depth of this excellent volume. "Language as a relational tool: Using Your Mouth with Your Head?" addresses such things as how to build rapport and respecting thoughts and feelings in others. "Managing Compassion Fatigue" deals with the obvious, but also fosters ways to enjoy a more natural flow of compassion. "The Muse of Music and Song" teaches us about how music can connect us to the past and each other and how it can even enhance words and relationships. It, and the chapter on chanting, are chock full of useful and thoughtful information. Much research has gone into the writing of this book.

This resource invites the reader on a journey that alters his/her perception in tiny positive ways, through experiencing the stories, concepts, and situations that provoke further consideration. The book thoughtfully addresses such issues unwanted pregnancy, divorce, gender confusion, death, dying, aging, and sexual orientation. The practical and gentle wisdom is exhibited without preaching at the reader and is both helpful and enjoyable. However, the wisdom in Blessing Those We Have Trouble Blessing, and relational care for those who committed sexual violations is to be especially applauded.

An Erickson story that is included in the text speaks volumes about the entire book. The story that is retold is about how a patient having heard of Erickson's fame traveled halfway around the world to see him. "Entering Milton's somewhat shabby office, he was

shocked as he took in its well worn furniture, overused chairs, and ramshackle bookshelves-- rather humble surroundings, for such a great man. Erickson noticed him looking around in disbelief, fixed his intense gaze upon him, and said, "I know it's not much, but I am here!" P.219

Not only will I reread this volume and turn to it as a resource, it is one that I recommend without reservation.

Reviewed by

John D. Lentz D.Min Shepperdsville KY

John D. Lentz D.Min, is a functioning Pastor and Therapist. For 18 years he served as an adjunct Professor at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He has taught ministers and therapists practical tools for ministry, and therapy for many years. His books include "Effective Handling of Manipulative Persons," "Therapeutic Meditations," "How the Word Heals:" " The Bible and Hypnosis," " Spiritual Solutions to Anxiety and Panic Disorder," and "Transforming Miscommunication." He truly wishes Jewish Relational Care A-Z; We Are Our Others Keeper, had been available when he was in Seminary.