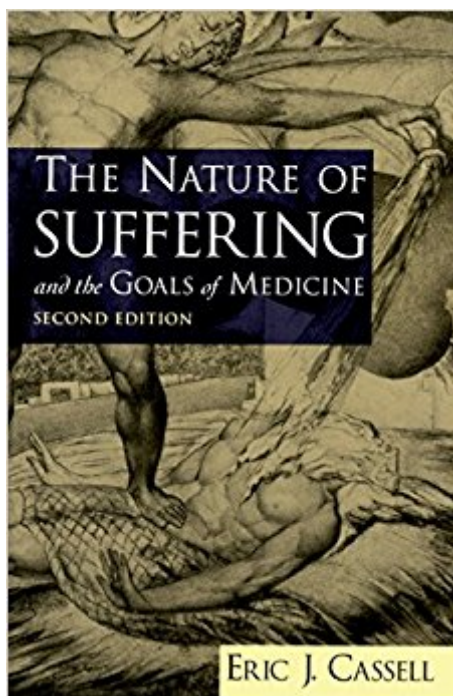


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The Nature Of Suffering And The Goals Of Medicine



Synopsis

This is a revised and expanded edition of a classic in palliative medicine, originally published in 1991. With three added chapters and a new preface summarizing our progress in the area of pain management, this is a must-have for those in palliative medicine and hospice care. The obligation of physicians to relieve human suffering stretches back into antiquity. But what exactly, is suffering? One patient with metastatic cancer of the stomach, from which he knew he would shortly die, said he was not suffering. Another, someone who had been operated on for a minor problem--in little pain and not seemingly distressed--said that even coming into the hospital had been a source of pain and not suffering. With such varied responses to the problem of suffering, inevitable questions arise. Is it the doctor's responsibility to treat the disease or the patient? And what is the relationship between suffering and the goals of medicine? According to Dr. Eric Cassell, these are crucial questions, but unfortunately, have remained only queries void of adequate solutions. It is time for the sick person, Cassell believes, to be not merely an important concern for physicians but the central focus of medicine. With this in mind, Cassell argues for an understanding of what changes should be made in order to successfully treat the sick while alleviating suffering, and how to actually go about making these changes with the methods and training techniques firmly rooted in the doctor's relationship with the patient. Dr. Cassell offers an incisive critique of the approach of modern medicine. Drawing on a number of evocative patient narratives, he writes that the goal of medicine must be to treat an individual's suffering, and not just the disease. In addition, Cassell's thoughtful and incisive argument will appeal to psychologists and psychiatrists interested in the nature of pain and suffering.

Book Information

File Size: 2422 KB

Print Length: 335 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 2 edition (March 25, 2004)

Publication Date: March 25, 2004

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B0053F0P6G

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #299,259 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #18

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Medical eBooks > Physician & Patient > Hospice Care #59

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Medical eBooks > Physician & Patient > Healing #85

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Customer Reviews

Excellent book and a very nice copy, Thanks for speedy service!Robert C

classroom speech making

The first edition is already a classic in its exploration of the nature of suffering. "Bodies do not suffer, only persons suffer." is a central concept. The text examines the doctor patient relationship, what diseases are, how understandings of disease have changed over time, how the unique and particular nature of the sick person influences all diseases and how they are cared for. How we know who a person is. Why medicine is changing its focus from the disease to the sick or well person. The new edition has three new chapters that focus on the mind-body problem, social contribution to sickness and dying, and how pain and other symptoms are inevitably personalized. And how suffering arises from the sickness and its personalization. It is a well-written, rich and exciting book.

The author identifies the effects of chronic and acute illness on each integral part of the sufferer, and describes personal attributes/approaches of patients that enhance their ability to live with their condition. This book is an inspiring insight into strategies for finding new meaning in life after loss of mobility and during years of living with chronic pain. I refer to it each time my condition has worsened my outlook; it never fails to help me find new strength. I would recommend it to doctors, patients, and counsellors.

Way too didactic unless you are a scholar or a medical student. The writing style was academic and self-contained. This important information should have been expressed in a more creative way. Not too "dummy down," important information, but to reach more readers.

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