



Before Forgiving: Cautionary Views of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy

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For psychologists and psychotherapists, the notion of forgiveness has been enjoying a substantial vogue. For their patients, it holds the promise of "moving on" and healing emotional wounds. The forgiveness of others - and of one's self - would seem to offer the kind of peace that psychotherapy alone has never been able to provide. In this volume, psychologist Sharon Lamb and philosopher Jeffrie Murphy argue that forgiveness has been accepted as a therapeutic strategy without serious, critical examination. They intend this volume to be a closer, critical look at some of these questions: why is forgiveness so popular now? What exactly does it entail? When might it be appropriate for a therapist not to advise forgiveness? When is forgiveness in fact harmful?

Lamb and Murphy have collected many previously-unpublished chapters by both philosophers and psychologists that examine what is at stake for those who are injured, those who injure them, and society in general when such a practice becomes commonplace. Some chapters offer cautionary tales about forgiveness therapy, while others paint complex portraits of the social, cultural, and philosophical factors that come into play with forgiveness. The value of this volume lies not only in its presentation of a nuanced view of this therapeutic trend, but also as a general critique of psychotherapy, and as a valuable testimony of the theoretical and practical possibilities in an interdisciplinary collaboration between philosophy and clinical psychology.



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