The Power of Compassion

An Exploration of the Psychology of Compassion in the 21st Century

Edited by Marion Kostanski

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We entered the 21st Century full of anxiety, with the promised threat of a millennium bug that could potentially cripple our lives. Since then we have witnessed an increasing level of angst and despair across the world as warnings of climate change, and economic hardships have been forecast. Wars have raged, a new evil has entered our consciousness, and the word terrorism has come to the forefront of our lexicon. Millions of innocent people have lost their lives. Today we are witnessing the ever-increasing state of displaced persons being shuffled from makeshift home to make shift home, being locked up in camps and cut off from the rest of society. Everywhere around us we hear about increases in depression and mental health disorders among the general population. Young people are checking out of the mainstream, there are phenomenal increases in the rate of suicide and older people are living out wretched lives, isolated and alone. Multinational corporations have been accused of extorting vulnerable peoples for economic gain and consumption seems to be our new idol. What is becoming of our society? How do we make sense of or world? The essays in this book provide a compelling insight and reflection into the work of health professionals as they struggle to make sense of their work and the world around them in this new century. From exploring the concept of Living Compassion, working with the good, bad and ugly aspects of our lives, and reflecting on practice, the authors discuss their ideas on compassion. They offer you, the reader, an opportunity to reflect on your own daily practice and to go forward with a sense of shared humanity.

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