

Moral Dilemmas, Identity, and Our Moral Condition: A Guide for the Ethically Perplexed

By Michael Shaw Perry

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For readers engaged in intellectual struggle, ethical thinking, and trying to figure out how to live a purposeful, fulfilling life, here is a critical and accessible approach to ethics. Moral dilemmas challenge us to think through sticky situations and lead us to look for moral grounding. Following Cicero and other ancient philosophers, the author views ethics in terms of the question of who and what sort of person one ought to be, without relying on religion or any other prescriptions.

Moral dilemmas are bedeviling situations in which incompatible actions appear to be morally required. Life's moral puzzles lead us to look for grounding, but traditional approaches are wanting. Identity can provide the grounding we seek—facts about who we are can serve to ground norms. The work develops an understanding of identity in terms of a complex web of roles and applies this approach to moral dilemmas and other ethical problems. The book helps readers develop a way to understand our moral condition. The author finds a middle course between an ethical imperialism that cannot recognize a variety of 'good' lives and an ethical insulation in which 'anything goes.' This book provides another option: a guide for the ethically perplexed. It takes the analytic, philosophical approach to ethics found in Michael J. Sandel's 'Justice: What's the Right Thing To Do?' and Simon Blackburn's 'Being Good: A Short Introduction to Ethics', but instead of surveying the field, 'Moral Dilemmas, Identity, and Our Moral Condition' develops a new and fruitful ethical framework.

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Michael Shaw Perry holds an BA in Philosophy from Dartmouth College and was awarded the Francis Gramlich Philosophy Prize and Barrett All-Around Achievement Cup. He earned an MA and Ph.D. in Philosophy from Johns Hopkins University, working primarily in epistemology. He also holds a JD from the University of Michigan Law School. This book is the result of his personal and intellectual struggles with the framework for ethical thinking and trying to figure out how to live a purposeful, fulfilling life.

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