

The authors include a number of appendices which reproduce various assessment tools and scoring forms mentioned elsewhere in the book. In some cases the purchaser is given permission to copy for personal use, and in others resources for obtaining manuals and licensed use are listed. The book concludes with an extensive section of references followed by a subject matter index.

This book is well written and quite readable. The appendices are very helpful adjuncts to the text. *Treating Health Anxiety* will be very useful for anyone who works with patients who have worries about their health, especially if those worries are overblown and/or nonproductive. This would include psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and primary care physicians. The book has sufficient explanations and background material that students, clinical psychology interns, and residents would find it quite understandable as well. And yet I do not believe that most experienced practitioners would be bored while reading it, since the chapter sections have headings which make it easy to scan and skip over elements with which the reader is already familiar.

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Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification, edited by Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman, Oxford University Press, New York, New York; 2004; ISBN: 0-19-516701-5, \$75 (hardcover), 814 pp.

This book is subtitled, at least internally, "A Manual of the Sanities." This is because the authors and editors are working toward the design of an empirical classification of positive attributes. This would be a companion to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, which is, after all, a classification of disorders or vulnerabilities of the human psyche. The two editors are joined in their work by an advisory board of 13 experts in the field of mental health. There are 42 additional collaborators who were "commissioned" to write about areas within their particular research interests. This work is a contribution to the overall field of "positive psychology," which sees as its legitimate areas of enquiry the building blocks of the good or virtuous life. The editors are psychologists, and indeed, the book carries the imprimatur of the American Psychological Association, so the perspective has a certain psychological flavor to it, although contributions by other professions are certainly obvious throughout the text. One purpose for this type of work is to design interventions in early development which might result in greater likelihood of people having such attributes.

The book is divided into three major sections, the first giving some introductory and historical background in three chapters; the second listing the character strengths identified by these researchers; and the third being a single chapter which summarizes and lists recommendations. It is the middle section, Strengths of Character, which this review will mainly address. Six general categories of virtues are identified, with each being

subdivided into three to five specifically named strengths. The authors gathered these descriptions from the study of multiple cultures in various parts of the world, and while this classification is an early attempt, a great deal of study and debate went into its composition. Measurement and assessment instruments have been identified for each strength. The intent is to identify true "character strengths" as opposed to talents and abilities such as "IQ," or virtues that are valued only by some cultures, such as "cleanliness" or "silence." The intent was to come as close as possible to a set of universally admired and positive traits. In pursuit of this goal, the group looked at multiple world cultures and religions.

The first is "wisdom and knowledge," which is subdivided into chapters on creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and perspective. Synonyms are frequently listed for each subcategory. Chapters give examples to demonstrate pragmatically how such a thing as "creativity," for example, actually manifests itself in someone's everyday life. Theoretical matters are discussed. Developmental issues are also reviewed, such as those environmental surroundings that might enable or hinder the development of a given strength. Cross-cultural issues are addressed when possible, and there are hypotheses regarding deliberate interventions which might assist in developing a strength. The final comments in each chapter address what is not yet known about that virtue and provide a short bibliography of "must-read" articles and books on that topic.

Since each of this section's chapters are organized in the same way, I will simply mention that the remaining sections cover courage and its attributes, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence. Perhaps a listing of the chapter headings under transcendence, at least, is necessary to demonstrate the traits discussed. They are as follows: "appreciation of beauty and excellence," "gratitude," "hope," "humor," and "spirituality."

The book is not about looking at the world through rose colored glasses, but actually seeks to devise a classification of strengths that is useful and generates hypotheses regarding each trait that can be scientifically tested. The editors have reviewed and rewritten each chapter so that the book, even with so many contributing authors, is unified and flows as if written by one individual. The writing is very clear as well, so this book is easy to read despite the esoteric nature of its content. The final pages of the book contain an extensive (118 pages) list of references, an index of names, and a subject index.

This book may be most useful to those who work in a "strengths-based" treatment setting, as a way of codifying character virtues when writing about positive attributes of a given patient, couple, or family. It could also be quite interesting reading for anyone who wishes to understand more about the positive psychology movement. Certainly any discipline, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses and other mental health professionals, can learn from this book.

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