



Human Dignity in Bioethics and Law

Charles Foster

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Dignity is often denounced as hopelessly amorphous or incurably theological - as feel-good, philosophical window-dressing, or as the name applied to whatever principles give you the answer that you think is right. According to author Charles Foster, this is wrong. Dignity is not only an essential principle in bioethics and law, it is really the only principle. In this ambitious, paradigm-shattering, and highly readable book, Foster argues that dignity is the only sustainable 'Theory of Everything' in bioethics. For most problems in contemporary bioethics, existing principles - such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and professional probity - can do a reasonably workmanlike job if they are all allowed to contribute appropriately. But these are second order principles, each of which traces its origins back to dignity. And when one gets to the frontiers of bioethics (such as human enhancement), dignity is the only conceivable language with which to describe and analyze the strange conceptual creatures found there. Drawing on clinical, anthropological, philosophical, and legal insights, Foster provides a new lexicon and grammar of that language. This book will be essential reading for anyone wanting to travel in the outlandish territories of bioethics, and it is strongly recommended for anyone wanting to travel comfortably anywhere in bioethics or medical law.



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