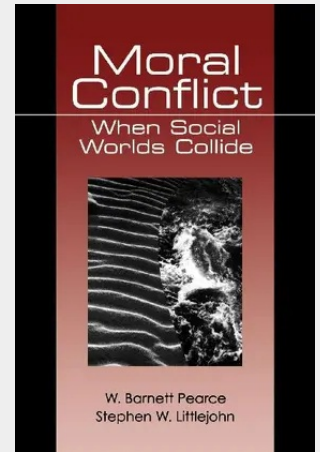


Moral Conflict

When Social Worlds Collide

Moral Conflict, the subject of this book is passionate and difficult to resolve. Responses that are normally effective such as explaining, persuading, and compromising can make matters worse and drive people further apart in such conflicts. Moral conflicts occur when incommensurate social realities come to clash. Disputes about abortion, religion in politics and education, legal rights for homosexuals, and environmental politics are issues in which well-intentioned parties have created polarized and diverse patterns of communication. The most virtuous actions of each side not only fail, but widen the schism. Such conflicts require us to find forms of communication that go beyond our normal ways of dealing with disagreement. In an original synthesis of communication theory and their own research, W. Barnett Pearce and Stephen W. Littlejohn describe a dialectical tension between the expression and suppression of conflict that can be transcended in ways that lead to personal growth and productive patterns of social action. In Moral Conflict several projects are described as practical examples of these new ways of working through difficult struggles.

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