



The Nature of Clinical Medicine: The Return of the Clinician

Eric J. Cassell

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Clinical medicine, as a thinking discipline, is concerned not only with what clinicians do, but why. When physicians act in medicine they have some purpose or goal in mind. What they actually do and how they go about it is in the service of their purposes and their goals. Such goals cover a wide range of topics centering on patients, the doctor-patient relationship, the acts of doctoring patients, and the goals involved in being a physician among other physicians working within the institutions of medicine.

The Nature of Clinical Medicine takes its direction from a catalog of goals of medicine that range from the expected diagnosis and treatment of diseases to wider concerns for patients, for physicians, and for medicine itself. The chapters are specific in teaching the kinds of knowledge that clinicians require in order to be able to achieve these goals. The central focus of the clinician and of this book is the patient. According to Eric Cassell, everything else, including the disease, is secondary.

Using many examples from real-life medical practice, each chapter examines the different kinds of thought involved in caring for the patient. Cassell takes on a variety of difficult issues, from thinking about values to developing wisdom. The care of the dying, what thinking itself is, and finally, why would one want to do this exciting and rewarding but difficult work, come under discussion in this book.



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