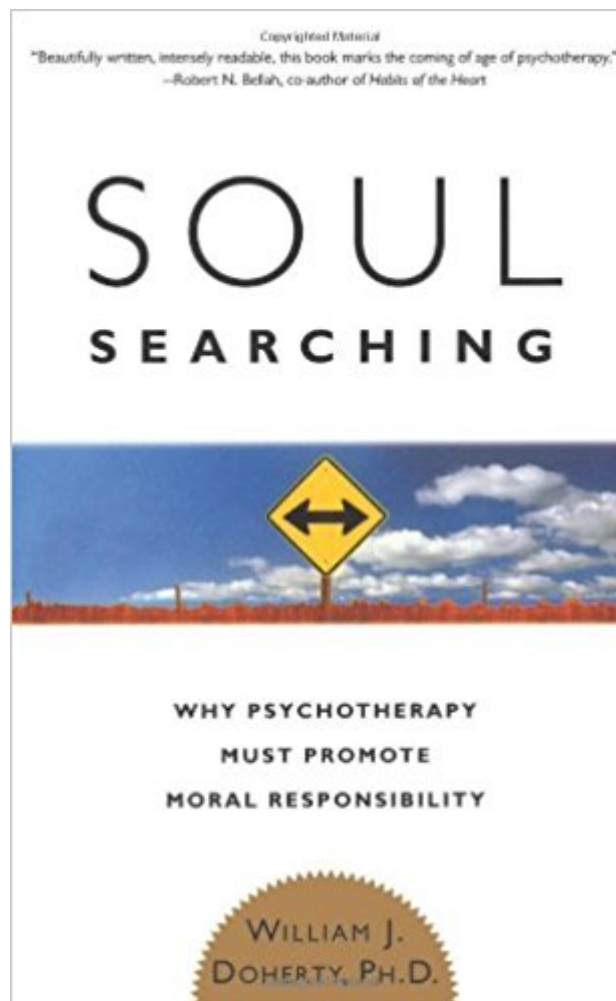


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# Soul Searching: Why Psychotherapy Must Promote Moral Responsibility



## Synopsis

Paul, a divorced father, wants to back out of his child care arrangement and spend less time with his children. Nathan has been lying to his wife about a serious medical condition. Marsha, recently separated from her husband, cannot resist telling her children negative things about their father. What is the role of therapy in these situations? Trained to strive for neutrality and to focus strictly on the clients' needs, most therapists generally consider moral issues such as fairness, truthfulness, and obligation beyond their domain. Now, an award-winning psychologist and family therapist criticizes psychotherapy's overemphasis on individual self-interest and calls for a sense of moral responsibility in therapy.

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## Customer Reviews

Psychotherapists since Freud, in Doherty's biting assessment, have overemphasized individual self-fulfillment while paying insufficient attention to the patient's moral values, accountability and family and community responsibilities. The psychologist-director of the University of Minnesota's marriage and family therapy program, Doherty draws on his own clinical practice in this important critique. Going against the prevailing wisdom, he proposes that therapists should consciously influence clients to change their behavior in light of the moral issues involved. Among the illustrative case histories are a recently divorced father who is considering abandoning his children; a depressed, anorexic, suicidal young man who needs emotional distance from his controlling, intrusive mother; and a couple coping with the strain of caring for their developmentally delayed,

four-year-old daughter. Included are guidelines for those seeking a morally sensitive therapist. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Doherty (Medical Family Therapy, BasicBks., 1992) raises concerns about our therapeutic culture's promotion of individual self-interest over interpersonal responsibility. Therapists of the past, presupposing that their clients had a sense of moral responsibility, set about to liberate their patrons from morally rigid upbringings. Yet, through changing times, psychotherapists have continued to emphasize self-fulfillment over social responsibility while at the same time claiming to be value-free. Doherty advocates that psychotherapists recognize the claims of the larger society on them; therapists, he says, have an obligation to serve as moral consultants to their clients, raising questions about the effects of clients' behavior on others. On a practical level, Doherty explains how therapists can introduce moral considerations to their clients and discusses the virtues he believes therapists should affirm after abandoning a morality-free approach. While the argument is well presented, the specter of mental health practitioners as "ethicists" is sure to raise hackles among therapists and their critics alike. A controversial book recommended for large psychology collections. ?Bonnie Hoffman, Stony Brook, N.Y. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

As a budding psychology, this book took me on a journey away from theory, and through in the ethical concerns with counseling. Counselors should pose ethical questions to their clients, especially about others (like children) who would be negatively affected by a divorce. We are not just sounding boards for clients to work out their problems with our helping skills; we need to challenge as well.

Been reading so many books that seemed to be written by aliens,, this book was a breath of fresh air - written very well but easier to read than most books in psychotherapy. I loved the way he thinks - it hit home. It is one of the books I know I will keep in my library, one I will re-read actually!

The author brings up thought provoking questions relevant for anyone in the therapeutic professions or any type of helping profession. It is written in a concise and easy to understand manner. I highly recommend this book.

Needed for a class. In new condition as promised.

Great book!

Perhaps it was because Doherty was mainly preaching to the choir, but I didn't find this book to offer any startling revelations. I had to read it for a seminar, and found myself skimming the later sections of the book. It was well written and easy to read. He just could have said what he had to say in fewer pages.

This book contains lots of great examples of clinical application from ethical perspective. This book is also very easy reading material.

The book was in for the purpose of making all humanity ready, for the vocation that we are all called. It is important we search our soul and let others benefit from that.

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