



**Gordon J. Hilsman, author-editor, and Sandra Walker, co-editor. *Confrontation in Spiritual Care: An Anthology for Clinical Caregivers*. Olympia, WA: Summit Bay Press, 2022. 278 pages.**

*Confrontation in Spiritual Care* consists of eighteen chapters along with two epilogues. Co-editor Gordon Hilsman authored four of the chapters, contributed to two more, and provided a more personal epilogue. A variety of experienced clinical caregivers and spiritual care educators are the authors of the additional chapters.

The introductory material presents overarching themes pertinent to engaging confrontation in the clinical setting, including confrontation as emotional reflection, interpretation, and posing a question. In the chapters that follow, authors focus on particular contexts such as drinking problems, palliative care, trauma, mental health, veterans, the unsheltered, grief, and the end of life. The last two chapters focus on how confrontation might operate at an institutional level, specifically, at a hospital (between a clinical leader and supervisor) and at a church (between clergy and laity).

One strength of the book is learning from many diverse individuals what has been useful to them in navigating confrontation. The flip side is that there is less focus on what might be reliable and consistent underlying principles and strategies for readers' ready application across many or most contexts.

Rabbi Beth Naditch, in her chapter addressing trauma-informed care, notably elevates the importance of establishing a trusting relationship before initiating confrontation. Further attention throughout the book on how to establish an appropriate relational context for offering confrontation would have been helpful. Some questions to address more explicitly are: How do "confronters" evaluate and ensure the appropriateness of their feedback? Where does humility fit in . . . along with mutual respect, mutual vulnerability, and transparency? How do "confronters" check themselves for the appropriate management of power differentials?

If readers are looking for more specific skills, a book I recommend is *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well* by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen. For a more mosaic approach to the topic of effective feedback, *Confrontation in Spiritual Care* has valuable material to offer. Given its many styles, strategies, and contexts, individual clinical caregivers can expect to find some gems to incorporate into their own practices.

Susan Freeman  
ACPE Certified Educator  
San Diego, California