
BOOK REVIEW**FACING FEELINGS IN FAITH COMMUNITIES**

BY: WILLIAM M. KONDRATH

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Leaders in all types of organizations have often been guilty of operating on rational models, which value logic and data above all else. In his book, *Facing Feelings in Faith Communities*, William Kondrath invites his readers on a journey through their emotions in hopes of creating more affectively competent leaders. He believes leaders and faith communities have undervalued the divinely given emotional realm. His book demonstrates that all organizations are complex human communities that often miss out on the multitude of benefits affective competence offers. Kondrath argues for leaders to fully immerse themselves in their feelings, rather than simply seeking to mitigate their emotions. This process allows individuals to recognize the messages feelings send in order to respond in a more congruent manner.

The book begins with a basic thesis which argues that human beings learn through three dimensions: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. He then provides a chapter on each of the six basic feeling families: fear, anger, sadness, peace, power, and joy. Next, he demonstrates how leaders can incorrectly respond to these emotions by trying to substitute them or by projecting them onto others. The final chapter is designed to provide application points for entire congregations.

Kondrath adeptly pulls his readers into each of the core feelings. His six chapters on emotions follow a simple format with evocative artistic illustrations, followed by assigned writing exercises and Scripture and poetry reflections. In an act of transparency, Kondrath shares his own personal experiences with the reader about the particular emotion discussed. He also outlines the benefits of the emotion examined and appropriate responses to it. Each chapter includes descriptions of the body's

physiological response to a particular emotion. Kondrath concludes each chapter with a helpful annotated bibliography. Another unique element that reinforces the transformational nature of this book is the reflection questions that close each chapter. These are designed to further engage the reader on a personal level as well as groups going through the book together on a congregational level.

After thoroughly exploring the six primary emotions, Kondrath then examines the concepts of substitution and projection. Both of these errors result in an individual moving away from the congruence that Kondrath advocates. The next chapter tackles the areas of guilt and shame, which are complex secondary emotions based upon societal context. In a final brief chapter, Kondrath posits that all congregations should be able to interweave their affective competence into their local missional ecclesiology. He reinforces this idea by providing ample positive benefits for congregational life, such as clearer communication, smoother meetings, and less conflict.

A natural question that comes forth while reading Kondrath's book is how it relates to the construction of emotional intelligence. Kondrath argues that the EQ literature is still primarily focused on the cognitive dimension and shows a bias against the affective dimension. He appeals for a correspondence between the three dimensions and explains possible beneficial outcomes. One of the strengths of this text is its ability to truly engage the reader on an emotional level. Each chapter's reflections and exercises reinforce Kondrath's call for change. Another positive highlight is how this book carefully redeems the emotion of anger. Kondrath clearly demonstrates appropriate responses to anger within faith communities while providing practical illustrations that assist with application.

This book should be well received in the academy and in the church. University and seminary classes in spirituality, religion, and leadership will benefit from a book that acknowledges the affective dimension of being human. The six archetypal emotions highlighted by Kondrath should be weighed equally with the cognitive and behavioral dimensions of the organization for optimal health. Overall, this book serves as an

excellent, entry-level transformational guide to empower leaders to become more affectively competent.

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