

REFLECTIONS FROM THE EDITOR

Jillian Jimenez, Ph.D.

I am very happy to offer this issue on “Spiritual Diversity in Social Work” edited by Edward Canda, to **Reflections**’ readers. Professor Canda is a renowned scholar whose book, *Spirituality in Social Work Practice* brought the social work profession back to its roots of spirit-filled compassion and resolve—a vision forged by people of faith. With this work, Canda acknowledged all the complaints that a secular society has heaped at the door of religion, at the same time calling for an understanding of spirituality as “the heart of empathy and care, the pulse of compassion, the vital flow of practice wisdom, and the driving force of action for service”(xv). Canda continues to remind us that our spiritual dimension is inextricably tied to the ontological questions of existence and essence and that it has driven our collective search for meaning throughout our history on this planet. It is impossible to deny the importance of spirituality in the short lives we are given, and certainly not good professional practice to ignore its meaning in the lives of clients. Yet that is what the social work profession sought to do for much of the twentieth century. In the struggle for professional legitimacy, social workers sought a false objectivity by valorizing scientific empiricism and secularism. It was as though disavowing our spiritual roots was crucial to our sense of ourselves as professionals. Yet the social constructivist position has revealed the limits of empiricism and objectivity, as well as exposing the ineluctable drive for meaning that characterizes our humanity. We can now re-own spirituality as a legitimate field of practice and inquiry. For this we have Professor Canda to thank, along with others, like the authors in this issue of **Reflections**.

They have allowed us to look at our own professional history with both dispassion and compassion, urging us to complete the circle and to embrace a vision of the meaningful life that our spiritual dimension offers.

Reference

- Canda, E., & Furman, L. (1999). *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice*. New York: Free Press.



Copyright of Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping is the property of Cleveland State University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.