

Book Review

Bodenheimer, D. (2017). *On clinical social work: Meditations and truths from the field*. Harrisburg: PA. The New Social Worker Press.

Reviewed by Elaine Spencer, MSW, RSW
Red Deer College

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“Dr. Danna Bodenheimer [is an] LCSW [Pennsylvania], master therapist, educator and supervisor” (foreword). *On Clinical Social Work: Meditations and Truths from the Field*, Dr. Bodenheimer’s second book, is a 53-chapter, 225-page gallop over a Grand Canyon-wide range of topics, from “Saying No to Gratitude and Forgiveness” through “On the Orlando Mass Shootings and Beyond” to “Scapegoats and the Social Work Workplace” and “Boundaries versus the Super Ego.” The book is organized into nine parts, showcasing Dr. Bodenheimer’s occasionally deeply moving musings on:

- The field and its stressors and realities
- Attachment and trauma
- Diagnosis and beyond
- Our clinical-internal worlds
- Use of theory
- Self-care
- What to do and how to do it: The world of assessment and intervention
- Demystifying dominant tropes
- Clinical social justice, we were made for this

Included in this work are photos taken by the author, as part of her self-care practice. These amateur photos lead us to the strength of the book—the author’s willingness to be vulnerable, personal, and unsure. Though some advice is clearly for new MSW students (such as the suggestions to learners

on pages 38 & 39), the bulk of the book is perhaps best read by new graduates about to set out into practice (such as Chapter 2, on negotiating salary, and Chapter 8 on starting private practice). The phrase *meditations from the field* fits well with Dr. Bodenheimer’s offering—shaped by her theoretical orientation (new order psychoanalytical with a feminist focus) and her advanced clinical experience (as the director of the Walnut Psychotherapy Centre) and her tender client focus (with some exquisite observations that made the slight slog through some chapters worthwhile for this well-seasoned clinician).

Don’t read this book if you want to thoroughly review clinical matters; like a clear sense of continuity and order; need a black or white answer; or like to see references for every utterance. Do read it if you are ready to listen to another’s rich voice of professional love of clinical social work filled with realism and hope for our world.