



Just a Job?: Communication, Ethics, and Professional Life

George Cheney, Daniel J. Lair, Dean Ritz, Brenden E. Kendall

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From cartoons to boardrooms comes the statement, "It's not personal. It's just business."

Just a Job? Communication, Ethics, and Professional Life offers a provocative perspective on ethics at work. The book questions the notions that doing ethics at work has to be work, and that work is somehow a sphere where a different set of rules applies. This problematic line between work and life runs through the ways we commonly talk about ethics, from our personal relationships to the domains of work, including the organization, the profession, and the market. Talk about ethics is far more than "just talk," and this book shows how and why it matters.

Drawing from the fields of communication and rhetoric, the authors show how the very framing of ethics--even before we approach specific decisions--limits the potential roles of ethics in our work lives and the pursuit of happiness, and treats it as something that is meaningful only at special moments such as when faced with dilemmas, or as the last chapter in a business book. Separating ethics from life, we put it beyond our daily reach.

The authors argue against ethical myopia limited to spectacular scandals or comprehensive professional codes. Instead, they propose a master reframe of ethics based on a new take on virtue ethics, including Aristotle's practical ideal of eudaimonia or flourishing, which tells new stories about the ordinary as well as extraordinary aspects of professional integrity and success. By reframing ethics as not special, they elevate it to its rightful position in work and personal life.

Generously illustrated with examples and ideas from scholarly as well as popular sources, this book asks us to reconsider the meaning of and path toward the "good life."

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