



Setting Limits: Medical Goals in an Aging Society with "A Response to My Critics"

By Daniel Callahan

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A provocative call to rethink America's values in health care.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this wise and thought-provoking review of present attitudes and public policy toward aging and death, Callahan, author of *Abortion: Law, Choice and Morality*, etc., faults our health care system for devoting disproportionate resources and technology on extending the lives of the elderly regardless of the quality of their lives. He also warns against the social and economic consequences of the increased ratio of old people in the population. Medical care, he suggests, should be allocated based on standards of need and priorities to meet them over a "normal life-span opportunity range," limiting the use of new technology to that which improves the quality of life. He also discusses the ethics of withholding artificial sustenance from the terminally ill, euthanasia and assisted suicide. "The proper question is not whether we are succeeding in giving a longer life to the aged," he argues, but "whether we are making of old age a decent and honorable time of life."

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Review

"Callahan addresses the problems of aging in a clear, comprehensive, sensitive, and compassionate manner. This is a pivotal work that poses hard questions and proposes provocative answers. *Setting Limits* promises to be the benchmark for future moral, medical and policy discussions of aging."? *New York Times Book Review*

"Logical and persuasive. . . . Provocative, well-based arguments from a respected voice."? *Kirkus Reviews*

"A thought-provoking and heart-jarring assessment of medical goals and aging in the United States today."? *America*

"A thought-provoking, in some ways profound, work....a morally courageous book, challenging current widespread assumptions that we should prolong life by increasing medical care even if the result is worsening health throughout the United States."? *New York Review of Books*

"An intelligent, profound, and challenging volume that should be assiduously chewed and digested by medical, legal, ethical, and policy professionals and all others who have a stake in the vital issues it raises."? *Journal of Legal Medicine*

"Callahan's book should be read?but very carefully?by anyone interested in aging, older persons, health care, and issues of morality in American society....This book is likely to be a point of reference in such discussions for some time to come."? Robert H. Binstock and Jeff Kahana, *The Gerontologist*

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