

### Anatomy of Regret: From Death Instinct to Reparation and Symbolization through Vivid Clinical Cases

Susan Kavaler-Adler



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Anatomy of Regret has a highly clinical focus, with cases that illustrate how critical psychic change can emerge from the mourning of the grief of "psychic regret." This book highlights the developmental achievement of owning the guilt of aggression, and of tolerating insight into the losses one had produced. The author uses the term "psychic regret" to capture the essence of the process of facing regret consciously. This is in contrast to the split-off and persecutory dynamics of unconscious guilt. Unconscious guilt exposes itself through visceral and cognitive impingements, which are related to internal world enactments, and it relies on unconscious avoidance of the pain and loss involved in facing psychic regret.

Dr. Kavaler-Adler's theory of "developmental mourning" is illustrated in this book through in-depth lively clinical processes (cases and vignettes). The reader is able to witness how those who have faced consciousness of their resistances to experiences of loss and guilt (as referred to by Melanie Klein in her theory of the depressive position) go through the critical psychological transformation, which allows for authentic psychic change. This is a psychological change that has "meaning" and "meaning creativity" within it.

Anatomy of Regret weaves the themes of psychoanalysis in its early days with those of current practice. It simultaneously offers vivid case examples, where theory becomes a retrospective way of organizing the progress in the clinical work, and in the lives of patients. Dr. Kavaler-Adler addresses both theoretical and clinical conundrums, as she offers the opportunity for readers to immerse themselves in the journey from internal emptiness to both internal and external richness.

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