

## HOW PEOPLE MATTER

Mattering, which is about feeling valued and adding value, is essential for health, happiness, love, work, and social well-being. We all need to feel valued by, and add value to, ourselves, others, co-workers, and community members. This book shows not only the signs, significance, and sources of mattering, but also presents the strategies to achieve mattering in our personal and professional lives. It uses research-based methods of change to help people achieve a higher sense of purpose and a deeper sense of meaning. Each chapter gives therapists, managers, teachers, parents, and healthcare professionals the tools needed to optimize personal and collective well-being and productivity. The volume explains how promoting mattering within communities fosters wellness and fairness in equal measure. By using the new science of feeling valued and adding value, the authors provide a guide to promoting happier lives and healthier societies.

Isaac Prilleltensky is an award-winning academic and former Dean of the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Miami, USA, where he currently serves as Professor and Vice Provost for Institutional Culture. He also has published 11 books and over 130 papers.

Ora Prilleltensky is a former assistant clinical professor and the former Director of the major in Human and Social Development at the University of Miami, USA. She is a wheelchair-user and has published a book in 2004 about her research on motherhood and disability. She has worked in a variety of clinical settings and has co-authored three books on the promotion of well-being.

## Advance Praise for *How People Matter*

This deeply illuminating volume is essential reading for those interested in mattering, meaning in life, happiness, and mental health. The authors provide a wonderfully comprehensive, integrative overview of mattering in a wide variety of life domains and its power to positively transform our love relationships and ourselves. I warmly recommend this groundbreaking book as the go-to resource for students, professionals, researchers, and the general public interested in better understanding how to approach the topic of mattering and how to use the useful insights provided by the authors in order to reach a happier and more meaningful life.

Mario Mikulincer, Founding Dean, Baruch Ivcher School of Psychology, Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya; author of *Human Learned Helplessness* and *Attachment in Adulthood: Structure, Dynamics, and Change*; editor of the Herzliya APA Series on Personality and Social Psychology.

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In this brilliant book, Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky elevate the notion of mattering, a concept that is perfectly suited for our times. In contrast to the individualistic ethos of the “Me Culture,” mattering focuses on adding value to others, culminating in a “We Culture.” This book is written in a personal, evocative, and passionate way, relating meaningful encounters with the authors and people in their lives as well as with critically needed ideas. The book reads like a fascinating novel that illuminates and enlightens while also creating the framework for a more authentic life and a more just world in which people feel called to contribute.

David Blustein, Duganne Faculty Fellow and Professor, Lynch School of Education and Human Development, Boston College; author of *The Importance of Work in an Age of Uncertainty*; editor of *The Oxford Handbook of the Psychology of Working*.

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It is difficult to describe all that the Prilleltenskys have accomplished with *How People Matter*. With gentleness and humor, the book embraces big, important elements under the heading of mattering: love, political action, Black Lives Matter, meaning in life, meaning to each other. They show the inseparability of social currents from our own well-being as they incisively describe contemporary “me culture”; they introduce illuminating new concepts like “wellfair” and the building of a “caring sector” in society; they offer clear, helpful strategies for putting their concepts to work in our lives. Loving, funny, brilliant, honest, and open, the Prilleltenskys emerge as the kind of friends that we all wish we had. Their work is liberation psychology for everyone.

Laura Smith, Teachers College, Columbia University; author of *Psychology, Poverty, and the End of Social Exclusion*.

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*How People Matter* is a wonderfully detailed user’s guide to help people feel valued for what they do and actually add value with what they do. It combines discussion of relevant research with lots of very practical tips that will help us lead more useful, productive, and fulfilling lives. There is a valuable lesson on almost every page.

Barry Schwartz, U. C. Berkeley; author of *Why We Work* and *Practical Wisdom*, among other books.

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A book on mattering or feeling valued and adding value is timely and immensely critical. This book deepens our understanding of the power of dignity and self-worth and calls us to action as individuals and as a “collective we” to enhance mattering for all. It spans the arenas of mattering for the self, for relationships, for work, and for communities, giving us frameworks and tools to spur understanding and action. It marries concerns for wellness and fairness at all levels and offers inspiration and actions to make their fusion a reality. The book is both practical and wise, integrating diverse streams of social science to make mattering a process we can appreciate, understand, and act upon.

Jane Dutton, Robert L. Kahn Distinguished University Professor Emerita of Business Administration, University of Michigan; author of *Awakening Compassion at Work*.

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This book is a joy to read and I did not want it to end. It should go a long way toward making mattering a bigger focus in the academic community

and in people's lives. But what most comes through these pages is the heart and humanity of Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky. They remind us that mattering, like life, is about people, and it represents a way forward during a time when a way forward is perhaps needed more than ever.

Gordon Flett, York University, Toronto; author of *The Psychology of Mattering*.

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Feeling good by doing good has the ring of a self-help cliché. There is a healthy dollop of self-help in this entertaining and beautifully written book – but there is also so much more. Adding value to others and oneself is a credo for how to create a better society, one that fosters good relationships and well-being. And it is all based on evidence that takes us from the individual, relationships, and work to what needs to happen in society. Psychology in a very social perspective – grand.

Sir Michael Marmot, Institute of Health Equity, University College London; author of the *The Status Syndrome: How Social Standing Affects Our Health and Longevity* and *The Health Gap: The Challenge of an Unequal World*.

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Chock full of science and real-life stories, *How People Matter* beautifully illustrates practical steps to cultivating a more meaningful life. Isaac and Ora do a masterful job of balancing the need for wellness with the importance of fairness in creating a more harmonious world where we can all truly become happy together.

Suzie Pileggi Pawelski, MAPP, and James O. Pawelski, PhD; coauthors of *Happy Together: Using the Science of Positive Psychology to Build Love that Lasts*.

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Through *How People Matter*, Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky make a critical and timely call: to pursue meaning, to balance rights and responsibilities, to seek both wellness and fairness, at home, at work, and in social life. It is a judicious appeal for our troubled times.

Julio Frenk, MD, MPH, PhD, President, University of Miami.

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What a great book on mattering! The authors have a real gift for turning complex academic ideas into something that many people can understand and apply to their own lives. This volume puts the very important issue of mattering center stage and gives us tips on how we can all get a bit more mattering in our own lives or in the lives of others. The mattering wheel is

a great resource around which we can plan actions ourselves to increase what we do to ensure that everyone matters. Leave the bookshop with a fabulous gift. After you have read this book, the importance of mattering will be yours forever.

Angie Hart, University of Brighton, United Kingdom; author of *Building a New Community Psychology of Mental Health: Spaces, Places, People and Activities*.

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In their insightful and compelling book, Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky offer us a path out of our current crisis of self-absorption and self-obsession. They do this by teaching us how to balance our concern with our own well-being with actions that promote the well-being of others, and by helping us recognize that all of us – especially those whose skin color, income, birthplace, or disability status differs from our own – *matter*.

Mark Pancer, Professor Emeritus, Wilfrid Laurier University; author of *The Psychology of Civic Engagement*.

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This is a book of our time. Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky have provided us with an excellent guide for what we can do about the mess we find ourselves in. They have provided an exceptionally clear explanation of why so many experience so much angst and what can be done about it. The Prilleltenskys help us understand why it is critical to matter as an individual, in our families, in our relationships, in our work, and in our communities.

The Prilleltenskys have provided excellent step-by-step guidance and activities that lead to greater personal skill and ability to impact one's own life and the lives of others. An example is the BET I CAN method in which they instruct the reader on developing understanding of Behaviors, Emotions, Thoughts, Interactions, Context, Awareness, and Next Steps. The presentations are easy to grasp and come with specific guidance on developing mastery of each of the concepts. Well-developed examples, vignettes, and case studies are presented that provide the reader with a clear understanding of how to incorporate steps of learning into the practice of living. *How People Matter* will be an excellent addition to a book club list. Anyone interested in learning more effective approaches to improving life, love, work, and community will benefit greatly from this fantastic book.

Arthur M. (Andy) Horne, Dean Emeritus and Distinguished Research Professor, College of Education, University of Georgia; coauthor of *Bullying Prevention: Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing*

*Social Competence*; coeditor of *Realizing Social Justice: The Challenge of Preventive Interventions*.

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*How People Matter* is a timely challenge to the notion of self-absorption that threatens our humanity and our planet. An in-depth explanation of personal and political dimensions of mattering within the arenas of self, relationships, work, and community is skillfully integrated with practical guidelines for finding balance between valuing the self and adding value in all these arenas. This inspiring work can be applied in any context to facilitate transformation toward wellness and fairness for all.

Dr Ansie Elizabeth Kitching, Associate Professor in Educational Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

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Ora and Isaac's poignant new book helps the reader construct what makes life worthwhile: the capacity to feel valued and to add value in our intimate relations, at work, and in society. Ora and Isaac document how we can navigate from a "Me Culture," primarily individualistic and hedonistic, to a "We Culture," communitarian and transformative. They address how to overcome powerlessness and helplessness, offering specific strategies like the BET I CAN method to change our thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Their aim is to develop a culture where we can pursue values such as autonomy and freedom that increase our own well-being as well as values such as compassion, empathy, generosity, and justice that promote the well-being of others. I am sure this book will be a seminal text in helping America complete the French revolution, promoting not only individual freedom but also equality and fraternity. It has done too much of a good job promoting liberty. America now has to focus more on equality and justice, promoting a culture balancing wellness with fairness, rights with responsibilities, feeling valued with adding value to others.

Donata Francescato, former Community Psychology Professor (Sapienza, Rome), current Co-Director of the Association for Individual and Community Development (ASPIC); author of twenty-three books on interventions to promote individual and social change, published in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Chinese, and Japanese.

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With their new book *How People Matter*, Isaac and Ora Prilleltensky join the ranks of Martin Seligman and Brené Brown as brilliant scientists and

teachers who translate what they have learned into accessible and practical advice. By exploring the role of mattering to self, to others, at work, and within a community, the Prilleltenskys provide a thoughtful road map for how adding value and feeling valued leads to a fulfilling life.

Julie Haizlip, MD MAPP, University of Virginia Schools of Nursing and Medicine.

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Increasing employee engagement and creating inclusive environments are hot topics on corporate “to-do” lists. But many leadership teams struggle with how to accomplish these goals and how to know what initiatives will make a cultural impact. The psychological concept of mattering can provide a road map for leaders looking to develop productive and positive energy in their organization. In this fascinating and extremely practical new book, the authors provide a great resource for leaders to create an environment where employees feel seen, heard, and appreciated and where they can make a contribution to the enterprise. This is creating an environment where people feel they are valued and their work is valuable. This is mattering, a topic every manager should master. Let Isaac and Ora be your guides!

Rebecca Lamperski, Executive Director, Learning & Development, Comcast University.

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Far from a typical self-help book of instructions, the Prilleltenskys have graced us with a humble, thoughtful, and instantly appealing analysis of what it means and what it takes to become ever more human, ever more connected to family, friends, coworkers, and community. Filled with personal stories of kindness and brilliance, this book makes the reader enjoy the ride as much as the reward. People who develop a healthy personality appreciate and exercise free choice. So should you. Be kind to yourself. Choose to read this terrific book. I promise it will greatly affect your heart and mind. Time spent reading, reflecting on, and appreciating the wisdom, lessons, and suggestions within the pages of this delightful book will inspire and repay the effort. In valuing yourself and adding value to others, you deserve to use this time. Together, we may all continue to grow our hippocampus and our humanity.

Peter A. Gorski, MD, MPA, Professor of Pediatrics and Humanities, Health & Society, Wertheim College of Medicine, Florida International University; Professor of Public Health, Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami.

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As we all go through the global pandemic together, it is clear that we must embrace the collective “We” rather than the self-centric “Me.” *How People Matter* shows us how we can make the transition from an individualistic to a communitarian culture. From managing the self to maintaining our relationships through effective emotional regulation, importance is given to understanding the contexts of our lives. By using numerous anecdotes, case studies, and authoritative research, the authors bring to us an in-depth look at mattering and its relationship to our health, happiness, love, work, and society. This book is undeniably a most helpful read for everyone. What makes it extra special is the strategies described to enhance the various domains of one’s life. The simple tips outlined and the description of the steps are alone worthy of your time. Buy it. Read it. Transform. Matter.

Sangeeta Bhatia, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology,  
Gargi College, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India.

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Using humor, research, and real-life examples, Ora and Isaac Prilleltensky deftly lay out the foundation of why mattering is so important to well-being and happiness. Here they offer a practical approach to how we can feel valued and add value in all areas of life. This book is not only timely but also necessary for personal and systemic change.

Karen Guggenheim, social entrepreneur, co-founder of WOHASU Foundation and World Happiness Summit.



# HOW PEOPLE MATTER

*Why It Affects Health, Happiness, Love, Work, and Society*

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*University of Miami*

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*We dedicate this book to our sister and sister-in-law, Miriam  
(Cachi) Prilleltensky and Myriam Rapoport, for making the  
world a better place by helping people matter.*

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