Going beyond pure technology - how soft factors - are vital to improve medical care.

Thought-provoking essays by an array of distinguished contributors, based on contemporary research and wide-ranging experience in clinical practice, show how we can and must go beyond pure technology in order to improve clinical care. Cultural and social factors on the part of the patients; the practitioner's own personality and other “soft factors”; society trends such as increased migration; communication skills; techniques ranging from mindfulness, cognitive psychology, and narrative medicine, to humor. All these and other human factors that medical professionals and those in training (physicians, nurses, counselors, and others) need to integrate into practice to provide effective and cost-effective care are explored and illuminated here by leading experts from a variety of disciplines.