

# Failures of Agency: Irrational Behavior and Self-Understanding

Annemarie Kalis



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Failures of Agency: Irrational Behavior and Self-Understanding begins by exploring classic philosophical questions regarding the phenomenon of weakness of will or *akrasia*: doing A, even though all things considered, you judge it best to do B. Does this phenomenon really exist and if so, how should it be explained? Author Annemarie Kalis provides an historical overview of some traditional answers to these questions and addresses the main question: how does the phenomenon of 'going against your own judgment' relate to the idea that we are rational beings? She elaborates on the notion of rational agency and shows how different types of behavior express or fail to express our rational agency. This leads to the speculation of what is needed for akratic action to be *free* action. A novel position is developed, stating that certain widespread philosophical accounts of free action must conclude that 'going against your own judgment' is necessarily unfree. This also requires a reflection on possible implications for moral responsibility. Would it mean that people cannot be held accountable for irrational behavior? Kalis offers insight on whether everyday irrational behavior differs from irrational behavior occurring in the context of psychiatric dysfunction, and develops a view on how we should understand ourselves when we do something other than what we judge best. Written for philosophers, psychologists and psychiatrists interested in issues of irrationality and philosophy of action, this is an indispensable book for both professionals and students interested in interdisciplinary endeavors in the science of mind and behavior.

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