

# A Critical Review of Eight Highly-Rated Books on Moral Theology: Finding a Common Ground For an Ethics Education Program

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**Abstract:** *This paper reviews eight highly-rated books on Moral Theology to find a common ground for an ethics education program for undergraduate students. Using James Rest's four domains of moral functioning as its frame of reference, it examined the substantive contents and determined the extent of their alignment with identified learning outcomes for an undergraduate ethics course. Although they differed in the elements of approach and method, it is evident that in terms of their overall substantive content, the eight books adequately covered what is widely considered as the foundation stones of Catholic morality. Nonetheless, it is clear that their usefulness as "tool, tutor, and guide" for ethics education would largely have to depend on the professional competence, intended outcomes, pedagogical skills/strategies, and personal qualities of the facilitator.*

**Keywords:** *Ethics, Moral Functioning, Development, Learning Outcomes*

## Introduction

James Bretzke, S.J., one of the leading and most prolific scholars in the field of contemporary Roman Catholic Moral Theology, provides an impressive list of both classical and contemporary sources of Moral Theology books, of which 32 are post-Vatican II Manuals of Moral Theology, 52 are articles on Fundamental Christian Ethics, and 73 are on Fundamental Ethics, authored by Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox moral theologians.<sup>1</sup> As a collective response to Vatican II's call for renewal in Moral Theology, the manuals and articles were, for the most part, written

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<sup>1</sup> James T. Bretzke, "Select Bibliography on Fundamental Moral Theology." Available on line <https://www2.bc.edu/...bretzke/FundamentalMoralBibliography...>

to address one of the pressing hermeneutical tasks confronting the Church and theology today: the development of a contemporary form of mediating the traditional moral principles of Roman Catholic Moral Theology to the cultural, theological, and ecclesial contexts within which theologians are working.<sup>2</sup> In particular, they are attempts on “how to teach the riches of the Christian tradition to undergraduates in an accessible and attractive manner.” This includes their capacity to speak to the common questions that may be asked especially by Christians who search for ethical meaning in their lives. Based on my experience with my own students, these questions would include the following: “Why be moral?” “Who needs morality?” “What’s in it for me?” “What use is ethics to me or what advantages does it bring me?” “Does it give me an advantage over those who may not be moral?” “What is the point of being moral?” In effect, they also are attempts to answer the question: “What is the point of being a Christian?”<sup>3</sup> More importantly, perhaps, they can also not only be oriented to the authentic and authoritative answers to these questions but show how they can contribute to their moral development.

To find a common ground for an ethics education program, I decided to review eight highly-rated books in Fundamental Moral Theology (FMT), explore their substantive content, and to determine the extent of their alignment with identified learning outcomes for an undergraduate ethics course.<sup>4</sup> Since all the books that Bretzke listed were equally worthy of attention, I turned to Goodreads and Amazon Books to have a fair selection method. Both using a five-star scale to rate books to determine readers’ reception, the former is “a website that allows individuals to freely search its database of books... to help people find and share the books they love.” The latter is a chain of retail bookstores owned by online retailer Amazon. Based on their most current cumulative ratings, I selected the

<sup>2</sup> Robert Dorran, “A New Project in Systematic Theology,” in *Theological Studies* 2015, Vol. 76 (2): 244-246; T. Howland Sanks, “A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Dynamics of Tradition,” in *Theological Studies* (2015). Vol. 76 (2): 298-299; Kevin E. O’Reilly, OP, “University Education Construed in the Light of Faith. A Review. Edited by the Dominicans of the English Province. Vol. 98, No. 1076, (July 2017): 373-386. doi:10.1111/nbfr.12046. 2013; John C. Cavadini, “Why Study God? The Role of Theology at a Catholic University,” in *Commonweal*, (October 2013). Available online at [sites.nd.edu/oblation/.../why-study-god-the-role-of-theology-at-a-catholic-university/](http://sites.nd.edu/oblation/.../why-study-god-the-role-of-theology-at-a-catholic-university/); Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987): 27.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Radcliffe, O.P., *What is the Point of Being a Christian?* (New York: Burns and Oates, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Sharkey, “A Critical Review of Some Best Selling Textbooks in Catholic Social Teaching,” in *The Catholic Social Science Review*, Vol. IX, (2004): 317-337.

eight-course books to describe, compare, and determine whether their contents are aligned with a set of identified course intended learning outcomes (CILOs) for an ethics development program. Table 1 shows the selected books arranged from the highest to the lowest cumulative ratings.

The paper is instructive about the challenges and issues faced by academicians and students who are looking for quality FMT manuals that “would speak to them.”<sup>5</sup> Using the profiles on the books generated by it, they can draw some conclusions which book can serve well as “tool, tutor and guide” towards the moral development of their undergraduate students.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 1: Selected Course books, their authors, title, and publication year**

Authors	Titles/ Publication Year	No. of Reviews	Ratings	Cumulative Rating
Pinckaers, S.	The Sources of Christian Ethics (1995)	14	86	4.65
Willems, S.	Understanding Catholic Morality (1997)	1	2	4.50
Cessario, R.	Introduction to Moral Theology (2001)	4	26	4.42
Pesche, K.	Christian Ethics; General Moral Theology in Light of Vatican II (2012)	1	5	4.20
Prummer, D.	Handbook of Moral Theology (1995)	3	6	4.13
Mattison, W.	Introducing Moral Theology (2008)	54	9	4.01

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Callahan, “Goals in the Teaching of Ethics,” in Daniel Callahan & Sisella Bok (Eds.) *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*: (1980): 61-80. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-3138-7>; David T. Ozar, “Learning Outcomes for Ethics across the Curriculum Programs,” Available online at <https://www.uvu.edu/.../Learning%20Outcomes%20for%20Ethics%20Across%20the>.

<sup>6</sup> Gerald Kulm, JoEllen Roseman, & Michelle Treistman, “A Benchmarks-Based Approach to Textbook Evaluation,” Available online at [www.project2061.org/publications/textbook/.../approach.htm](http://www.project2061.org/publications/textbook/.../approach.htm).

Authors	Titles/ Publication Year	No. of Reviews	Ratings	Cumulative Rating
William, M.	An Introduction to Moral Theology (2007)	9	23	3.92
Gula, R.	Reason Informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality (1989)	12	62	3.69

Given that among the branches of Catholic education in religion, Moral Theology or Christian Ethics is the one most likely to be challenged by what one author calls as an increase in “moral deregulation” or “moral relativism,”<sup>7</sup> this review would earn a greater significance. This perceived challenge is due in part to its traditional approach to knowledge. While the classical or traditional education in religious ethics begins with the abstract, is primarily deductive, appeals to tradition, authority and pre-established norms, puts a high premium on duty and obligations, its counterparts begin with experience, is primarily inductive, individualistic bent, and highly sensitive to the personal, historical, and cultural contexts as valid sources of moral wisdom and knowledge. On the other hand, a book may admittedly be sound in its substantive message content but its approach, focus, and method may not be appropriate to the development level of their intended end-users. Thus, there is also a need to factor in not only the social and cultural conditions of the young people today but also their dispositions.<sup>8</sup> In recent times, it is no longer convenient to presume that today’s youth, whom sociologist labeled as Gen Zers, are merely passive recipients of what the teachers may provide them inside the classrooms. They have minds and views of their own sometimes opposed diametrically to those of the traditional sources of moral wisdom and knowledge: family, church, and school.<sup>9</sup> As a generational cohort, they are described as more active, more individualistic, more assertive,

<sup>7</sup> Christina H. Sommers, “Are we living in a moral stone age?” in *Imprimis*. Available online at <https://books.google.com.ph/books?isbn=0295800763>

<sup>8</sup> Michael Carino, “Evangelism in a Postmodern World (Part 1) Reaching a Conversational Generation,” Available online at <https://bible.org/article/clash-cultures-evangelism-postmodern-world-part-i>. 2000; Rina Jimenez-David, “A teen-pregnancy crisis,” in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (July 01 2016). Available online at [inquirer.net](http://inquirer.net).

<sup>9</sup> Diana Villegas, *The Christian Path in a Pluralistic World and the Study of Spirituality* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2012): 3

and more involved than their previous counterparts in what is happening in the world today, qualities that can both facilitate and hinder the learning and teaching processes.<sup>10</sup>

More importantly, perhaps, they have also become in their ways not only consumers but also producers of knowledge facilitated by their increased use and facility with communication and information technologies (CITs) and social media.<sup>11</sup> Coupled with a culture of consumerism, in an “emerging cultural context often designated by the admittedly slippery term, post-modernity,” the CITs have encouraged pluralism of belief systems among them. Consideration of these changes will contribute to a better use of course books today in a richer and more nuanced historical context. Knowing and understanding that these are the kind of students that academics have to deal with will significantly contribute to a more relevant content and student-friendly education in religion.

## The Four-Component Model of Moral Behavior

To bring this review into focus and provide a framework for its purpose, it utilized the four-component model of moral functioning identified by James R. Rest and his fellow developmental psychologists as areas in which an ethics education program can work holistically for the moral development of undergraduate students.<sup>12</sup> As an alternative to Kohlberg’s cognitive-developmental stage theory, and in place of the traditional tripartite model of thinking, feeling, and acting, Rest and his colleagues designed this model to understand and explain the morality of everyday life, especially in the context of professional decision-making.<sup>13</sup> This model seeks to answer the question of what is required to act morally, as well as to explain how

<sup>10</sup> Carol Ellam, Terry Stratton, & Denise Gibson, “Welcoming a New Generation to College: The Millennial Students,” in *Journal of College Admission* (2007):20-25.

<sup>11</sup> William Strauss & Neil Howe, *Millennial Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Original, 2000): 370.

<sup>12</sup> James R. Rest, “A Psychologist Looks at the Teaching of Ethics. Moral Development and Moral Education,” in *Hastings Center Report* (1982):29-36. Doi: 10.2307/3560621; Michael J. Bebeau, James Rest, & Darcia Narvaez, “Beyond the Promise: A Perspective on Research in Moral Education,” in *Volume: 28 issue: 4*, (1999):18-26. Available on line at <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X028004018>; William M. Kurtines, Jacob L. Gewirtz, & Sharon Lamb, (Eds.) (2014). *The College Experience and Moral Development from Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development, Volume 2*. (2014); David T. Ozar, “Learning Outcomes for Ethics across the Curriculum Programs Available online at <https://www.uvu.edu/.../Learning%20Outcomes%20for%20Ethics%20Across%20the...>

<sup>13</sup> Liisa Myrsky, “Components of Morality: A Professional Ethics Perspective on Moral Motivation, Moral Sensitivity, Moral Reasoning and Related Constructs among University Students,” in *Social Psychology Studies* 9. Department of Psychology, University of Helsinki (2003); Larry Nucci, & Darcia Narvaez, ((Eds.) “*Handbook of Moral and Character Education*” (New York: Routledge, 2008).

persons who clearly knew what was right could act otherwise.<sup>14</sup> Although they might interact and influence one another Rest also pointed out that (1) the four components are distinct from each other, (2) the order is logical rather than chronological, and (3) that they are processes involved in the production of a moral act, not general traits of people. Finally, he contends that a fundamental rethinking of how the intended outcomes of ethics education are needed so that it could be more responsive to the moral needs of the students in the contexts of their social and cultural environment today.

The first identified learning-outcome is **moral sensitivity**. It refers to the ability by which a subject interprets the ethical dimension of a particular situation. Ethics education should enable learners to discern which lines of action are possible in a particular situation, identify the stakeholders, and figure out how each line of action would affect their welfare and interest.<sup>15</sup> It involves being aware that there is a moral issue at hand that would involve role-taking and empathy.<sup>16</sup> Its absence or lack thereof in a subject is moral blindness or the incapacity to identify ethical issues in the complexity and ambiguity of real-life settings. Such deficiency may also cause one to turn a blind eye to a moral situation.

The second outcome is **moral judgment or reasoning**. It refers to the ability to decide which line of action within a specific situation is the morally ideal one, that is, what ought the person to do as an imperative or which line of action is morally justified. Ethics education should enable students to acquire what Aristotle once referred to as moral wisdom or practical knowledge as distinguished from mere intellectual wisdom (or the theoretical knowledge of the good). Its absence or deficiency in a subject is called faulty reasoning or the incapacity to analyze moral issues and provide justifications/reasons for one's decisions.

The third outcome is **moral motivation and commitment**. It refers to the subject's conscious affirmation of and pattern of

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<sup>14</sup> David Callahan, "Goals in the Teaching of Ethics." in D. Callahan, Bok, S. (Eds.) *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*: 61-80. Part of The Hastings Center Series in Ethics book series. Springer, Boston, MA. DOI[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-3138-4\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4613-3138-4_2). (1980); JoAnn Klinker, & Donald Hackman, "An Analysis of Principals' Ethical Decision Making Using Rest's Four Component Model of Moral Behavior," in *Journal of School Leadership*, Vol. 14 (July 2004): 434-448.

<sup>15</sup> Gideon Lasco, "Pagkakanya-kanya" in *Philippine Daily Inquirer* April 5, 2018. Available online at [inquirer.net](http://inquirer.net).

<sup>16</sup> Paul Vermeer & Johann Van der Ven, "Students' Moral Consciousness," in *Journal of Empirical Theology*, Vol. 15, (2002): 57.

living habitually according to certain values/principles/ideas that lead to actions in accord with his/her ethical judgments in a concrete situation. The decision on what to do or not do is based on a personal moral frame of reference. Ethics education should enable students to create their personal identity around the moral values/principles/norms. Its absence or deficiency is called lack of motivation or the incapacity to give priority to moral values over other personal and cultural values.

The fourth and last outcome is **moral character and competence**. It refers to the practical and emotional ability to carry out the course of action that a person has judged ought to be done and is motivated to do. It is “having the strength of one’s convictions, having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions and obstacles, having implementing skills, and having ego strength.”<sup>17</sup> Ethics in its literal sense means “character” suggesting that ethics is all about practicing what is good and right in the concrete situation of one’s life. Does the person act on the basis of what he/she knows as the good or right thing to do? Its absence or lack thereof is called moral paralysis due to one’s weakness or incapacity to act or not to act in accordance with one’s judgment and conviction.

Rest has made it clear that the failure to behave morally can result from deficiencies in any of the four components. Firstly, if a person is insensitive to the need of others, or if a situation is too ambiguous, the person may fail to act morally (deficiency in component I). Secondly, if a person is deficient in formulating a moral course of action or may employ simplistic and inadequate moral reason, that person may pass either a bad and/or wrong judgment (Component II). Thirdly, if a person does not possess or is deficient in certain values/principles/ideas, that person's morality can be compromised or preempted by other values (Component III). Or, it may be that a person has decided upon a moral course of action, but loses sight of the goal, is distracted, or just wears out (Component IV). Moral development entails gaining the ability in all the four components.<sup>18</sup>

Thus ethics education program- understood in its most general sense of life-long influences, both in and out of school- should

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Beth Armstrong, Edward J. Ketz, & Dwight Owsenc, “Ethics Education in Accounting: Moving towards Ethical Motivation and Ethical Behavior,” Available online at [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0748-5751\(02\)00017-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0748-5751(02)00017-9).

be concerned with these four components. Moral functioning is understood as an ensemble of these four components rather than a single, unitary process. In so far as a specific program or academic course contributes to proficiency in any of these four components, it contributes to moral development. This socio-psychological model assumes that moral behavior is defined not solely by its external consequences (someone was helped, the behavior conform to the social norm) but by the internal or dispositional processes that govern it. In this light, the intended learning outcome for an undergraduate ethics education program would be as follows:

1. To develop or enhance the students' sensitivity to/awareness of the ethical/moral issues likely to arise in their personal, social and professional lives.
2. To develop or enhance their competency to discern the good and the right in the conflicts or dilemmas inherent in the concrete situations of their lives.
3. To form in them a personal moral identity that integrates/ embeds objective norms and values with the subjective dimensions of their personality.
4. To create or reinforce an already embedded and budding moral commitment in them strong enough to practice/ implement the norms/principles/values that they have learned or gained in the course of their ethics education.

## Findings and Discussion

This section presents the three main findings of my review of the substantive content of the eight books' in terms of their focus, approach, method, and alignment with the identified CILOs of an ethics education program.

Firstly, although their respective authors may have expectedly differed in the elements of approach and method, it is evident that in terms of their overall substantive content, the eight books adequately covered what is widely considered as the foundation stones of Catholic morality. This includes: the nature and purpose of the moral life, morality as the path to genuine happiness, the intimate links between seeming opposites such as faith and morality, faith and reason, revealed and natural law, objective law and conscience, the cardinal and theological virtues, sin, and conversion.



More importantly, there is not only a clear focus on orienting the intended readers to the “what” and “why” of the Christian morality but likewise provide guide questions and activities to help them achieve competency or “how” to do what is expected of them. The common feature of the eight books is in their clear and balanced presentation of the teachings of the sources of morality and their relevance and meaning for the lives of their readers. As the characteristic approach of Roman Catholic moral tradition, there is a conscious desire to remain rooted in the tradition received but also open to reason’s critical reflection on human experience. Following the Catholic principle of mediation, all of them acknowledge the traditional sources of Catholic FMT (scriptures, tradition and Magisterium of the Church) and the wisdom of ressourcement of what they called as intellectual giants, “smart and holy people” who have gone before us on the common quest for happiness.<sup>19</sup> There is a collective desire to understand and explain how Catholic Morality is grounded in Sacred Scriptures and Tradition as received and communicated by the Magisterium of the Church. It is clear that the approach is characterized by what one author called as a religion in education approach. This approach “focuses on the introduction of students into one specific religious tradition and does so in such a way that a certain religious commitment is created or a budding religious commitment is reinforced and embedded in a person.”<sup>20</sup> I believed that based on these preliminary observations alone, all the eight books will be excellent textbooks for a course in FMT.

Secondly, one dominant theme emerged as the focus or the heart of the whole moral life. Unlike with the pre-Vatican 11 manuals, it is not the duties and obligations. Instead, there is a wide consensus that at its center, as one of the authors put it, “is not elements such as laws and rules and obligations (although they are also important) but is an ongoing initiation into a way of life capable of making a person good and therefore truly happy.” The search for happiness is the dominant theme. Echoing this classical view of the moral life as the quest for happiness, Pinckaers states that “Christian morality is not first of all about obligations but about happiness, understanding that the happiness of union with God is our natural

<sup>19</sup> William C. Mattison III. *Introducing Moral Theology*. (Brazos Press, 2008): 11

<sup>20</sup> J.Z.T. Pieper, & Paul Vermeer, “Religious Consciousness of Dutch Youth: Consequences for Religious Education,” in *Journal of Empirical Theology* 14, 2 (2002): 56.

destiny made possible by grace.” The lay Catholic Mattison started his book by asking about a basic human question: What is a good life? He argued that the good life is a life of happiness achieved by being and doing morality. Their main thesis is that Moral Theology points to the way towards the human quest for happiness and that they can find meaning in their lives and answers to their deepest questions by considering a moral life or a life of virtue.

Based on these first two observations, it is safe to say that the said books are all responsive to the three requirements and conditions of renewal in Moral Theology which Vatican II prescribed. Thus, they did not only overcome the limitations and inadequacies of classical moral theology but also addressed the pressing task to develop a contemporary form of theology confronting the Church and theologians today. To achieve this, they carefully tried to strike a delicate balancing act between the bipolar of faith. These are: taught under the light of faith and the guidance of the Church's teaching authority, rooted in the faith and dogmas of the church, and how these teachings relate to changes and developments in human history. All that being said, it is also safe to say that not all of the books were written in an accessible and attractive manner for undergraduate students. Because of their mostly classicist approach and deductive method, most of them (namely Pinckaers, Cessario, Pesche, May, and Prummer) may only be appreciated by those studying or intending to become professional theologians. Their books may need a cicerone at least for the non-expert undergraduate students and, based on my own experience in teaching Ethics to undergraduates, it would be quite a challenge to get them to read the said books. Because of their academic and essentialist approach, course facilitators on ethics who may decide to use these books may still need to work on the domains of sensitivity and character.

On the other hand, Gula's, Mattison's and Willems's books, because of their experiential/historicist approach and inductive conversational method would be more student-friendly and accessible to the non-scholars and undergraduate students. In addition, they also provide further readings to help deepen students' moral understanding of the topics at hand and thus encourage their maximum participation in the learning process. They even contain study guides, questions, and suggested further readings to allow them to learn and think on their own and thus promote critical and

creative thinking skills. Because of their inductive and narrative style of writing, Mattison and Willem's perhaps succeeded in basing the basic and objective content of Roman Catholic morality in the subjective or descriptive morality of the present-day students.<sup>21</sup> Gula's book, on the other hand, is remarkable for its clarity and heroic attempt to address the creative tension between the bipolar of faith and reason, change and continuity, objective and subjective morality, and so on and so forth.

Thirdly and finally, most, if not all, of the textbooks reviewed here can be readily described as evidently and fully aligned with the CILOs for the ethics education of undergraduate students. The only difference lies in the level of importance allotted to each of the four components. While there are books that tend to focus on the domain of moral motivation and reasoning, for example, others tend to pay more attention to moral sensitivity and implementation. On one end of the scale are three books that seemed to me are the most evidently aligned with the CILOs, namely, Gula's, Willems' and Mattison's. To understand the nature of morality and moral reflection, Gula directly examined and explained the four domains as identified by Rest. These are sensitivity, reflection, and judgment and moral character. He views the domain of sensitivity/awareness as fundamental because it "awakens (our) moral consciousness and gives a basis in reality to (our) moral judgments." It is sensitivity to the value, sacredness or worth of the human person or sacredness of human life." Empathy is another name for this value. Moreover, he discussed the four moral components of Rest in the context of the relationship between conscience and the moral life.<sup>22</sup> Following the teachings of Vatican II, he designates conscience as first and foremost an awareness of moral truth or the basic moral principles of morality. It is this awareness that enables the individual person to be sensitive to the particular situation. In direct reference to the domain of implementation, Gula, ethics explains that the formation of character is the goal of ethics.

Although she did not explicitly name them, Willems' presentation also strongly suggests alignment with the four domains. With regards to awareness, she states that the book "will

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Richard M. Gula, "Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality" (New York: Paulist Press, 1989): 57-70.

attempt to fine-tune the readers' assessment of moral wrongs but it will do so by focusing on the positive side of morality." In terms of moral judgment, a part of the process of moral decision making, she aimed to help readers make moral decision rooted in the moral wisdom of (our) foremothers and forefathers and moral authority of the church. In terms of motivation and inspiration for moral decisions one makes, she presents the putting on the mind and heart of Jesus as the goal of moral theology and as the norm of the moral life. It is about "penetrating the human mind and heart of the person so that morally right actions emerge from personal conviction. In terms of implementation, she made mention of the idea of living the moral life on how to follow Jesus and the formation of moral character as what defines us as persons. Integrity, truth, courage, goodness, love, and compassion are the significant traits moral character that flows from one's basic character. The primary goal of Catholic moral theology is to form a moral character modeled on the person of Jesus. But it is in the domains of moral reflection and motivation that Willem's book proved to be strongest. In Chapter 7 of her book, she provides cases highlighting difficult decisions that involve moral judgments and provides a framework that can assist a person who is making a moral decision. It also applies the principles of Catholic morality to specific life situations throughout the book making it ideal for personal and classroom study. Focusing on the moral development of the learner and not simply on the acquisition of learning Willem's book has a person-oriented approach that begins with the person of Jesus and continues its search for moral truth and goodness in human persons

Likewise, Mattison's conversational style of writing easily connect with his intent is to enable people who are not trained in the academic discipline of moral theology to understand and utilize the students' practical reasoning better so as to live more virtuous lives. The two cornerstone ideas behind his book: the moral life is a happy life and the happy life is rooted in discovering the truth about who and what human beings are in their relationships with each other and the world would be an easy sell to them. In an accessible and hospitable manner, (not academic), he clearly demonstrates that happiness is the goal of life. A moral life leads to authentic happiness. The approach is existential as it starts with human lives and the questions that arise as humans live their lives. As opposed

to the so-called morality of obligations, it proposes a moral life that hinges upon the development of virtues as stable qualities that enable the person to live a good life. His perspective of a virtuous life is to live a moral life are on all fours with the components of moral functioning. In particular, this applies to the virtue of prudence as the virtue of choosing well or doing practical decision-making well.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This review critiques eight highly-rated books on FMT through the lens of James Rest's four domains of moral functioning as identified CILOs for an ethics education program. Overall, like any other instrument, their usefulness as "tool, tutor, and guide" for ethics education would largely have to depend on the professional competence, intended outcomes, pedagogical skills/strategies, and personal/professional qualities of the ethics facilitator. In the hands of a competent, clearly motivated, innovative and authentic ethics facilitator, the eight books can all easily contribute to the moral development of undergraduate students in terms of the four domains of moral functioning: sensitivity, reasoning, motive, and implementation. As their common ground for an ethics education program, the students must and can easily relate with the eight books' clear and unmistakable focus on the moral life, not primarily as a listing of do's and don'ts (ethics of doing), but as the path to the common human search for genuine happiness through the living and practice of the virtues (ethics of being). This is particularly the case for the books authored by Mattison and Willem. Because they relate objective ethics to the subjective life situations and the world of the young people of today, integrate and ask the question that can engender ethical sensitivity, judgment, motivation, and implementation their books must and can easily connect with them who are looking for a companion in their own personal journey toward moral development. These qualities would make the task of the course ethics facilitator not only less challenging but more interesting and accessible to their undergraduate students across all program offerings.

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