Book Review

Klikauer, T. (2012). *Seven management moralities.* New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

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Seven Management Moralities begins with the premise that managers engage in actions that affect others, thus managers have a moral responsibility to all those they encounter that extends to the whole of creation. Klikauer builds on Kohlberg's theory of moral development to explain how managers may engage in moral behavior, particularly in for-profit organizations. This model consists of three categories, which are further defined by seven stages. The model assumes that managers engage in an authoritarian leadership style within a hierarchical structure. Although social workers tend to work in non-profit organizations, Klikauer's model provides a useful framework for understanding moral dilemmas that confront managers. Hence, the model may be used to help determine the moral framework from which a manager is operating and how a manager's behavior might change in order to manifest a higher level of morality.

The seven stages are broadly conceptualized under the three categories of pre-conventional morality, conventional morality, and post-conventional morality. As part of pre-conventional morality, management behavior is intended to incite workers' fear of punishment and later on, the potential for personal gain. Conventional morality means management behavior is congruent with managerial peers, which subsequently leads to behavior that reflects identification with the organization's culture. The highest level of moral development, post-conventional morality, involves management's desire to comply with external norms such as those established by regulatory agencies and the government. Internal and external resources are solicited to help management ensure global wellbeing, including the wellbeing of animals and the environment.

Again, these three categories consist of seven stages that reflect management's gradual shift in morality, as indicated by, for example, management's value of human life. Theoretically, management behavior is based on moral values that are relative to a particular stage of moral development. The seven stages of management morality include 1. Obedience and punishment, 2. Selfishness and personal benefits, 3. Social conforming, 4. Law and order, 5. Justice and economic and social welfare, 6. Universal principles, and 7. Beyond humanity. Therefore, at the lowest end of the continuum, management views workers as objects that require force (stage 1) or rewards (stage 2) for them to comply with managerial dictates. At the highest end of the continuum, managers partner with workers (stage 5) and others outside of the organization (stage 6) to manage operations that ultimately reflect one's responsibility for the preservation of all things (stage 7).

The remainder of this book details each stage of moral development. Klikauer references numerous theories across disciplines to demonstrate the moral challenges managers face and what is needed to uphold moral behavior in the for-profit environment. Being a stage model, each stage of moral development enables a manager's progression to subsequent stages. Moral processing and behavior reflect some remnants of previous stages, but less so, as more stages of moral

development are integrated and used to inform advancement across the morality continuum. This means upward movement in management morality requires a reorientation of behavior and actions to be consistent with the new level of moral functioning. Klikauer suggests that by the time management reaches level 3, lower level behaviors are extinguished. Subsequent advancement to higher levels of moral behavior requires less profound internal change to enable a fuller expression of management morality.

Klikauer concludes that in an environment where profits are valued over people, managers are not likely to operate at higher levels of morality. Workers become a means to an end so organizations can access the maximum profits for stakeholders. As workers carry out disembodied decisions on behalf of management, there is little direct accountability for the consequences of these decisions, which increases the risk for immoral behavior. Management takes advantage of opportunities to exploit resources, especially when there are rewards for such behavior that defy organizational and/or civil sanction. Management further projects entitlement to organizational rewards, even at the expense of others. However, as asserted by Klikauer earlier in the book, management is a social construction that cannot exist beyond people who recognize the legitimacy of it. Therefore, people have the potential to transform management operations so they better fulfill moral obligations to society and beyond.

Even though this book focuses on the experience of managers in for-profit organizations, it is important to consider how this model may apply to managers in non-profit organizations specific to the social work profession. It is possible that managers in non-profit organizations operate under similar conditions that, for example, involve an authoritarian leadership style within a hierarchical structure. Profits may not be the primary motive for stakeholders, but insurance reimbursement and private pay for services must cover organizational costs to the satisfaction of board members who advise them. Managed care companies nearly dictate the

type and duration of treatment that can be provided in some organizations. The public may serve as stakeholders who leverage power through public pressure for the passage of legislation that shapes organizational funding and operation in other organizations. This high-pressure environment surely leads to moral challenges faced by non-profit managers that range across the continuum.

Non-profit managers are also likely to draw upon traditional management principles and practices that have implications for the stages of management morality. For example, non-profit managers may believe workers require specific directives with close supervision of service provision (stage 1). Some workers may be singled out for promotion or merit raises that legitimize the hierarchy of preferential treatment (stage 2). These modes of behavior are more likely to be employed by managers than the sharing of power with workers to create organizational policies (stage 5). Beyond the type of organization and style of management, it also seems important to consider variation in a manager's moral predisposition. Are there differences in the morality of managers based on gender, professional experience, or role in the organization? One of the key points made by the author is that individual variation, for instance, expressed through self-interest (stage 2), will fade away as moral decisions are made to be in line with immediate peer support (stage 3) and broader organizational norms (stage 4).

Finally, it seems that the purpose of non-profit organizations is to promote social welfare (level 5), and in the case of advocacy organizations, create social change (level 6) to enhance the collective wellbeing of human, animal, and plant life (level 7). This would suggest that non-profit organizations are more inclined to have internalized the charge by society to operate at a higher moral level, although it is unclear whether individual managerial practices would be consistent with this higher calling. It seems feasible that some managers in non-profit organizations would engage in behaviors associated with lower stages of moral development based on personal preference

for managing by fear (stage 1) or desire for self-service (stage 2), despite working in a way that is congruent with the organization's charge to facilitate social transformation (stage 6). Therefore, potential differences between individual versus collective behavior, as well as behavior within a for-profit versus non-profit organization, remain unclear.

What is clear is that *Seven Management Moralities* is well-researched and integrates numerous theories of considerable depth to inform a new model of management morality. This book indirectly draws attention to the need for more research on management morality in the field of social work. Even though it is particularly important

for social work administrators and educators to read about this topic, *Seven Management Moralities* is not applicable without additional work to process it. In fact, at the beginning of this book, Klikauer admitted that the content was presented for a highly specialized audience. This results in a book that is challenging for the average person to read. This difficulty could have been alleviated if Klikauer had used more examples to link theory and model application for practice. Nevertheless, Klikauer highlights the importance of management morality and the power of social construction to reconstruct the role of management and promote the well-being of all.