



The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey

By William J. Bennett



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More than two million readers have used *The Book of Virtues*, the nationwide #1 bestseller by William J. Bennett, to help their families learn the essential traits of good character.

The Moral Compass, the inspiring and instructive companion volume to *The Book of Virtues*, offers many more examples of good and bad, right and wrong, in great works from literature and in exemplary stories from history. Organized by the stages along life's journey, these stories and poems serve as reference points on a moral compass, guiding the reader through the ethical and spiritual challenges along the pathway of life: leaving home, entering into marriage, easing the burdens of others, nurturing one's children, and fulfilling the obligations of citizenship and leadership.

Drawn from familiar Western history and mythology as well as a wide selection of tales and folklore from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the stories in *The Moral Compass* are literary and evocative, designed to inspire as well as instruct. Complete with informative introductions and notes, *The Moral Compass* is an indispensable guide that will help family members meet the challenges of life at any age.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Like Bennett's bestselling *Book of Virtues*, this volume gathers hundreds of stories, poems and essays that defend or illustrate virtue and family values. Quoting Flannery O'Connor, Bennett states the book's purpose: "You have to push as hard as the age that pushes against you." *Compass*, just as portly as its predecessor, is arranged by seven life stages and challenges: the child at home and at school; the adult in need of perseverance, compassion, family fidelity, community, responsibility and faith in God. Selections, ranging in length from just a few lines to over 15 pages, come mostly from times when masculine virtue was considered the norm and men took center stage. Most are from European or Western culture, but a not inconsiderable number are drawn from African, Asian and Latin American traditions.

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From Library Journal

In this companion volume to *The Book of Virtues* (LJ 11/1/93), former Secretary of Education Bennett hopes to keep the needle of America's moral compass pointing always to the straight and narrow. Believing that learning to be virtuous is a lifelong journey, Bennett has provided a kind of moral travel guide and map through each territory?childhood, adolescence, adulthood?along the way. Selections range from Eudora Welty's touching story "A Worn Path" (childhood) to the Cinderella-like East European folk tale "The Twelve Months" (adolescence) to the overwrought tale of Monica, the mother of St. Augustine (adulthood). Bennett's certainty about the principles of right and wrong allow no room for the complexities inherent in the struggle to be virtuous. Even so, his books have been popular precisely because of this moral nostalgia and simplicity, so demand for this title is likely to be high.

-? Henry L. Carrigan Jr., Westerville P.L., Ohio

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From [Booklist](#)

Two years back, conservative gadfly William J. Bennett frightened the publishing business when *The Book of Virtues* became one of the biggest best-sellers of the 1990s. It was an anthology of the kind of stuff that parents supposedly quit reading to their kids at least a half-century ago, stories and verses that had morals to them and nothing ironic, satiric, distanced, or otherwise modernistic about them. The book's success suggested that old verities and manners long reviled as hypocritical were back in style. It certainly mandated a second helping--this book. The contents here appear in seven sections that loosely trace life's progress from "Home and Hearth" on "Into the World" and learning when and how to persevere ("Standing Fast") and be generous and kind ("Easing the Past"), then becoming "Mothers and Fathers, Husbands and Wives" and exercising "Citizenship and Leadership," and finally ascertaining "What We Live By" --that is, why "those things we call virtues are . . . not just means; [but] very frequently . . . the ends themselves." Drawn from the Bible and Homer, from the legends of cultures throughout the world, from plenty of Victorian writers, and from the popular magazines of the pre^--World War II era, the selections are uniformly readable, definitely and honorably moral, as promised. *Ray Olson*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gary Cornejo:

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