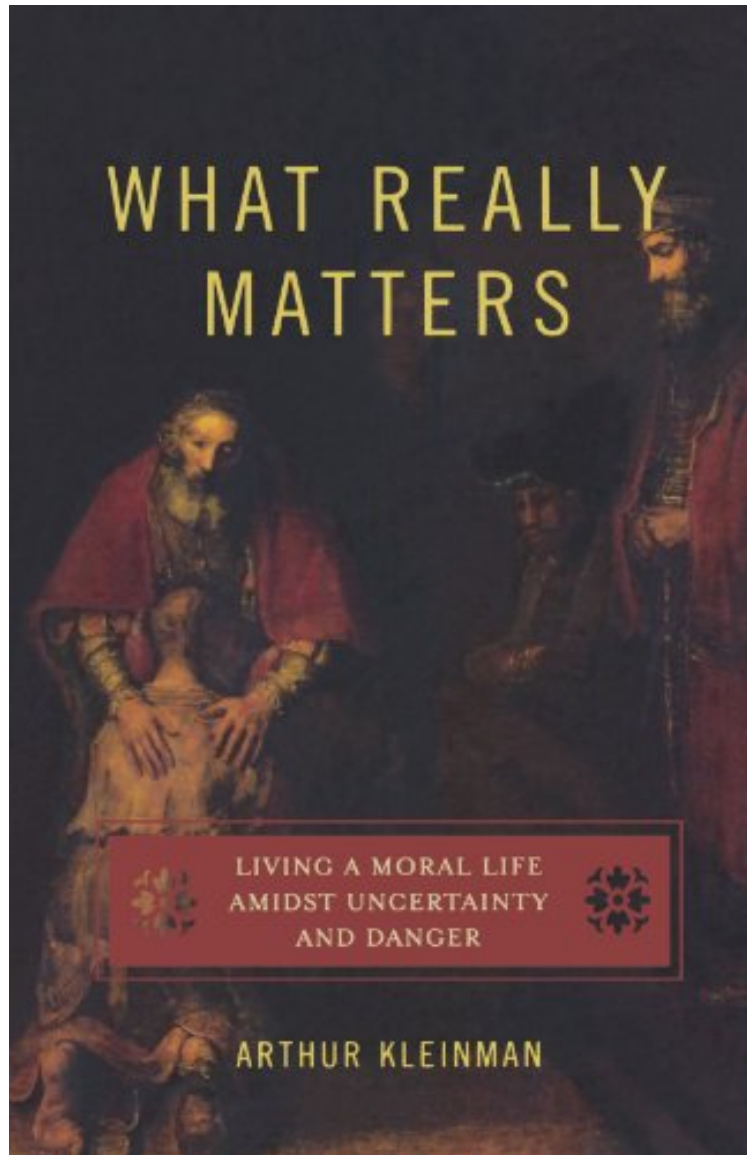


What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger

Arthur Kleinman

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Arthur Kleinman : What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Really Matters: Living a Moral Life amidst Uncertainty and Danger:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. What Really MattersBy Anthony R. BrunelloKleinman's book and its title is not a question. The author explores both philosophically, and specifically through case studies (really--human narratives) of people, the many ways to approach understanding what really matters in life. Our lives in this world are filled with joys and tragedies and it is dangerous, fraught with moral dilemmas, and we as people are each on a journey to navigate these treacherous waters. In the end, the navigation itself and the way we respond and learn from all of our experiences, tells us what really matters. I recommend this book to scholars and to everyone.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must read.By Joanna G.While far from an easy read, Kleinman beautifully illustrates the reality of life amidst a complicated moral landscape. This book is a must read for anyone working in public health or practicing medicine."This is also what life is, he importuned. Don't say it is inexplicable but technically solvable. See it for what it is and feel ashamed for who we are."1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Exploration of Moral ExperienceBy RyanWritten for a wide audience, Arthur Kleinman M.D. reflects on personal narratives encountered throughout his life as a mental health professional. With an anthropological approach, Kleinman develops a theme that explores the dynamic interaction between subjective moral experiences, ethical systems, political systems, and socio-economics. He relates these stories to his own moral experiences in an effort to understand what really matters to moral creatures living in a violent and dangerous world. I applaud his effort to unite personal experiences with a more meaningful ethics.

In this moving and thought-provoking volume, Arthur Kleinman tells the unsettling stories of a handful of men and women, some of whom have lived through some of the most fundamental transitions of the turbulent twentieth century. Here we meet an American veteran of World War II, tortured by the memory of the atrocities he committed while a soldier in the Pacific. A French-American woman aiding refugees in sub-Saharan Africa, facing the utter chaos of a society where life has become meaningless. A Chinese doctor trying to stay alive during Mao's cultural revolution, discovering that the only values that matter are those that get you beyond the next threat. These individuals found themselves caught in circumstances where those things that matter most to them--their desires, status, relationships, resources, political and religious commitments, life itself--have been challenged by the society around them. Each is caught up in existential moral experiences that define what it means to be human, with an intensity that makes their life narratives arresting. These stories reveal just how malleable moral life is, and just how central danger is to our worlds and our livelihood. Indeed, Kleinman offers in this book a groundbreaking approach to ethics, examining "who we are" through some of the most disturbing issues of our time--war, globalization, poverty, social injustice--all in the context of actual lived moral life.

"This is a fascinating and deeply entertaining book by an eminent anthropologist, psychiatrist, and teacher. It offers the kind of insight that makes you think and think again. But it isn't only analytical. For me at least, the richness of the book comes mainly from the stories Dr. Kleinman tells, about patients and friends and one remarkable historical figure--complicated stories that confront life's miseries and renew the cheapened word 'inspiring.'"--Tracy Kidder" In this searingly written book, Arthur Kleinman takes us deep into the contrasting worlds of genuine reality and cultural pretense which he has spent so much of his life exploring. I have rarely read such a powerful portrayal of what Kleinman wonderfully calls 'the quality of anti-heroic everydayness.'"--Jonathan D. Spence" In this luminous new book, master scholar Arthur Kleinman offers a handful of stories that open a channel between personal experience and the broader contexts--such as war or illness--in which we live our short lives. What Really Matters is a stern yet humble antidote to the shallow self-help books now crowding bestseller lists. It is also an instructive, deeply affecting and, in the end, transcendent and spiritual book."--Dr. Paul Farmer, Founding Director of Partners in Health, and author of Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor" Arthur Kleinman is one of the most broadly informed and wisest people in the life sciences, bridging medicine and the social sciences in a way that is extremely rare and valuable. Moreover, he is an exceptionally keen observer and writes beautifully about matters of great significance. His new book, What Really Matters, is certainly timely when violence is so much in focus and yet it is a contribution of long-term significance." --David A. Hamburg, President Emeritus, Carnegie Corporation of New York About the Author Arthur Kleinman is Esther and Sidney Rabb Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, and Professor of Medical Anthropology in Social Medicine and Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School. A renowned psychiatrist and anthropologist, he has been awarded the Boas Prize (the highest award of the American Anthropological Association) and is a Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.