A NOTE BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Thank you for taking a few minutes with *Morality Lost*.

I'm a retired engineer, not a professional writer. I spent my career testing systems — finding where they break and asking why. Some years ago I began to see the same kind of breakdown somewhere far more important: in the trust that once held our families, neighborhoods, and country together.

This book is my attempt to understand what we've lost, how it happened, and whether it can be recovered. I believe it can.

What follows are two short pieces from the book. The **Preface** explains why I wrote it. **Chapter 4** is about my father — a Marine and a mason — and what his life taught me about character, mostly without saying a word.

I chose these because the book doesn't begin with an argument. It begins with people, and with a question most of us have already felt:

> *What happens when trust starts to disappear — and what can we do about it?*

You don't need to agree with me to read on. I only ask that you read with an open mind, and think about the people whose example shaped you.

Kerry Ingram
AUTHOR

FROM THE BOOK

Preface

There is a moment most of us have experienced but few of us talk about openly. You are sitting across from someone you love, someone you have known for years, someone whose judgment you have always respected, and you realize that somewhere along the way, without either of you quite noticing, you stopped being able to have a real conversation.

Not because you disagree. Disagreement is healthy. Disagreement is how people who respect each other work things out.

This is different. This is the moment when you realize that the person across from you no longer trusts the same basic reality you do. Facts that seem settled to you are suspect to them. Sources you consider reliable they consider compromised. And the harder you push, the further they retreat into a version of the world that is closed, self-confirming, and increasingly impenetrable.

I have sat in that moment. It is one of the loneliest feelings I know.

This book came out of my experiences. Not as an argument or an attempt to fix something, and not as an attempt to win. I gave up on winning early. It came out of a need to understand—how we got here, what is actually happening beneath the surface of our cultural moment, and whether there is any honest path back to something solid.

What I found, after a great deal of thinking and writing and sitting with hard questions, is that the problem is not really about facts. It is not about information or media literacy or which sources are trustworthy. Those things matter. But they are symptoms.

The disease is something older and quieter. It is the slow erosion of the shared moral foundation that once made trust possible in the first place. When that foundation weakens, everything built on top of it becomes unstable—institutions, relationships, and eventually the basic ability to share a reality with the people we love.

That is what this book is about. Not politics. Not conspiracy theories specifically. Not any one public figure or event or controversy. It is about the ground beneath all of those things and what happens when it gives way.

I wrote it out of frustration. I kept writing because I believe the frustration is worth something, if it points toward something true.

I am an engineer by training. I have spent my career watching organizations succeed and fail based on the foundations beneath them. I am a husband and a grandfather of six. I have seen what gets passed down when those foundations hold and what gets lost when they don't. I hike mountains when I need perspective and build things with my hands when I need to remember that quality takes time. I have watched the stars long enough to know that some things are larger than our arguments about them.

I am not a theologian, a politician, or an academic. I am a man who has been paying close attention for a long time, and who has watched something precious erode —slowly, quietly, and at great cost.

I believe it can still be recovered. That belief is what this book is built on.

I hope it does that for you. And I hope, wherever you are in this—whether you are the one who feels unmoored, or the one watching someone you love drift away—you find something here worth holding onto.

Kerry Ingram

FROM THE BOOK

Chapter 4

Character: How Does It Relate to Morality?

My father was a Marine. And like the saying goes—once a Marine, always a Marine. He lived that way. Not just in the years he served but in every year after. The way he carried himself, the way he treated people, the way he made decisions when no one was watching. He is the clearest definition of character I have ever known.

Character is one of those words we rarely stop to examine. We recognize it immediately when we see it—the firefighter carrying a child out of a burning building, the kid who grabs his friend's arm before the rock leaves his hand, the stranger who slows down to help an elderly woman cross the street. We don't ask those people about their values. We don't need to. Their actions speak with a clarity that words rarely match.

But where does that quality come from?

There is an argument that some of it is instinct. A mother wolf will fight to her last breath for her pups. A parent will throw themselves over their child without a moment's thought. These are not calculated decisions. They happen before the mind has time to deliberate. So is that character or simply biology?

I think it is both. And I think that is exactly the point.

Instinct may give us the impulse. But character is what shapes that impulse into something reliable, something others can count on across a lifetime. And character doesn't develop in isolation. It is built—slowly, quietly—through family, culture, and faith. Through what we are shown, what we are taught, and what we come to believe about how a person ought to live.

That belief system has a name. We call it morality, and losing it doesn't just make a person unpleasant, but dangerous. My father didn't think of it in those terms. He simply lived by it every day, whether anyone was watching or not. That is what morality produces: character. And character is what produces trust.

Less morality leads to less character. Less character leads to unpredictable behavior. And unpredictable behavior, multiplied across a society, is where we find ourselves today.

My father was a mason by trade. I remember being on a job in Denver, in the middle of a large concrete pour. It was a Colorado summer, and afternoon showers were normal. It had started to rain, and the city inspector was worried. He turned to my father and asked: What are we going to do about the rain?

My father put his tools down, looked up at the sky, and said: I think I'll let it rain.

That was him. No performance. No deliberation. Just a man who had a clear sense of what was his to control and what wasn't—and who wasn't going to pretend otherwise to make someone else comfortable. The inspector wanted reassurance. My father gave him something better: the truth.

The recovery begins the same way the erosion did—one person at a time, one decision at a time. It begins with people who choose, quietly and without applause, to live the way my father did.

That is what character looks like. And it still matters.

MORALITY LOST

The Erosion of Our Shared Foundation

KERRY INGRAM

Available November 25 in paperback, hardcover, and eBook

Thank you for reading.

The full book follows this thread through faith, family, media, leadership, and community — what we've lost, how we lost it, and where recovery can begin.

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