Four-Way Method for Ethical Decision Making

For each proposed solution:
- Who are those most likely to be affected?
- How are they likely to be affected?
- Which solution will be most beneficial and/or least harmful to those affected?

- Do the proposed solutions treat others the way you would want to be treated?
- Do the proposed solutions treat all involved with respect and dignity?
- Are the proposed solutions motivated by goodwill?
- Do the proposed solutions enhance or diminish the autonomy of all involved?

- Can the proposed solutions be enacted virtuously (i.e., compassionately, wisely, courageously, etc.)?
- Will doing the proposed actions tend to make the agent(s) more or less virtuous?
- Can the proposed solutions be implemented in a way that builds trusting relationships?

- What are the facts?
- What are the relevant laws?
- What is the institutional/company policy?
- What are the relevant professional standards?
- What are the possible solutions to the problem?

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“An Ethical Life: A Practical Guide to Ethical Reasoning is first rate. It is wonderfully accessible, deeply informed, and genuinely constructive… I warmly recommend this fresh and engaging book to anyone looking for a balanced and student-friendly introductory text in ethics.”

—James G. Hanink, Professor of Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University

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