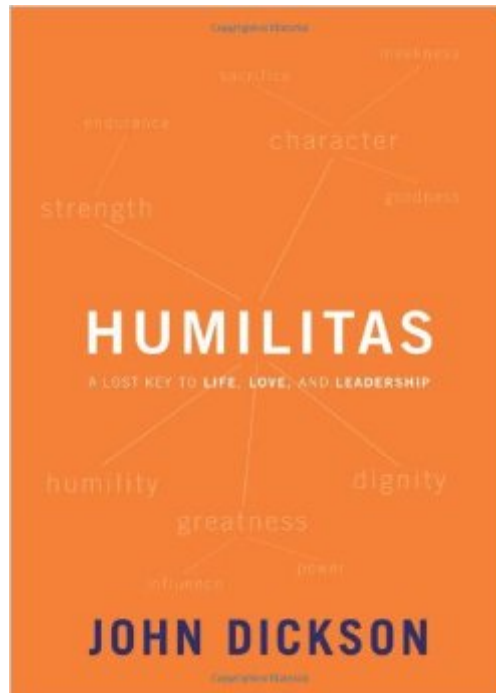


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Humilitas: A Lost Key To Life, Love, And Leadership



Synopsis

Speaker and historian John Dickson shows how the virtue of humility was an important character trait for the 'greats' of history and figures prominently in the findings of psychology and sociology. Developing humility can transform your personal relationships and professional dealings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I purchased "Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership," by John Dickson after hearing him speak at the Global Leadership Summit. Most leaders will never hear about this book, but all who do should consider reading it. It has too much fat for my taste, but the meat is exceptional. Dickson defines humility as "the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself," such that a "humble person is marked by a willingness to hold power in service of others." (p. 24). By this definition you can see that humility starts from a position of dignity, strength, and a healthy sense of my own worth and abilities. Unlike humiliation, which can be thrust upon me by others, humility is a choice I make willingly. And humility is social, more about how I treat others than about how I think of myself. Bob Sutton has written that the best test of a person's character is how he or she treats those with less power. Dickson argues that humility is important for leadership because humility is persuasive. Humility unlocks the door to referent power. "We are more attracted to the great who are humble than to the great who know it and want everyone else to know it as well." (p. 69). He quotes Aristotle's belief that character is the controlling factor in persuasion: "We believe good-hearted

people to a greater extent and more quickly than we do others on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt." (p. 139). We trust the humble more than the proud to act in our best interest. Dickson also argues that humility is generative, a powerful key to learning and growth.

Our contemporary society may have eclipsed the past in terms of science, medicine and technology, but in some things we are "well below par" when compared to the ancients, according to John Dickson in this book. Real wisdom in life and leadership can be found by opening yourself up to centuries of human thinking on subjects such as communication, ethics, human nature, romantic love and natural human rights. There are plenty of books which have been written about the virtues of humility, but I was intrigued to find out what a historian might have to say about the virtue of humility as applied to leadership. Humility, according to the author, is the noble choice to forgo your status, deploy your resources or use your influence for the good of others before yourself. Thus true humility presupposes that a person has status and influence, and is not to be confused with low self-esteem or being a doormat. In subsequent chapters, the author asserts that: * It is common sense for us to use humility to keep our pride in check. * We are more attracted to great people who are humble than to those who are not. * The ancient world admired honour, not humility, but Jesus of Nazareth caused a humility revolution. * Humility generates learning and growth, and provides a firm basis for self-esteem. * The humble are frequently more persuasive and inspiring than the arrogant. * Humility inspires and lifts those around us. * Humility means treating those who hold contrary beliefs with respect and friendship. The book is reasonably brief and written in an entertaining style.

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