

A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life



An utterly original exploration of the timeless human virtues and how they apply to the way we live now, from a bold and dynamic French writer. In this graceful, incisive book, writer-philosopher André Comte-Sponville reexamines the classic human virtues to help us understand what we should do, who we should be, and how we should live. In the process, he gives us an entirely new perspective on the value, the relevance, and even the charm of the Western ethical tradition. Drawing on thinkers from Aristotle to Simone Weil, by way of Aquinas, Kant, Rilke, Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Rawls, among others, Comte-Sponville elaborates on the qualities that constitute the essence and excellence of humankind. Starting with politeness -- almost a virtue -- and ending with love -- which transcends all morality -- *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues* takes us on a tour of the eighteen essential virtues: fidelity, prudence, temperance, courage, justice, generosity, compassion, mercy, gratitude, humility, simplicity, tolerance, purity, gentleness, good faith, and even, surprisingly, humor. Sophisticated and lucid, full of wit and vivacity, this modestly titled yet immensely important work provides an indispensable guide to finding what is right and good in everyday life.

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