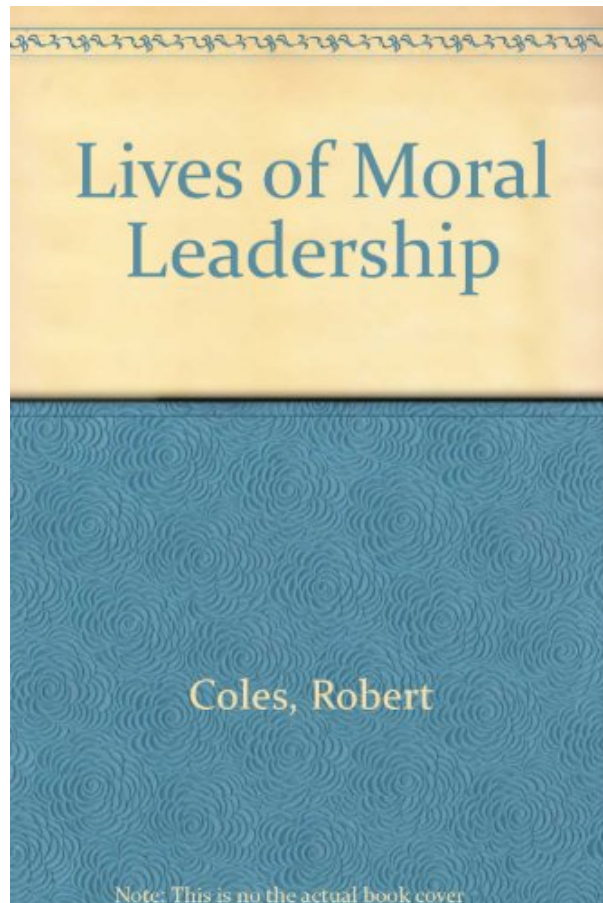
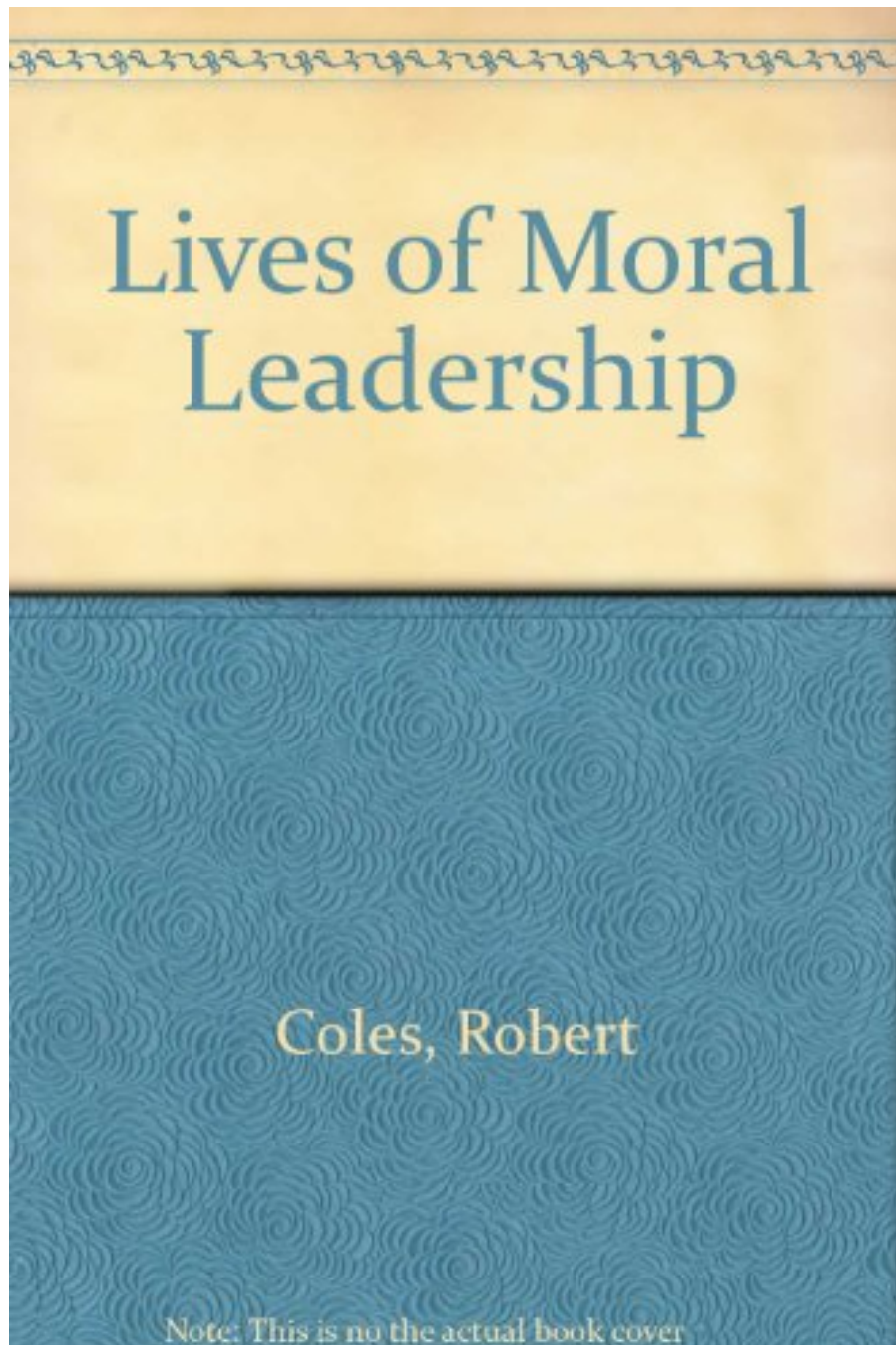


LIVES OF MORAL LEADERSHIP BY ROBERT COLES



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From Library Journal

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LIVES OF MORAL LEADERSHIP BY ROBERT COLES PDF

In this rich and illuminating book, the Pulitzer Prize-winning, bestselling author Robert Coles creates a portrait of moral leadership--what it is, and how it is achieved--through stories of people who have led and inspired him: Robert Kennedy, Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Erik Erikson, a Boston bus driver, teachers in college, medical school, and elementary school, among others.

Coles tells how to be a moral leader and shows how the intervention of one person can change the course of history, as well as influence the day-to-day quality of life in our homes, schools, communities, and nation. We need to "hand one another along" in life, says Coles, quoting his friend Walker Percy, and in *Lives of Moral Leadership* he explores how each of us can be engaged in a continual and mutual life-giving process of personal and national leadership development. Coles discusses how the actions of the American president affect the way people feel about themselves and the country, and-citing the influence of Shakespeare's Henry V on Robert Kennedy, and of Tolstoy's Anna Karenina on his own mother--explains how reading literature can motivate action and growth. The way in which moral leaders emerge today, and for all time, comes vividly to light in this brilliant book by one of America's finest teachers and writers.

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Amazon.com Review

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Most helpful customer reviews

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Moral Leaders Beget Moral Leaders, and Beget a Moral World
By Donald Mitchell

The book clearly deserves more than 5 stars.

Dr. Coles is helping us see "circles of human moral connectedness growing, touching, informing the lives of individuals and of the communities to which we belong."

This is the most insightful book on moral leadership that I have read. That success builds on giving you an inside-out examination of how moral leaders developed their perspectives, how their words and deeds affected others, and how moral progress ensued. Professor Coles was able to do this by heavily drawing on people and situations he knew personally, so that you get many lovely nuances of how moral leadership has worked in his life through civil rights and humanitarian examples.

The book opens with a lengthy anecdote about how Robert Kennedy (when he was a Senator) worked with a group of Doctors, including the author, to develop the food stamp program. The physicians would have been satisfied with venting their moral outrage at hunger in America and going home. Kennedy helped them understand that they could accomplish much more by matching their indignation to the practical matters of influencing others. The author often thought that Kennedy was not being sincere as these lessons were being given, but later came to realize that Kennedy had given them all and the nation a great gift of moral leadership.

Unlike most books about leadership, this one talks about ordinary people as well. Those examples speak louder to us, if you are like me, because they describe situations where we are likely to find ourselves, and can draw practical inspiration. I was especially interested in how the Tomasellos encouraged Mr. Thomas (a black man) to go after the vote in the South, Elaine Vogel's efforts to develop her white students' moral sensibilities during the school integration years in New Orleans, and Al Jones' example in encouraging

busing in Boston (both by speech, becoming a bus driver, and using the bus rides to provide moral lessons for the embattled black students).

Many anecdotal books seem to have no point, but Dr. Coles has created one here that gives you the rich detail necessary to make the points for yourself. The lessons you learn from your self-examination will stay with you more than if he continually made all of the points for you. This is a greater gift of moral leadership than a traditional book attempts.

Clearly, moral leadership has many roots, and each is examined in detail through the cases here. The most important ones seem to be in literature (such as Conrad's heroes), the examples of great moral leaders (such as Gandhi), and the supportive reactions we get to efforts at moral leadership (as when someone tells us we should go ahead). We can each stimulate much more moral leadership by reading literature about moral leadership, sharing what we learn with others and encouraging them to read the same literature, reading about the lives of moral leaders and sharing those lessons and encouraging similar reading, encouraging the moral observations and actions of others, and by being a good example in taking moral stands and actions. I came away with a sense that the amount of moral leadership could be greatly expanded if each person simply absorbed and acted on the major lessons of this book.

If you are moved by this book, I suggest that you develop your moral consciousness by looking for places every day where you can share what you learned with younger people. In that way, you can have the most influence for the longest time, and help create a magnificent legacy for your own life.

Create more goodness!

30 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

Great Book. Tiresome Sentences

By Jim Street

I agree with the Washington Post Book World assessment that Robert Coles should be declared a "national treasure." For years his writing have shown him to be a man of compassion with a heart for the oppressed and downtrodden as well as for the children who are often so easily overlooked in our society.

Coles new book "Lives of Moral Leadership" is also a national treasure. I think it is important not only for the insights it provides concerning moral leadership but also because of its behind the scenes glimpse of historic events that shaped the American character in the latter part of the 20th century.

In the book, Coles displays the tensions inherent in moral leadership including the tensions of inherent moral force and political pragmatism, the leader as hero and also as one who must garner the consent of his/her followers, wisdom and innocence, and "standing apart" in order to give courage to others.

The book is a collection of narratives and reflections. Much of the material is drawn from Coles interviews with such people as Robert Kennedy, Dorothy Day, and Danilo Dolci. The reader is asked to do a good bit of reflecting based upon the stories Coles tells.

My only complaint about the book has to do with Coles style of writing. While his style is clear in most instances, he has a tendency to launch into never ending sentences. Me thinks he sometimes feels "he will be heard for his much speaking." Every so often you will want to say, "Robert, a period costs no more than a semi-colon, dash, colon and parentheses."

The chapter on Dorothy Day is worth the price of the book and is a wonderful of example of someone who tried to stay faithful to the leading of God as well as to the wisdom of community.

Great book. Tiresome sentences at times.

1 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

A book that every ... member would find silly...

By Daniel

I enjoyed a lot the reading of that book. Dr. Coles is a man who really dedicated himself for the well being of children and society in general. His examples are powerful and instructive. But reviews like the one of John S. Bradburn inspires me pity. I looked at Mr. Bradburn's interest, and found out that Charlton Heston seems to be his favorite "philosopher", and war his theme of predilection. Fortunately, USA has citizens like Robert

Coles and the individuals he described in his book, and it is because such people that Leonard Cohen is right when he sings that "Democracy is coming to the USA"...

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