



The Importance of Being Civil: The Struggle for Political Decency

By John A. Hall

Princeton University Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 272 pages. Civility is desirable and possible, but can this fragile ideal be guaranteed? The Importance of Being Civil offers the most comprehensive look at the nature and advantages of civility, throughout history and in our world today. Esteemed sociologist John Hall expands our understanding of civility as related to larger social forces—including revolution, imperialism, capitalism, nationalism, and war—and the ways that such elements limit the potential for civility. Combining wide-ranging historical and comparative evidence with social and moral theory, Hall examines how the nature of civility has fluctuated in the last three centuries, how it became lost, and how it was reestablished in the twentieth century following the two world wars. He also considers why civility is currently breaking down and what can be done to mitigate this threat. Paying particular attention to the importance of individualism, of rules allowing people to create their own identities, Hall offers a composite definition of civility. He focuses on the nature of agreeing to differ over many issues, the significance of fashion and consumption, the benefits of inclusive politics on the nature of identity, the greater ability of the United States in integrating immigrants in comparison...



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