Frances Hesselbeins views on leadership have attracted fans since the one-time Johnstown, Pennsylvania, troop leader became CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA in 1976 and turned that venerable but struggling organization around. Now in Hesselbein on Leadership the current chairman and founding president of the Drucker Foundation has compiled 19 essays that lay out the philosophy she honed during those experiences and in years since—a philosophy that today draws more admirers than ever, such as Jim Collins, who wrote the books foreword. In a disarmingly simple manner, Hesselbein offers her underlying definition of the topic at hand (leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do it) and spells out nuances and specifics that those atop any private, public or nonprofit organization would do well to absorb. Throughout the book she shows how character determines performance, how a willingness to innovate and a desire to make a difference regularly bring results, and how the best leaders actually turn a vision into the spark needed to ignite their enterprise. There is plenty of pragmatic advice here amidst the theoretical, and in light of Hesselbeins wealth of provocative yet practical insights, the only complaint may be that this collection is a little on the slim side. -- Howard Rothman

Features:
* Click here to view our Condition Guide and Shipping Prices

My Personal Review:
Frances Hesselbein is currently editor-in-chief of Leader to Leader quarterly. Previously, she served as CEO of the Girls Scouts of the USA and then as chairman and founding president of the Leader to Leader Institute, formerly the Peter F. Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management. Her published works include this book as well as The Leader of the Future, co-edited with Marshall Goldsmith and Richard
Beckhard; The Leader of the Future 2, co-edited with Goldsmith; and Be"Know"Do (an adaptation of the U.S. Army's leadership manual) to which she and General Eric K. Shinseki (USA Ret.) co-wrote the Introduction.

In his Foreword to this book, Jim Collins observes that Frances Hesselbein "grasped a central paradox of change: the organizations that best adapt to a changing world first and foremost know what should [begin italics] not [end italics] change. They have a foxed anchor of guiding principles around which they can more easily change everything else. They know the difference between what is truly sacred and what is not, between what should not change and what should always be open for change, between 'what we stand for' and 'how we do things'...Equally important, she exercised the discipline to say no to opportunities that did not fit the central mission." This brief excerpt from an uncommonly insightful analysis of Hesselbein's numerous and substantial contributions to knowledge leadership help to prepare the reader for the 19 essays that follow in which Hesselbein shares what she has learned about leadership that understands the importance of knowing that leadership is much less about what one does, and much more about who one is.

The essays originally appeared over a period of three years, 1999-2002. After re-reading them, Hasselbein observes, "I found that I believe even more passionately in the whys [of leadership]: the values, the principles, the beliefs that define who we are, what we believe, what we do, and how we work with others, our fellow travelers on a shared journey to leadership in an uncertain world." In this volume, of all the challenges that CEOs face, she identifies those that have little to do with managing the enterprise's tangible assets (important though as they obviously are) and everything to do with monitoring the quality of leadership, the work force, and relationships.

More specifically, the "'how to be' leader knows that people are the organization's greatest asset and in word, behavior, and in relationships she or he demonstrates this powerful philosophy...builds dispersed and diverse leadership - distributing leadership to the outmost edges of the circle to unleash the power of shared responsibility...holds forth the vision of the organization's future in compelling ways that ignite the spark needed to build the inclusive enterprise...and [meanwhile] knows that listening to the customer and learning what he or she values - 'digging in the field' - will be a critical component, even more so in the future than today."

My take on all this is that Hesselbein fully understands and appreciates the value of "know-how." Her key point (if I understand it) is that effective leadership can be provided only by what Bill George characterizes as "authentic" people: those who consistently demonstrate the values, the principles, the beliefs that define who they are, what they believe, what they do, and how they work with others. As George describes them, they demonstrate "the highest integrity, [are] committed to building enduring
organizations...have a deep sense of purpose and are true to their core values...have the courage to build their companies to meet the needs of all stakeholders, and recognize the importance of their service to society.

Both Hesselbein and George are convinced, and I wholeheartedly agree, that the greatest leaders are those who develop and then sustain authentic leadership at all levels and in all areas of the given enterprise. Moreover, they are determined to be "good citizens." As Hesselbein explains, they believe "that the community is as much their business as is the business of their enterprise. They dedicate the same commitment to this job, the same forecasting, planning, marketing, and mobilization of energy and initiative, that they dedicate to building the enterprise within the walls."

Make no mistake about it: These are formidable challenges that Hesselbein poses to those who aspire to be leaders. "All the how to's in the world won't work until the 'how to be's' are defined, embraced by the leaders, and embodied in every action, every communication, every leadership moment." Indeed, she continues, there must be "leaders of character at every level, leading the organization and the community of the future." Some may view that challenge as "unrealistic." It isn't. Others may view it as "idealistic." It is...and that is the most important lesson all of us can learn, not only from what she has written but from what she has been and continues to be.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
Hesselbein on Leadership (J-B Leader to Leader Institute/PF Drucker Foundation) by Frances Hesselbein - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!