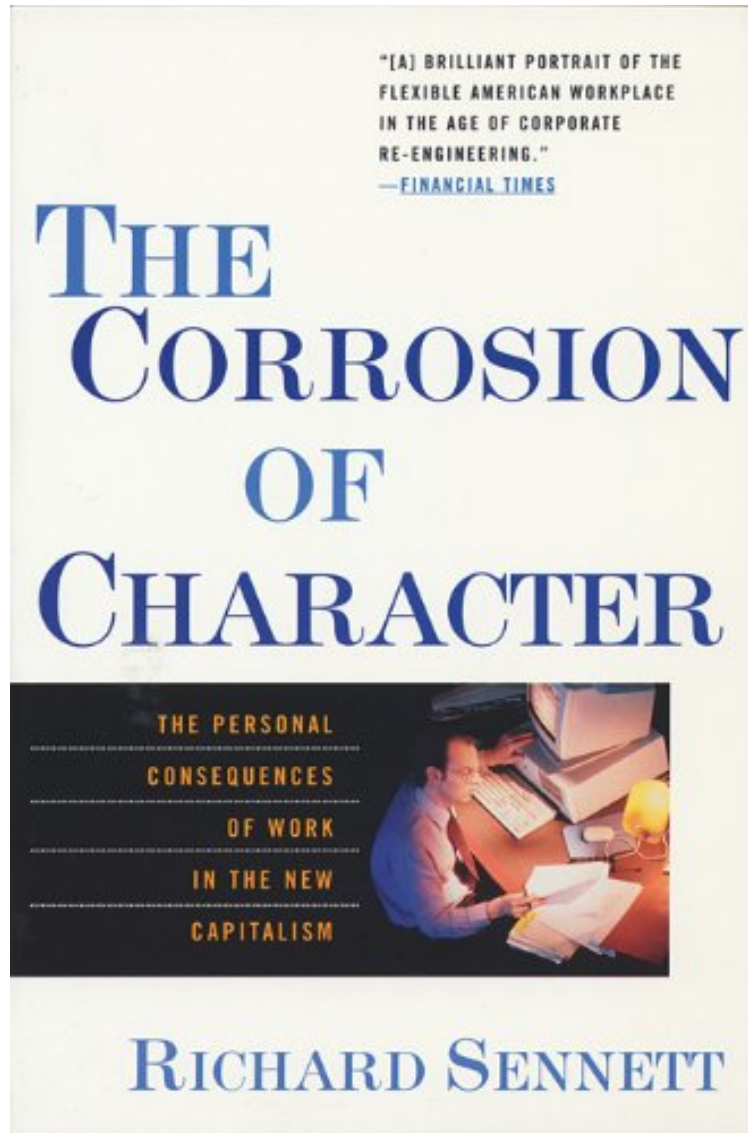


The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism

Richard Sennett

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Richard Sennett : The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy David EberleGreat0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must read for understanding new management strategy around teamsBy Gustavo Kuhn AndriottiDespite the title it is a must read to understand the shift in management strategy and how is the current

"leader" culture (instead of the boss culture) mostly benefit your leaders and not you. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enduring thoughts for our current era
By Paul Jonker
Very insightful long essay. Contains many interesting thoughts - I wonder what Sennett makes of the period after this book first appeared?

A Business Week Best Book of the Year.... "A devastating and wholly necessary book."mdash;Studs Terkel, author of WorkingIn The Corrosion of Character, Richard Sennett, "among the country's most distinguished thinkers . . . has concentrated into 176 pages a profoundly affecting argument" (Business Week) that draws on interviews with dismissed IBM executives, bakers, a bartender turned advertising executive, and many others to call into question the terms of our new economy. In his 1972 classic, The Hidden Injuries of Class (written with Jonathan Cobb), Sennett interviewed a man he called Enrico, a hardworking janitor whose life was structured by a union pay schedule and given meaning by his sacrifices for the future. In this new book-a #1 bestseller in Germany-Sennett explores the contemporary scene characterized by Enrico's son, Rico, whose life is more materially successful, yet whose work lacks long-term commitments or loyalties. Distinguished by Sennett's "combination of broad historical and literary learning and a reporter's willingness to walk into a store or factory [and] strike up a conversation" (New York Times Book Review), this book "challenges the reader to decide whether the flexibility of modern capitalism . . . is merely a fresh form of oppression" (Publishers Weekly, starred review). Praise for The Corrosion of Character: "A benchmark for our time."mdash;Daniel Bell "[A]n incredibly insightful book."mdash;William Julius Wilson "[A] remarkable synthesis of acute empirical observation and serious moral reflection."mdash;Richard Rorty "[Sennett] offers abundant fresh insights . . . illuminated by his concern with people's struggle to give meaning to their lives."mdash;[Memphis] Commercial Appeal

.com In the brave new world of the "flexible" corporation, Richard Sennett observes, workers at all levels are regarded as wholly disposable, and they have responded in kind, ceasing to think in terms of any long-term relationship with the organizations they work for. This, he argues, has tremendous negative consequences for workers' emotional and psychological well-being. Even in menial jobs, we extract much of our self-image from the idea of a "career"--a life narrative rendered intelligible by specific loyalties, which is to some degree self-invented but also in some respects predictable. Innovations like "flextime" and bureaucratic "de-layering" seem to promise more freedom to define one's career, but in fact they create jobs in which there's less freedom than ever to be had. The Corrosion of Character is a short, anecdotal book, and while one might wish that it included a discussion of the social and psychological costs of the sheer increase of work time in the average worker's week, Sennett has created a pithy, disturbing picture of the cost of the corporate world's much-vaunted new efficiencies. --Richard FarrFrom Publishers WeeklyThe American company today ostensibly offers a more humane environment than in the era of "Fordism," when work on the assembly line had a deadening, routine character. However, Sennett, professor of sociology at New York University and the London School of Economics, believes this improvement is illusory. His argument is that the modern workplaceAwith its emphasis on short-term, episodic labor; projects and flexibilityAdoes not allow people to shape their experiences or build a coherent narrative of their lives. Most important, the new adaptability in business militates against the formation of character. Character depends on stability for virtues such as loyalty, trust, commitment and mutual helpfulness to develop. And rather than giving workers greater freedom, the flexibility model allows another kind of power to be imposed from the top: from 1980 to 1995, between 13 million and 39 million workers became unemployed owing to downsizing. Even flextime contributes to the fragmentation and disorder, and teamwork only emphasizes "mutual responsiveness rather than personal validation." Sennett makes his case in well-crafted prose with references not just to luminaries such as Adam Smith, Diderot, Nietzsche and Rousseau, but to the immediate experiences of blue-collar workers and folks in bakery shops and bars. He challenges the reader to decide whether the flexibility of modern capitalism offers a better context for personal growth or is merely a fresh form of oppression. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalFrom a writer with great credentials (New York University and the London School of Economics).Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.