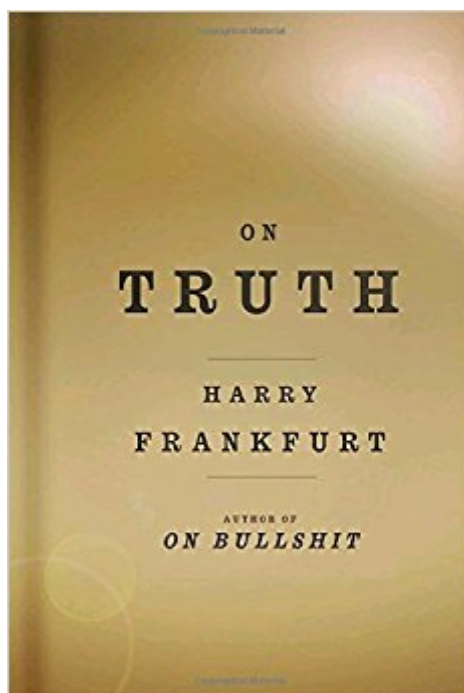


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On Truth



Synopsis

Having outlined a theory of bullshit and falsehood, Harry G. Frankfurt turns to what lies beyond them: the truth, a concept not as obvious as some might expect. Our culture's devotion to bullshit may seem much stronger than our apparently halfhearted attachment to truth. Some people (professional thinkers) won't even acknowledge "true" and "false" as meaningful categories, and even those who claim to love truth cause the rest of us to wonder whether they, too, aren't simply full of it. Practically speaking, many of us deploy the truth only when absolutely necessary, often finding alternatives to be more saleable, and yet somehow civilization seems to be muddling along. But where are we headed? Is our fast and easy way with the facts actually crippling us? Or is it "all good"? Really, what's the use of truth, anyway? With the same leavening wit and commonsense wisdom that animates his pathbreaking work *On Bullshit*, Frankfurt encourages us to take another look at the truth: there may be something there that is perhaps too plain to notice but for which we have a mostly unacknowledged yet deep-seated passion. His book will have sentient beings across America asking, "The truthâ "why didn't I think of that?"

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Customer Reviews

Frankfurt wrote the little book *On Bullshit* (2005) that became a surprise runaway best-seller. It focused on, as the title indicates, people "who are attempting by what they say to manipulate the opinions and the attitudes of those to whom they speak." This sequel, equally brief, trenchant, and deeply thoughtful, is another extended essay, this one on a topic closely related to the first.

Frankfurt takes the position that a "deplorable mistake" would be unleashed abroad if there should develop in today's world a widespread lack of caring for the "value and importance" of truth. He finds a disregard for truth "endemic" among publicists and politicians, but he has discovered a similar attitude growing among authors. Frankfurt works with a broad canvas here, averring, "A society that is recklessly and persistently remiss in [supporting and encouraging truth] is bound to decline." Without an appreciation for truth, humans can not consider themselves--take pride in themselves--as rational animals, separate from other animals in that regard. The author is an emeritus professor of philosophy at Princeton, and despite its brevity, this provocative meditation is not light reading. Brad Hooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Harry G. Frankfurt is a professor of philosophy emeritus at Princeton University. His books include *The Reasons of Love*; *Necessity, Volition, and Love*; and *The Importance of What We Care About*. He lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

I was hooked from the first page, where Frankfurt explains one of the first principles about the truth -- that, for any functioning society, first and foremost the truth is actually a *useful* thing. Despite being just a short essay, this book reads as a complete compendium to a fascinating subject. I find his writing style superb and the clarity of his thinking an absolute inspiration. With *On BS*, these two books make an excellent addition to any thinking person's bookshelf or ebook. Not to mention that his dismissal of post-modernism's view of the truth is as hilarious as it is compelling. A very enjoyable and worthwhile little book.

Dr. Frankfurt, the author of this book, explicitly makes clear that this book was intended as an extension to his very original and insightful previous book "On BS". In that book Dr. Frankfurt elaborated on why he thought that BS was such a danger to society and did so not only quite well but in a very original manner. Few authors covered the subject previously in a serious manner, never mind in the insightful and original manner that he did. This reviewer was expecting more of the same albeit knowing full well that this would be much more difficult, especially considering the fact that the topic has been covered in a much more extensive depth throughout all history. Unfortunately Dr. Frankfurt was not able to match his previous book, "On BS" in terms of either originality or depth of insight. The reasons are for the obvious fact that this topic has been so well and thoroughly covered throughout human history. Dr. Frankfurt cites the many reasons that have been so many times cited before such as those cited by Kant, Aristotle and many other before (i.e.,

without truth making a decision as to how to optimize actions are impossible, etc.). Thus this book lacks both the originality and in-depth insights of his previous "On BS". A real let down albeit expected considering the quantity and quality of writing on this topic in the past. On the positive side he does sum up previous thought on this subject quite well. Hence anyone interested would do well to read it, just for the summary if nothing else. In addition, the audiobook is relatively well read. Never a monotone or boring moment.

This book sets forth an understanding of what is true and why is it important to life. A quick read packed with a lot of ideas to ponder.

This is great for the bathroom and a good read for anyone. I like this product it was as described by and I am very happy with the product. I will buy more if I find that I am in need of them.

A little disappointing. Really just a short essay and OK, but not great.

Smart mate to his book On Bulls***.

good food for thought

Enjoyed reading it.

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