



### Book Recommendation

## Dignity: The Essential Role it Plays in Resolving Conflict by Donna Hicks

The subtitle of **Dignity** includes the word 'essential' and that is certainly the takeaway regarding dignity holistically, (defined as recognition of our worth and value), that we have from this book. Hicks makes a compelling case for the role of dignity in all our lives, over and above its stated role in resolving conflict, explaining that it is our inherent birthright - as opposed to respect, which we must earn. Hicks, an Associate of Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University, grants us ten elements of dignity as a framework for practice, and ten temptations that we all have to be aware of, and avoid, if not always successfully. To use this understanding collectively to resolve conflict, as she does writ large on the world stage, would go a long way towards adding grace to our world.

Hicks unpacks three developmental stages of our understanding of dignity: dependence, independence, and interdependence. The dependence stage originates with the child - the source of dignity is external, reflected from the way others treat us - and is a fitting state for the child; however, many, if not most of us, remain stuck in this 'Me' stage well into our adult years. The independent stage, the 'I') follows if we are insightful enough to internalise our source of dignity, so that we look inward for our worth, not outward to take our cue from others. The third stage, the interdependent, is full circle; we now realise that we can deepen our sense of worth with input from others. In this stage, the 'I' becomes 'We' and together we can experience connectedness and embrace our common humanity fully.

At **my manifesto** we are concerned to join a 'We'. We begin by fashioning with you a personal statement of your wisdom and identity, you step into it, to respect the dignity of your own expressed authentic life and also you reach out and respect others' dignity. This is a way into the interdependent enlightened (Hicks' chosen word) stage of the understanding of dignity, quite a concept!