

Freedom

Shortcuts to a Big Idea

The second edition of Freedom recovers the concept as a fundamental aspect of modern Western ideas and explores its history and how controversial its meaning can be. To what extent does freedom have a 'social' component, and how is it being reshaped by our dominant consumer society? Today, the West sees itself as having a crucial role to play in exporting freedom into the far regions of the world – but our own freedom seems more under threat than ever. Linking ideas of public and personal freedom, Stevenson explores complaints about 'big brother', the arrival of the business society and the erosion of democracy to show how our freedoms are far from secure. Through the analysis of several distinctive philosophical traditions that have raised concerns about freedom, as well as a range of critical thinkers and perspectives, Stevenson seeks to affirm the importance of freedom, providing a compelling argument for linking it to other values such as equality and responsibility, and raise the question about what freedom will come to mean in the future, in a world that seems increasingly fragile, uncertain, and insecure. Drawing upon a range of critical thinkers and perspectives, this book represents a wake-up call to all those who thought our basic ideas of freedom were settled.

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