



Iron Butterflies: Women Transforming Themselves and the World

Birute Regine

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This inspiring and compelling narrative weaves together stories of sixty successful women from all walks of life and throughout the world. The author spent several years in eight countries interviewing dynamic female role models: businesswomen, CEOs, a Congresswoman, a governor, an ex-Prime Minister, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, a winemaker, artists, doctors, nurses, and many others.

The author calls these women "Iron Butterflies" because they meld a will of iron with the gentle, nurturing touch of a butterfly. With disarming candor, these women talk about their struggles, their fallibilities, and their strengths in the journey to the top of their professions. Forging their leadership from an amalgam of masculine and feminine skills, all of these Iron Butterflies have transformed themselves and in doing so they are contributing to a larger social transformation.

A key to this personal and social transformation rests in their ability to address vulnerability in themselves and those around them, and transform it into a crucible of healing, growth, and innovation. Knowing how to deal with vulnerability, in ourselves and with others, evokes feminine skills and values and is a key to the societal change so many are seeking.

Critiquing the command-and-control style of leadership, derived from the gladiator concept of male invulnerability, the author convincingly demonstrates how traditional feminine skills and values—such as inclusion, empathy, a holistic perspective, relational skills, and emotional strength—can be applied to empower more people than ever before. Like the sixty Iron Butterflies profiled, leaders in the 21st century will paradoxically embrace vulnerability and durability, creating better working and living relationships for us all.



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