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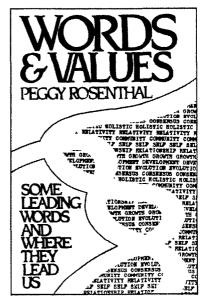
Words and Values

Some Leading Words and Where They Lead Us PEGGY ROSENTHAL

For many of us, hardly a day passes anymore without our encountering a word like "self" or "systems" or "development" or "alternatives" or "relationship," either through the media or in conversation. In Peggy Rosenthal's view, these and many other words—"feelings," "individual," "community," and "consensus" are also popular—have acquired a peculiar power in our lives. She proposes that such words constitute an active force that can actually lead us into particular kinds of attitudes and behavior without our realizing it.

How did this disturbing situation arise? Why do such words seem to lead us instead of our leading them? What difference do they make in our private and public lives? To answer these questions, Rosenthal examines how some of our current leading words got into their leading position and what kind of influence they exert over us. She argues that our leading language often leads us into intellectual confusions, emotional entanglements, and misguided choices, but that we're usually unaware of this because we don't see the hidden assumptions and values that words carry.

By drawing out the implications of



the meanings of certain common words, this lively, thought-provoking book reveals how some of our apparently most liberating language actually entraps us in modes of thought and behavior we might want to avoid. And by showing how our language can control us, the book suggests ways to escape its control and gain the power to make enlightened decisions in those areas where we use words to figure things out.

Peggy Rosenthal is Adjunct Instructor in Humanities at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

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