



Discourse on the Method for Conducting Ones Reason Well and for Seeking Truth in the Sciences

By René Descartes

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Paperback. 64 pages. Dimensions: 8.5in. x 5.5in. x 0.1in. In the Discourse on Method for Conducting Ones Reason Well and for Searching for Truth in the Sciences (1637) Descartes suggests that perfect knowledge can be achieved by means of perfect, individual reasoning. According to Descartes, reason can only guarantee its truth-seeking value in the personal sphere, and even then only when it is gradually and systematically applied. Descartes demonstrates his own method for generating perfectly reasoned knowledge, but it is the model of this behavior and not the knowledge itself that ought benefit his readers. The text is in this sense a testament to Descartes own progress as a practitioner of his own method. Descartes exerts himself as the ultimate critic whose default stance is one of doubt and who wishes to reform his own thought according to the most rigorous standards of reason possible. He does not succeed in following most of his maxims. Nevertheless, his experiment is a notable instance of the struggle for individual enlightenment. First, Descartes addresses the harms of the status quo organization of knowledge and its acquisition. He identifies the vector...

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