

The Power of Stupidity



A review by Dada Montarolo – November 16, 2010

Stupidity the Dark Force

There is a book that I have been keeping on my desk for quite a while. It's crammed with memo stickers and somewhat worn by frequent reading. It's called "The Power of Stupidity" and the author is Giancarlo Livraghi.

When I feel that I am going to fall victim to an attack of stupidity (I have some experience in noticing the most disturbing early symptoms, as in the case of headaches) I stop whatever else I am doing and I reach for the remedy.

I choose the chapter or page that best fits the occasion (this is why I have the stickers). I read, consider, think – and the preemptive treatment begins to work. Pleasantly. Because "The Power of Stupidity" isn't a boring how-to manual. It's an amusing, intriguing – often sharply cutting – picture of what the author correctly defines "the most powerful destructive force in human history".

I have also given a copy to several people, not mischievously, but with the honest desire to contribute to a strengthening of their immune defenses. Nobody can be free from stupidity – it's devious and creeping like a malignant virus, it can burrow into the brightest mind and cause awful damage.

I originally read "Il potere della stupidità" in Italian. Later I discovered that it had been published also in English (and now in Spanish) with some interesting additions and developments – that, I trust, will be included in the next Italian editions (they are, anyhow, already available online).

So I re-read it all over again and it was quite intriguing. The language difference, combined with the conceptual additions and improvements, made it feel like a new book – with fresh amusement, stimulating insights and food for thought.

Well, I said to myself, now we can really save the planet. Or, at least, humanity at large has one more tool to prevail on the advancing Dark Force. Because yes, I firmly believe, that's what stupidity is.

Maybe Giancarlo Livraghi will never win a Nobel Prize (and somehow I hope he doesn't, because prizes are often awarded to people who don't really deserve them). But with this book he is pointing to the road that it would be better to follow for the good of all of us.

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