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Author

Shrode, Flora G.

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Peer reviewed

Review: *Deep Design: pathways to a livable future.*

By David Wann

Reviewed by [Flora G. Schrode](#)
University of Tennessee

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Wann, David. *Deep Design: pathways to a livable future.* Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1996. 216 pp. US \$24.95 ISBN: 1-55963-420-0.

Deep Design is presented as an approach to developing high quality and high performance processes for industrial and community activities. This approach rejects obsolete patterns of the industrial revolution and adopts practices which can help preserve the world's biological and cultural wealth. Denouncing supply-side economics for its emphasis on finding ways to convert resources to profits, author David Wann says humans should approach life in a manner modeled on observable patterns of systems in nature. Wann explains that natural systems' characteristics of feedback, diversity, and flexibility can be incorporated into design principles for structures, regulatory systems, and social or community arrangements. He proposes that such a transformation will make life more satisfying for people because they will have better quality products, services, and physical infrastructure, and more time in which to enjoy these things with their families and friends.

Very readable, the text of *Deep Design* is replete with examples of companies, communities, and industrial processes where deep design could offer improvement or is currently offering improvement. For each example, Wann outlines collaboration between stakeholders and describes the positive impact of deep design implementation. The result is a glimpse into the enormous benefit deep design principles would offer society.

Discussions of values, including the importance of resource conservation, surface throughout the book. Wann would like us to rethink fundamental assumptions behind many commercial and community processes. He argues that the market and GNP should no longer be the major forces behind U.S. and other countries' manufacturing methods (whether it be design conception, resource gathering, product generation, or the delivery of goods to consumers.) He proposes that a worldwide change in attitude is crucial. People can maintain their quality of life only if they reject the importance of material goods (grounded in traditional supply-

side economics) and embrace a more widespread philosophy on the whole of human life, Wann says.

Deep Design is appropriate for public or academic libraries and special libraries featuring engineering or design subjects.

Flora G. Shrode <fshrode@utk.edu> is Reference Coordinator for Science and Technology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville TN 37996-1000 USA. TEL: 423-974-4415