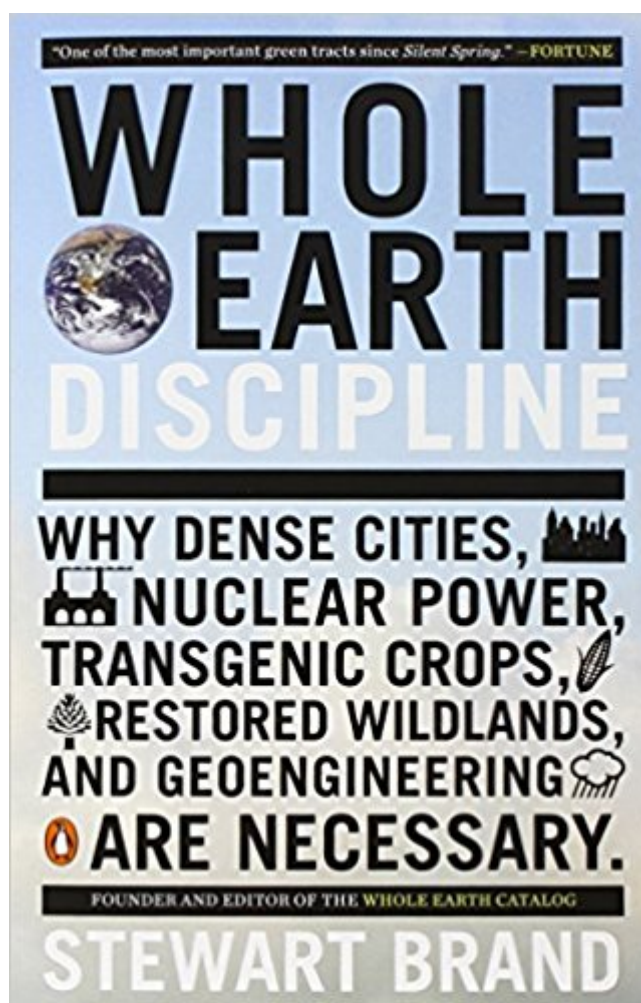


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Whole Earth Discipline: Why Dense Cities, Nuclear Power, Transgenic Crops, Restored Wildlands, And Geoengineering Are Necessary



Synopsis

"This is a very scary book by a very bright man, offering a picture of humanity's future that is both ominous and exhilarating." -Edward O. Wilson This eye-opening book by the legendary author of the National Book Award-winning *Whole Earth Catalog* persuasively details a new approach to our stewardship of the planet. Lifelong ecologist and futurist Stewart Brand relies on scientific rigor to shatter myths concerning nuclear energy, urbanization, genetic engineering, and other controversial subjects, showing exactly where the sources of our dilemmas lie and offering a bold, inventive set of policies and design-based solutions for shaping a more sustainable society. Thought-provoking and passionately argued, this is a pioneering book on one of the hottest issues facing humanity today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was interviewing George Soros as the Dow rapidly shed 300 points and crashed through the 10,000 level."Is this it?" I asked.Soros shrugged --- a very calm reaction from an investor who might have seen his portfolio shrink by hundreds of millions of dollars in a matter of minutes.I lost much less that day, but I had a different reaction --- panic. The thing to do, I concluded, was to trade my beloved Classic 6 in Manhattan for a self-sustaining house in the country. Ten acres would suffice, as long as they had decent water, land suitable for a large garden and enough sunlight for the solar panels.I bought a URL for the web site I planned to launch: [...]. This was no back-to-the-land hippie retreat. I would be stepping into the smart future: small town/rural purity (Woodsmoke) with the 21st

century benefits of a fast Internet (Broadband) and .com's free shipping. Given all that, you will understand that I was quite stunned to read "Whole Earth Discipline: An Ecopragmatist Manifesto" --- by Stewart Brand, creator of the 1960s and 1970s classic, the "Whole Earth Catalog" --- and discover that the last place its author would have me go is back to the land. In these pages, Stewart Brand lays out a mind-blowing vision for the planet's salvation: migration to the cities, power generated by mini-nuclear reactors, healthier crops through genetic engineering. This may well be the most important book I'll read this year. Certainly, it's the most aggressively optimistic book that's also closely reported --- Brand's a student who shows his work. Granted, a lot of it is technical. Skip those pages. Just read with a pencil. Mark what seems important and/or drives you crazy.

This is the most revealing and compelling of Stewart Brand's writings to date, and I've read pretty much everything he has written in the past 40+ years. Brand is a conceptual artist whose medium is words. He specializes in developing, creating, and promulgating interesting and useful perspectives. Somehow he always manages to find whatever is exciting, important, or cool about whatever he is investigating and to reframe the subject at hand to make you want to learn more. His reframings are powerful. They are aimed to give you a new and improved perspective and point of view, and that is what they do, but they do so with your informed consent. A lot of people have looked into squatter cities and shanty towns, but Brand does a better job of showing how they are part of an organic and evolutionary and even in some ways positive, optimistic process than most others I've read. There has been a lot of shouting on all sides of the debate on nuclear energy -- this is a really good attempt to get the pros and cons on the table in rational discourse and (mostly) dispense with the flame wars. Same goes for the discussions of genetically engineered crops and geo-engineering. We desperately need a much higher quality public dialog on all these subjects, and this book is a real contribution toward putting all these issues on the table in a discussable format. Stewart is right -- the time for allowing ideology and sentimentality to stand in front of what science is telling us is over, and we are going to be forced as a society to make some difficult decisions relating to the future of our climate and the management of our ecosystems.

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