



Sustainability by Design: A Subversive Strategy for Transforming Our Consumer Culture

John R. Ehrenfeld

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The developed world, increasingly aware of “inconvenient truths” about global warming and sustainability, is turning its attention to possible remedies—eco-efficiency, sustainable development, and corporate social responsibility, among others. But such measures are mere Band-Aids, and they may actually do more harm than good, says John Ehrenfeld, a pioneer in the field of industrial ecology. In this deeply considered book, Ehrenfeld challenges conventional understandings of “solving” environmental problems and offers a radically new set of strategies to attain sustainability.

The book is founded upon this new definition: sustainability is the possibility that humans and other life will flourish on Earth forever. There are obstacles to this hopeful vision, however, and overcoming them will require us to transform our behavior, both individually and collectively. Ehrenfeld identifies problematic cultural attributes—such as the unending consumption that characterizes modern life—and outlines practical steps toward developing sustainability as a mindset. By focusing on the “being” mode of human existence rather than on the unsustainable “having” mode we cling to now, he asserts, a sustainable world is within our reach.

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