



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

Stewart Brand

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An icon of the environmental movement outlines a provocative approach for reclaiming our planet

According to Stewart Brand, a lifelong environmentalist who sees everything in terms of solvable design problems, three profound transformations are under way on Earth right now. Climate change is real and is pushing us toward managing the planet as a whole. Urbanization—half the world’s population now lives in cities, and eighty percent will by midcentury—is altering humanity’s land impact and wealth. And biotechnology is becoming the world’s dominant engineering tool. In light of these changes, Brand suggests that environmentalists are going to have to reverse some longheld opinions and embrace tools that they have traditionally distrusted. Only a radical rethinking of traditional green pieties will allow us to forestall the cataclysmic deterioration of the earth’s resources.

Whole Earth Discipline shatters a number of myths and presents counterintuitive observations on why cities are actually greener than countryside, how nuclear power is the future of energy, and why genetic engineering is the key to crop and land management. With a combination of scientific rigor and passionate advocacy, Brand shows us exactly where the sources of our dilemmas lie and offers a bold and inventive set of policies and solutions for creating a more sustainable society.

In the end, says Brand, the environmental movement must become newly responsive to fast-moving science and take up the tools and discipline of engineering. We have to learn how to manage the planet’s global-scale natural infrastructure with as light a touch as possible and as much intervention as necessary.

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