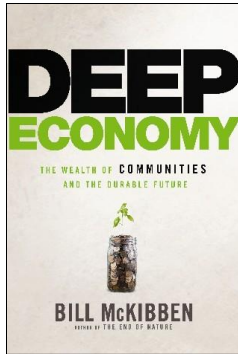


BOOK REVIEW

McKibben, Bill. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future.* New York: Henry Holt, 2007.



In this powerful and provocative manifesto, Bill McKibben offers the biggest challenge in a generation to the prevailing view of our economy. McKibben asks – and answers - the fundamental question of the twenty-first century : 'What is the purpose of the economy?'

This book is an impassioned call to arms for an economy that creates community and ennobles our lives. For the first time in human history, observes McKibben, 'more' is no longer synonymous with 'better' – indeed, for many of us, they have become almost opposites. McKibben puts forward a new way to think about the things we buy, the food we eat, the energy we use, and the money that pays for it all. Our purchases, he says, need not be at odds with the things we truly value.

McKibben's animating idea is that we need to move beyond 'growth' as the paramount economic ideal and pursue prosperity in a more local direction, with cities, suburbs and regions producing more of their own food, generating more of their own energy, and even creating more of their own culture and entertainment. He provides examples of how this concept is blossoming around the world with striking results, from the burgeoning economies of India and China to the more mature societies of Europe and New England. For those who worry about environmental threats, he offers a route out of the worst of those problems; for those who wonder if there isn't something more to life than buying, he provides the insight to think about one's life as an individual and as a member of a larger community.

McKibben offers a realistic, if challenging, scenario for a hopeful future. As he so eloquently shows, the more we nurture the essential humanity of our economy, the more we will recapture our own.

This book combines a simplicity of style with a inspiring and challenging insights into complex issues. It is jam-packed with examples of alternative approaches of local interdependence and sustainable use of resources.