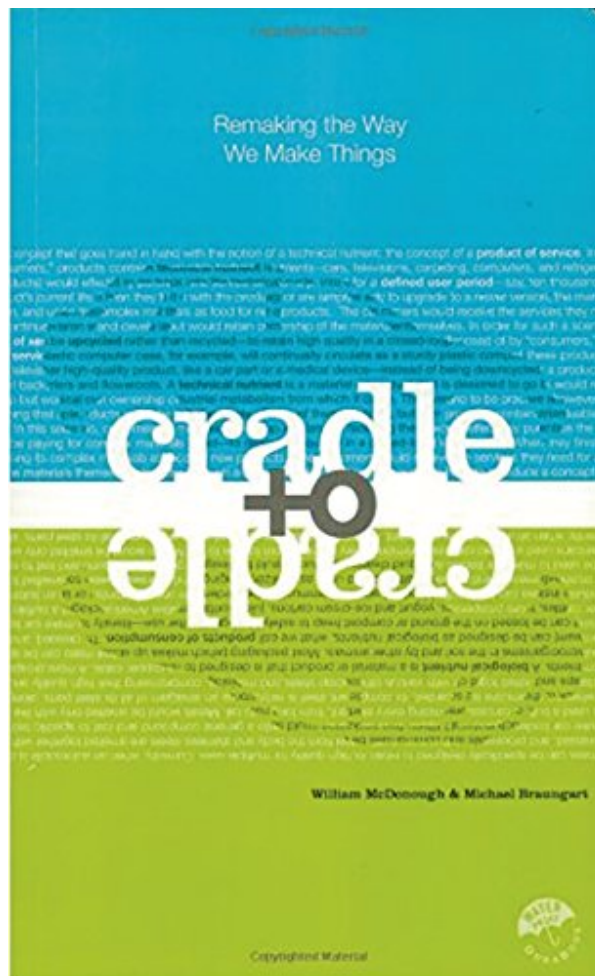
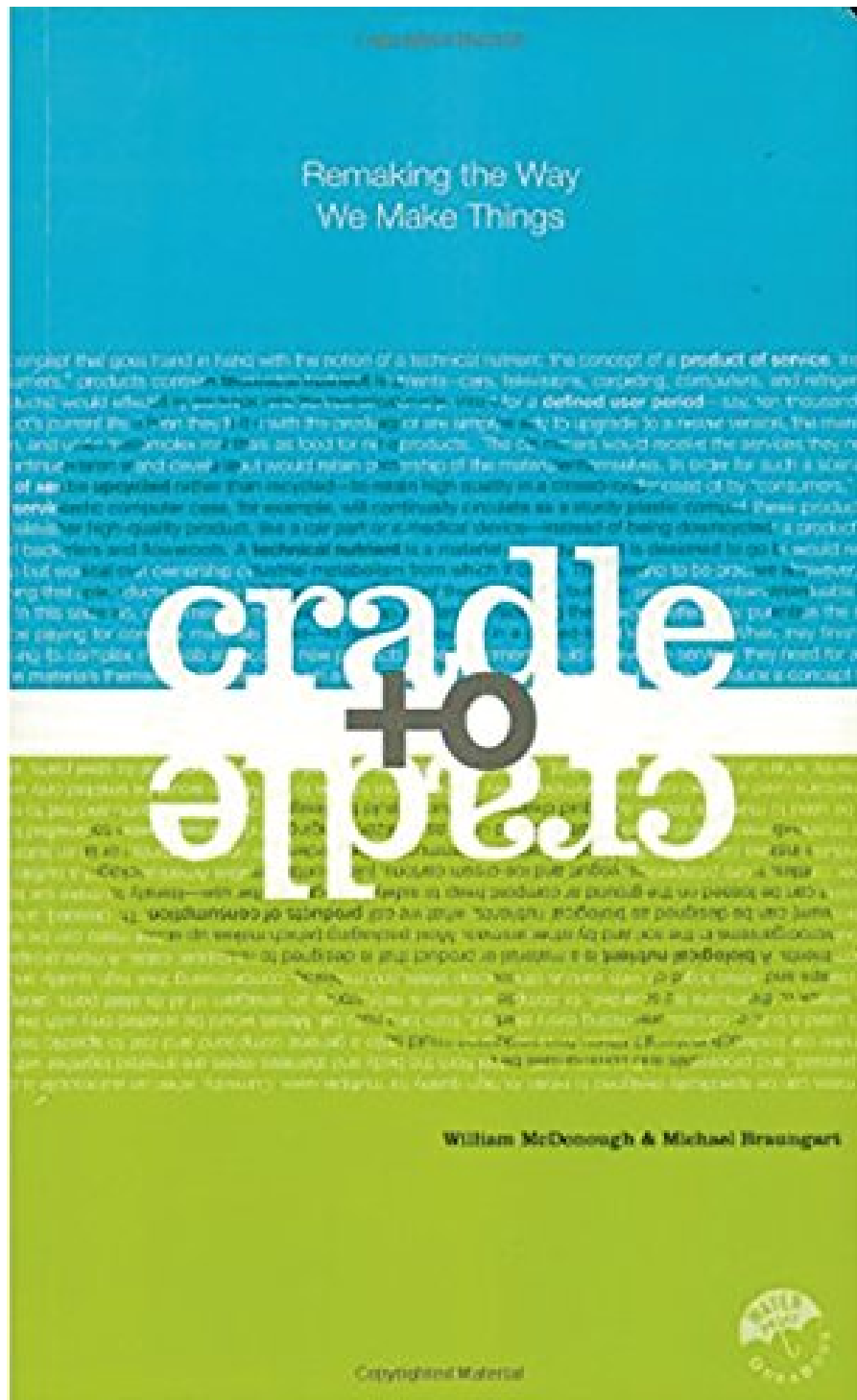


CRADLE TO CRADLE: REMAKING THE WAY WE MAKE THINGS BY MICHAEL BRAUNGART, WILLIAM MCDONOUGH



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Amazon.com Review

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From Scientific American

McDonough and Braungart (an architect and a chemist) are partners in a firm that creates ecologically intelligent designs for corporations. They argue for a shift from the cradle-to-grave model of manufacturing, in which most of the materials that go into making products end up as waste. They champion a cradle-to-cradle model, in which the materials are "circulated infinitely in industrial cycles ... without loss of quality or damage to our environment or ourselves."

Editors of Scientific American

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A manifesto for a radically different philosophy and practice of manufacture and environmentalism

"Reduce, reuse, recycle" urge environmentalists; in other words, do more with less in order to minimize damage. But as this provocative, visionary book argues, this approach perpetuates a one-way, "cradle to grave" manufacturing model that dates to the Industrial Revolution and casts off as much as 90 percent of the materials it uses as waste, much of it toxic. Why not challenge the notion that human industry must inevitably damage the natural world?

In fact, why not take nature itself as our model? A tree produces thousands of blossoms in order to create another tree, yet we do not consider its abundance wasteful but safe, beautiful, and highly effective; hence, "waste equals food" is the first principle the book sets forth. Products might be designed so that, after their useful life, they provide nourishment for something new—either as "biological nutrients" that safely re-enter the environment or as "technical nutrients" that circulate within closed-loop industrial cycles, without being "downcycled" into low-grade uses (as most "recyclables" now are).

Elaborating their principles from experience (re)designing everything from carpeting to corporate campuses, William McDonough and Michael Braungart make an exciting and viable case for change.

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Editors of Scientific American

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A New Way of Seeing and Making.

By Rosemary

A new trend is beginning to emerge and its presence increasingly felt in our everyday lives. Let me offer an example: As you take a stroll through your neighborhood you are likely to see not just one container, but two lining the curbs of the street. To many, their existence resembles progress and an increased responsibility in the way we interact with our environment. In fact, to own and use a recycling bin (yes, you likely already guessed it) in some ways has progressed to an object of pride or a display of consumer responsibility. However, it's early and you take little notice of them as they have become quite commonplace in your neighborhood. You continue your walk and pass a couple wearing matching slip-on shoes, which you recognize from an advertisement as being made of recycled rubber and various other recycled materials. In addition, they are each carrying a cotton grocery bag which they intentionally bring and reuse every time they make such a trip to the store. You head back down your street (feeling slightly guilty after the couple passed you and wondering if you shouldn't also be using such a bag) and arrive back at your residence. You reach down and pick up the newspaper (made of recycled paper) just as your neighbor pulls into their

driveway, windows down and music playing. You recognize the soothing voice of Jack Johnson and strain your ears to listen more closely:

If you're going to the market to buy some juice. You've got to bring your own bags and you learn to reduce your waste...And if your brother or your sister's got some cool clothes...You could try them on before you buy some more of those...Reuse, we've got to learn to reuse... And if the first two R's don't work out..and if you've got to make some trash...Don't throw it out...Recycle, we've got to learn to recycle...

I think I've made my point. The message is everywhere. And as Johnson's song laid out for us above, the message is clear: Reduce, reuse, recycle. However, as widespread and as this message is becoming one must stop and ask: is it effective? William McDonough and Michael Braungart argue in *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking The Way We Make Things* that such a design goal is ineffective. Efficient? Yes. Effective? Not quite. They propose that such efforts, which they categorize as "eco-efficient" design, are only a "less bad" version of a poor design methodology that emerged from the industrial revolution. These efforts do not change the way products are designed, rather they seek to mitigate the effects of poor design. As result, they seek a negative goal of zero impact on the environment. The problems associated with this approach are numerous. First, it creates a dichotomy between the environment and industry, with gains to one necessitating a loss to the other (also known as zero sum, see the trend). This leads to conflict and opposing agendas between the two and does very little to reveal how the two may actually be of benefit to one another. Second, as mentioned, it only makes a bad thing, less bad. To reduce something bad or harmful does not negate its impact, but only delays it. As such, these efforts are by definition unsustainable. Third, at best it has a goal of seeking not to degrade the environment and certainly does not consider the possibility that good design may actually improve the environment. So what is the main problem with the design form that emerged from the industrial revolution? Put simply, it was designed to become waste. Or put another way, it was designed with waste in mind. The authors label such design, cradle-to-grave design, as it is purposed from inception to become waste. They suggest that to solve this design dilemma we must rethink our idea of waste, or rather not think of it as a possibility at all. If design is reborn without waste in mind then we will have new products and new systems that bring life and wasteful abundance to its surroundings. If we sow design with new life in mind, our industries and our environment will reap the benefits of this change in design methodology. The author's point out that nature's idea of waste or excess actually enriches its surroundings. What if we design products from inception that sought to do the same? What if we learned from nature's example and designed our systems cradle-to-cradle?

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

When Action & Reputation Mirror Each Other

By John Cirigliano

Braungart & McDonough's beautiful rendition of the way my father wanted the world to work: renewably, collaboratively, intellectually honestly.

We could easily call "Cradle" a dream, but the real world fascination you will find here pins Nobel Prize-quality medals on the lapels of Michael & Bill.

Cradle gives us hope that the excesses of the Mechanical Age do not suffocate us with their formaldehyde gases, but will energize an age where taking a problem to its highest level of abstraction yields tools to solve the thorniest issue we face. Do our actions mirror our reputation?

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Waste = Food

By Jennifer Jones

I highly recommend this inspiring work. From the very surface it is printed on (not paper!) to the bold vision it conveys, McDonough and Braggart have gifted the world with this call to action. This should be required reading for every Industrial Designer, Interior Designer/Decorator, Architect, Engineer, et al. I will definitely

be reading their next, "Upcycle". This book is now part of my permanent library, to always remind me when designing, "waste equals food." Highly recommend!

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Amazon.com Review

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