

a multitude of encouraging answers to them that are already saving lives and livelihoods. It is an eloquent, painstakingly researched sound of warning and expression of hope.

About the Reviewer

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Introduction to Personal Futuring

You can't predict your future, but you can direct it, says a professional futures workshop leader.

You may find yourself living in a shotgun shack.

You may find yourself in another part of the world.

You may find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile.

("Once in a Lifetime," song lyrics by David Byrne et al.)

Anyone who has heard the Talking Heads' hit song "Once in a Lifetime" will agree with the lead singer that a person's future holds many alternative possibilities. But unlike the song's protagonist, you don't need to look around one day and tell yourself, "Well, how did I get here?"

Verne Wheelwright, a professional futurist, emphasizes in his new book *It's Your Future ... Make It a Good One!* that the years of life ahead of you are much less mysterious than you might believe. With proper thinking and evaluating, you can obtain a clear sense now of the direction your life is heading in and what you can do to guide it toward the outcome that you want.

"You will be surprised to find out how much you can know about your future. And, you will be surprised at how much influence you can have over your future," he writes.

Government agencies and businesses throughout the world rely on formal foresight exercises to help them identify plausible futures and plan ahead how they will navigate them. Wheelwright adapts these exercises to the personal level to show how you can thoroughly map out where you might go—and where you might want to go—in the next 10, 20, 30, or more years of your own life.

"If you have a plan for your life, then as you make daily decisions, small as they may be, you will keep moving toward your plan and toward the future that you want for yourself," he writes.

Wheelwright's methods begin with you observing your present situation and your past. Next, you develop several scenarios for what your future might entail: best case, worst case, most likely, and a few unexpected "wild card" scenarios.

Alternatively, you could backcast—i.e., start in the future and work backward. This entails having a preferred destination in mind and then working through the steps that you would have to take to reach it.

Wheelwright demonstrates how you can use Excel sheets to list the "stakeholders" in your life—family members, co-workers, supervisors, elected officials, and other individuals who can impact your future for good or ill. Then you can similarly chart the "forces" that motivate you: finances, social relationships, housing, health, etc. Don't forget to employ "environmental scanning" methods, which Wheelwright explains are how you look around to identify events and people likely to impact your future: marriage, job



It's Your Future ... Make It a Good One! by Verne Wheelwright. Personal Futures Network. 2010. 253 pages. Paperback. \$17.50. An accompanying workbook is available as a free download from www.personalfutures.net.

change, illness, divorce, and so on.

Self-awareness is integral to Wheelwright's methods, also. He advises you to determine your values, as well as your strengths and weaknesses. You must know what you want and what would be the best approach you could use for attaining it.

The future can be a bewildering and intimidating concept. Wheelwright helps readers to not be daunted, however. The exercises and strategies he lays out in *It's Your Future* can help any reader apply the long-term perspective necessary to find a desirable future and proceed

confidently toward it. —Rick Docksai

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Edited by Rick Docksai

Sustainability's Dividends

Climate Capitalism by L. Hunter Lovins and Boyd Cohen. Hill and Wang. 2011. 364 pages. \$26.

A business that lowers its fossil-fuel use is not only benefiting the planet's health; it is also increasing its own profitability, argue L. Hunter Lovins and Boyd Cohen. In *Climate Capitalism*, they demonstrate how businesses in a variety of industries are adapting to the recession by adopting policies of environmental sustainability.

It's no fluke that Toyota and Volkswagen became the world's largest car companies in recent years by marketing fuel-efficient cars, according to the authors. Nor is it too sur-