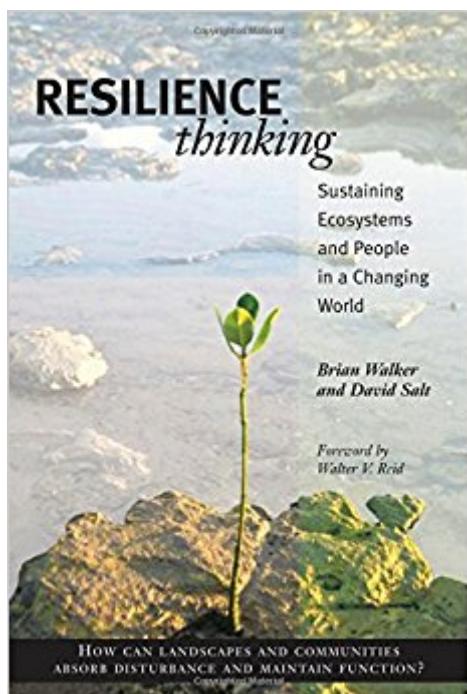


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# Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems And People In A Changing World



## **Synopsis**

Increasingly, cracks are appearing in the capacity of communities, ecosystems, and landscapes to provide the goods and services that sustain our planet's well-being. The response from most quarters has been for "more of the same" that created the situation in the first place: more control, more intensification, and greater efficiency."Resilience thinking" offers a different way of understanding the world and a new approach to managing resources. It embraces human and natural systems as complex entities continually adapting through cycles of change, and seeks to understand the qualities of a system that must be maintained or enhanced in order to achieve sustainability. It explains why greater efficiency by itself cannot solve resource problems and offers a constructive alternative that opens up options rather than closing them down. In Resilience Thinking, scientist Brian Walker and science writer David Salt present an accessible introduction to the emerging paradigm of resilience. The book arose out of appeals from colleagues in science and industry for a plainly written account of what resilience is all about and how a resilience approach differs from current practices. Rather than complicated theory, the book offers a conceptual overview along with five case studies of resilience thinking in the real world. It is an engaging and important work for anyone interested in managing risk in a complex world.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Resilience Thinking is an impressive and highly successful effort to explain complex ecological and social interactions and changes in a unified framework and in language accessible to a wide

audience. This book should stimulate extensive discussions on these critical issues and innovative ways to approach them." (Harold Mooney Achilles Professor of Environmental Biology, Stanford University)"Resilience Thinking provides a much-needed accessible entrÃƒÂ©e into a concept that holds the key to our future.... Full of wisdom, sophisticated science, and practical guidance, this book provides profound ideas, insights, and hope to scientists, students, managers, and planners alike." (Jane Lubchenco Distinguished Professor of Zoology, Oregon State University)"Resilience Thinking is an essential guidebook to a powerful new way of understanding our worldâ€¢ and of living resiliently within itâ€¢ developed in recent decades by an international team of ecologists. With five clear and compelling case studies drawn from regions as diverse as Florida, Sweden, and Australia, this book shows how all highly adaptive systemsâ€¢ from ecologies to economiesâ€¢ go through regular cycles of growth, reorganization, and renewal and how our failures to understand the basic principles of resilience have often led to disaster. Resilience Thinking gives us the conceptual tools to help us cope with the bewildering surprises and challenges of our new century." (Thomas Homer-Dixon Professor of political science, University of Toronto)"...a clear, readable, non-academic explanation of the difference between an optimization mindset and a resilience mindset." (GreenSpirit)"This is one of those books that barely mentions planning as such, but has lots of implications for it. It's short but will repay some extra quiet time...Their goal is to get us to look at the world and its systems in a fresh new way." (Planning)

Brian Walker is a Research Fellow in Australiaâ€¢s CSIRO Ecosystem Sciences, Visiting Researcher in the Stockholm Resilience Centre, and Chair of the Resilience Alliance. David Salt is a science and environment writer at the Australian National University, and has more than two decades experience writing and producing popular science magazines and books. Both authors live in Canberra, Australia.

I used this book in my graduate research and when I missed placed it, several years past grad school, I had to buy it again for a reference. It is a short book, but packed with useful information to help you understand Resilience Theory. If authors Walker and Scott taught in the US I'd be signed up in a doctorate program with them. Definatly check out this book.

I come from a background in conservation and complex systems. Like the author, I have been struggling to describe the very important worldview of systems thinking and the need to apply this thinking to ecological issues. Systems science has a language of its own which has yet to be

translated for effective use by those conservation people who make important ecological decisions. I think of folks like the field biologists who work with public lands agencies. Honestly, the systems science people have a long way to go in describing their critically important ideas. The author of this book makes a valiant attempt to bridge the gap but is entrapped in buzzwords and dense text. He uses the word "resilience" when he should probably be describing ecosystems and sustainability in terms of Nature's interconnections (energy conduits) that hold these systems together by transporting and transforming energy. Broken connections are the driving force behind broken ecosystems and are the cause of reduced resilience/sustainability. I can't be too harsh because I find myself with the same struggle of trying to translate the systems research work of Santa Fe Institute (and others) into useful, applicable ecological knowledge at the field level. I have the same minor complaints as other reviewers. The editing is poor in places. Someone from the outside should have worked with the author to make the book more readable. Nonetheless, the use of good case studies did offset the dense and often technical/obtuse writing.

This is a fantastic little book. The presentation of complex adaptive systems and the things that determine how resilient they are is crystal clear and concise. My background is computer science research, with a fair amount of experience in complex systems from that angle, and this book was still excellent for putting things into simple and straightforward language without dumbing it down or skipping important connections. My other life is as a permaculture designer. If you're not familiar with that, permaculture is a discipline that seeks to build ecologically sound, self-sustaining human settlements. Currently there is very little in the permaculture literature regarding systems and resilience, and personally I think that this is the next big step forward. This book is the best introduction to those ideas that I've ever seen, and I heartily recommend it to anyone getting into permaculture design.

Great topics discussed. Leans left as in progressive on its fews of the future sustainability of our ecosystem. I agreed with about 25% of the subject matter and do not agree with most of their predictive suggestions. A lot of reaching or predictable teachings.

This is a gem of an educational book. Mixing case studies with elaborating chapters on key concepts, it's as good a volume as I have found for teaching undergraduates, graduates, and practitioners (farmers, factory managers, investors) the core ideas needed to restore a sustainable social-ecological system. Highlights for me:+ Optimization is a false premise, simplifies complex

systems we do not understand, with the result that we end up causing long-term damage.+ Resilience thinking is systems thinking. I cannot help but think back to all of the excellent work in the 1970's and 1980's--the authors were simply a quarter century ahead of their time.+ In a nut-shell, resilient system can absorb severe disturbance.+ System resilience is affected by context, connections across scales of time and space, and current system state in relations to thresholds.+ Fresh water, fisheries, and topsoil depletion are major failures.+ Drivers of environmental degradation are poverty, willful excessive consumption, and lack of knowledge (from another book, I recall that changes to the Earth that used to take 10,000 years now take three, one reason we need real-time science).+ Key concepts are thresholds and adaptive cycles. Adaptive cycles have four phases: Rapid Growth; Conservation; Release; and Reorganization.+ Redundancy is NOT a dirty word (just as intelligence--decision support--should not be a dirty word within the United Nations)+ Ecological networks cannot be understood nor nurtured with a tight linking and understanding of the social networks that interact with the ecological networks.+ Subsidies are a form of social denial, as they subsidize unsustainable practices and prevent adaptation and change.+ Lovely--absolutely lovely--chart on page 89 about time-scales of climate and natural disasters like major fires.+ One size does not fit all--solutions for one social-ecological network, e.g. in the USA, will not be the same as for another, e.g. in Norway.+ Diversity is the key to regeneration.+ Governances must be able to see and act upon key intervention points.+ A Resilient world would be characterized by:1. Diversity2. Ecological variables3. Modularity4. Acknowledgement of slow variables5. Tight feedbacks6. Social capital7. Innovation8. Overlap in governance9. Ecosystem servicesWithin this small and very easy to absorb book one finds a great annotated bibliography of recommended readings, a fine reference section, and a very solid index. Other books that come to mind as complements to this one (limited to ten links by ):The leadership of civilization building: Administrative and civilization theory, symbolic dialogue, and citizen skills for the 21st centurySociety's Breakthrough!: Releasing Essential Wisdom and Virtue in All the PeopleEcological Economics: Principles And ApplicationsNatural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial RevolutionGreen to Gold: How Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive AdvantageCradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make ThingsThe HOK Guidebook to Sustainable DesignHigh Noon 20 Global Problems, 20 Years to Solve ThemPandora's Poison: Chlorine, Health, and a New Environmental StrategyThe Blue Death: Disease, Disaster, and the Water We Drink

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