

*The World Café: Shaping Our Futures Through Conversations That Matter.* Reviewed by Robert Steele, amazon.com reviewer.

This remarkable book has a foreword from Margaret Wheatley, genius guru and author of "Leadership and the New Science" who inspired Robert Buckman's tremendous work on "Building a Knowledge-Driven Organization," and it has a review from Tom Atlee, author of "The Tao of Democracy" and founder of the Co-Intelligence Institute.

As I finished this book and dealt with my teen-ager who at 16 is quite certain that even the great schools of Fairfax County are largely boring and dysfunctional, still teaching by rote and testing memory rather than the ability to discover, it occurred to me that this book is in fact a handbook for both educating the world, and for reforming education. Instead of the current didactic form of instruction (one-way lectures) we should be teaching, at every level, interactive discovery. It's not what you can remember from the past, but what you can discover in tandem with others, and apply constructively!

As someone who has been trained to be dysfunctional, overly reliant on "command and control" and predictability, I can certainly see how this book would cause discomfort and inspire disbelief among the mandarins of industry and government, but I can also see this book sensibly defines the only path likely to lead to collective intelligence and collective consensus solutions.

Context, hospitable spaces, questions that matter, encouraging everyone's contribution, cross-pollination of diverse perspectives, listening for patterns, cultivating collective intelligence and insight through dialog instead of debate—this book has it all.

My last annotation in the book is "Wiki!" As smart people like Jock Gill and Howard Rheingold start to think about how to create a global Wiki that enables a World Cafe with a space for every topic, every challenge, every zip code, every neighborhood, I have a strong feeling that "bottom up people power" may at last be in the offing.

Alvin and Heidi Toffler are publishing a new book in April called "Revolutionary Wealth." Knowing their past work, I suspect it will be an epic statement that carries the work of Tom Stewart ("The Wealth of Knowledge") and Barry Carter ("Infinite Wealth") to new heights, and that is where I will end this review: the world cafe is about creating wealth and peace through dialog. Done right, there are no limits to our ability to engage one another in conversation, and no limits to the wealth that we might create, the peace we might foster, by so doing.

This book is very serious, very valuable. It is worth reading and it is worth sharing with others.