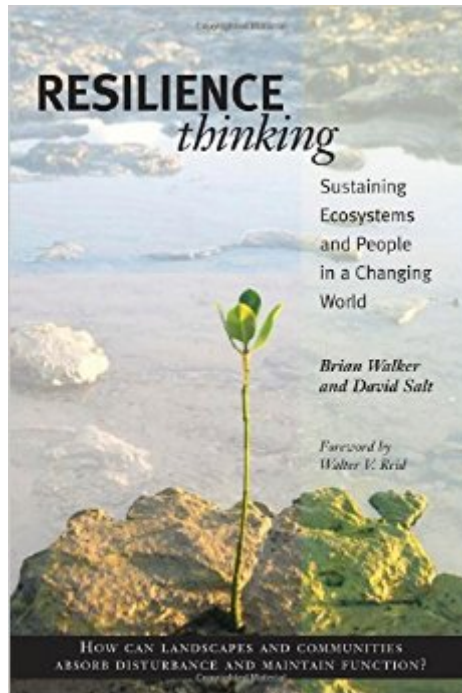


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# Resilience Thinking: Sustaining Ecosystems And People In A Changing World



## 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

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.

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