



Becoming Good Ancestors: How We Balance Nature, Community, and Technology

David Ehrenfeld

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A brilliant writer and gifted "big picture" thinker, David Ehrenfeld is one of America's leading conservation biologists. *Becoming Good Ancestors* unites in a single, up-to-date framework pieces written over two decades, spanning politics, ecology, and culture, and illuminating the forces in modern society that thwart our efforts to solve today's hard questions about society and the environment.

The book focuses on our present-day retreat from reality, our alienation from nature, our unthinking acceptance of new technology and rejection of the old, the loss of our ability to discriminate between events we can control and those we cannot, the denial of non-economic values, and the decline of local communities. If we are aware of what we are losing and why we are losing it, the author notes, all of these patterns are reversible. Through down-to-earth examples, ranging from a family canoe trip in the wilderness to the novels of Jane Austen to Chinese turtle and tiger farms, Ehrenfeld shows how we can use what we learn to move ourselves and our society towards a more stable, less frantic, and far more satisfying life, a life in which we are no longer compelled to damage ourselves and our environment, in which our children have a future, and in which fewer species are endangered and more rivers run clean. In the final chapter, he offers a dramatic view of the possibilities inherent in a fusion of the best elements of conservatism and liberalism. Our society has an inherent sense of what is right, says Ehrenfeld, and the creativity and persistence to make good things happen. It is now time to apply our intelligence, guided by our moral judgment, to the very large problems we all face. This book is an important first step.



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