



Glimmer: How Design Can Transform Your Life, and Maybe Even the World

Warren Berger , Bruce Mau

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What can we learn from the ways great designers think-and how can it improve our world? In this highly original book by journalist Warren Berger, in collaboration with celebrated designer Bruce Mau, ten groundbreaking principles of design are shown in action-addressing business, social, and personal challenges and improving the way we think, work, and live. Glimmer takes readers on a journey through today's fascinating world of design, where the formerly distinct disciplines of graphic, product, and social design are undergoing "smart re-combinations." In the cutting-edge studios of Mau and other visionaries, everything is ripe for reinvention-including the ways businesses function, children learn, and communities thrive. Designers are solving problems at an unprecedented pace today by using improved technology and the highly practical design principles described in this book, such as "Ask stupid questions," "Make hope visible," "Work the metaphor," "Embrace constraints," and "Begin anywhere." Glimmer inspires readers to apply these same principles to their own life challenges.

Glimmer: How Design Can Transform Your Life, and Maybe Even the World Details

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From Reader Review Glimmer: How Design Can Transform Your Life, and Maybe Even the World for online ebook

Nathanael Coyne says

Warren Berger's Glimmer is a practical book on design in business and social innovation based around ten principles covering ethnography, creative thinking and working within constraints.

Read the entire review at [purecaffeine.com](http://www.purecaffeine.com):

<http://www.purecaffeine.com/2010/07/b...>

Andrew Karpel says

Changed the way I think about the word design. Great case studies on designing better processes and solutions. Changed the way I look at the world around me. I have always been able to identify inefficiencies and bad design, but this book tipped me over the edge towards designing better processes.

The term design is used very broadly and the designers mentioned are often made out to be gods/heroes but other than that an inspiring and well written book for me an outsider to the design industry.

Tara Joyce says

An amazing book to help one understand the value of design thinking not only in business but in creating change in the world. It also discusses the brilliant work of designer, Bruce Mau, a evolutionary thinker.

Melissa Hicks says

I really hadn't read the reviews for this until I finished the book, and it was funny to find that some folks had the same thoughts that I did. First, I think this is a great book! But, it took me quite a bit to get into it and get through it. This worried me at first, but I made it through. The reason it takes so long is that there is a LOT of information in here. Good information. Great examples. Deep thoughts. I checked this out from the library, but now I'm going to buy a copy of this. A definite must in my creative toolkit. The other BIG PLUS is the set of resources at the end of the book...from a glossary, to people, to websites, etc. This is a gem!

Neelesh Marik says

A practitioner's ready reckon-er on making the easy and difficult things happen. The following silver bullets embody the ready reckon-er themes, categorized in 4 fields where design thinking does apply.

Universal: Ask stupid questions, Jump fences, Make hope visible
Business: Go deep, Work the metaphor,
Social: Face consequences, Embrace constraints
Personal: Design for emergence, Begin anywhere

The following 2 videos summarize the ethos of the book.

<http://glimmersite.com/about-glimmers...>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/WarrenBer...>

Crysta says

This book was passed out by our VP as a "must-read." I assumed it was about graphic design, but it was about so much more. I loved the multiple case studies about how design - whether in a product, a process, or an idea - can really be transformative, far beyond what we usually consider. This book is about opening your mind to a new way of thinking and a shift in worldview. Very much worth the read.

Dan Graham says

This a book by designers who apply the term 'design' (too broadly) to encompass almost everything that is invented, created, painted, machined, or constructed. The main thing I enjoyed about this book was some of the creative examples of design used to solve hard problems, but it was a bit snooty from the design perspective and it referred to the great designer so and so and the amazing work of so and so else so much that it became annoying. Still a worthwhile read.

Alara says

Took me a while to get into it, but once I did, I found this book is a great tool to showcase there are things we can all change by applying design principles. While reading it has also been extremely interesting to learn about different designers and inventors.

Jeff says

I've been reading a lot lately about design -- it's a vastly misunderstood word. This book helped bring some clarity around the issue. After all, we're all designers.

Some highlights:

Design is a way of looking at the world with an eye toward changing it. To do that, a designer must be able to see not just what is, but what might be. And seeing is only the beginning. Designers are also makers. They take the faint glimmer of possibility and make it visible and real to others.

Ask stupid questions.

Take Field Trips, the bandwidth of the world is greater than that of your TV set or Internet.

Begin Anywhere. Don't be afraid of confronting a blank piece of paper.

If you question the way things work but do nothing about it, you're more whiner than designer.

Designers are known for questioning that there is a joke acknowledging the tendency to question everything: "How many designers does it take to change a lightbulb? Answer: Does it have to be a lightbulb?"

Innovation happens when we seek Empathy. Frame the Challenge/Problem. Generate Options/Ideas. Create Prototypes. Iterations of the Answer.

Ann says

Absolutely fascinating book on the way Design Thinking has changed the world, for better and worse, and what current Designers are doing to change everyone's life for the better. Every case study mentioned is amazing, my favorite being how Deborah Adler has revolutionized Target's pharmacy to make it easy to understand medication, and harder to take the wrong thing.

The worst part of this book is that it makes me want to go back to school and get into Design!

Sabin says

Although at times I felt that this book is just an updated version of Wikinomics (I sometimes doubt the updated part) aimed at designers, complete with some obligatory design-speak, it managed to keep me interested to the end. Although at times it just seemed to go all over the place with the examples, some practical, others technical, others personal or more artistic in nature, it kept coming back to the idea of design as the expression of human will and desire (and Macs, he always had to return to the Mac or iPod - basically deifying Jobs).

Even though it has its flaws (from my point of view), it's actually a great book - the book sometimes sounds like a basic self-help book, with the short and definite sentences, like the author expects you to put down the book and start applying the thing he was talking about. It has a wealth of examples and references (although not all of them new, especially when you realise you know most of them) and is a fine read.

There's nothing wrong with a little self-help advice for designers or wannabe-designers.

Joseph Preston says

This was my first book on the subject of Design, it was assigned to me for a senior capstone course on entrepreneurship and product design. I thoroughly enjoyed thinking about design from the eyes of designers, I felt like it offered me more mental tools to approach design thinking than learning fundamentals of design

in a college course. It's an easy read and has some great anecdotes, pick it up at your local library if you'd like to learn about designing things as small as spatulas and as large as economies.

Scott Williams says

It took me about a hundred pages to get into this. I found the first section repetitive and dull but it quickly became more interesting when the author began to discuss a wide range of examples of innovative design and explained how modern designers are working not only to design interesting products but also systems, cities and even personal lives.

Thomas Vree says

Totally loved it. Some really great insights into design, and how design is becoming far more important to companies that want to survive and thrive in today's world. Many companies think design is merely the packaging, the glossy veneer so to speak. But smart companies realize that design needs to extend not just to how the product looks, but everything. They need to design the whole experience, from how the product looks, but more importantly how it works, and the detailed research that goes into functionality, to how the company interacts with their existing and potential customers, via a website, phone interaction, etc.

It uses Bruce Mau's terrific essay An Incomplete Manifesto For Growth as a starting point.

Several sections were very profound, and one I thought was especially good.

Brian Collins of the firm COLLINS states that the experience design movement is reinventing the marketing model that has been dominated by advertising for the last half century. That old model made it feasible that a large company could offer a lackluster customer experience, yet still coax people to purchase its bland offerings, thanks to the sheer power of message bombardment. But over the past decade, a flip-flop began to take place. Ads started to lose their power because of changes in media (including more fragmentation and greater audience control and participation). Meanwhile, those same changes in the media heightened the importance of providing quality customer experiences because customers now had more ways to talk to each other. Today, increasingly, the experience is the advertising.

The companies that are unable to figure out how to design and deliver that experience have little else to do but make pleas for our attention that are mostly ignored—in other words, they advertise. Collins believes we may now be reaching the point at which advertising becomes the penalty paid by companies that cannot design well. “In this new environment,” he says, “you could think of traditional advertising as a tax on laggards.”

Glimmer p.147-148

It also delved into the curse of a lot of designers - that they're interested in everything - that they want to learn and try everything. I can identify. Buckminster Fuller would call it being a 'comprehensivist'.

“When I'm totally unqualified for a job, that's when I do my best work. If you're trying to find a new way to think about something to make it better, it can actually hurt you to have too much experience in that particular milieu—because you understand the expectations too well. And that can cause you to limit and edit your possibilities, based on what you already know 'doesn't work'.” - Paula Scher

Another section touched on why being creative is such a charge.

People tend to think of happiness as a goal, but it's more of a process, according to Martin Seligman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and the former president of the American Psychological Association. Seligman maintains that there are two activities that lead to happiness. One is what he calls "engaging" activity—the challenging and often creative activity that tends to lead to a "flow experience."

When you're engaged in these types of creative activities, it activates an area of the brain called the nucleus accumbens that controls how we feel about life, according to Dr. S. Ausim Azizi, chairman of the department of neurology at Temple University's School of Medicine. He noted that creative activities that you enjoy also stimulate the brain's septal zone—the "feel good" area—and that makes you feel happy.

But the other part of the puzzle has to do with the second type of activity that can make you happy. Seligman has observed that in addition to those "engaging" or creatively stimulating activities, there are also "meaningful" activities that tend to make people happy. These, he says, involve "using what you're best at to serve others or participate in a cause bigger than yourself."

If you're doing a certain kind of design—"problem solving design"—you are combining both types of activities. You are creating and contributing to a larger cause, simultaneously.

Through constant acts of creative design, you recreate yourself. You help propel your own growth spiral, feeding off the energy of creation. That's not just a feeling, it's a fact: being in that state of "design flow" raises the levels of neurotransmitters in your brain, such as endorphins and dopamine, and that keeps you focussed and energized, according to Dr. Gabriella Corá of the Florida Neuroscience Center. Glimmer p.264-266

Imelda says

Warren Berger's Glimmer: How Design Can Transform Your Life and Maybe Even the World was insightful and eye-opening. Design is not only about beautiful packaging and choosing the perfect font for a poster, rather a method of finding or solving problems to improve our daily lives. Berger uses various real life design examples such as the iBOT wheelchair, starting from what inspired the designer to how it was finally created. The book is not only aimed at those who know about design but, anyone who enjoys reading about the subject, while promoting to apply the designer mentality to our lives.
