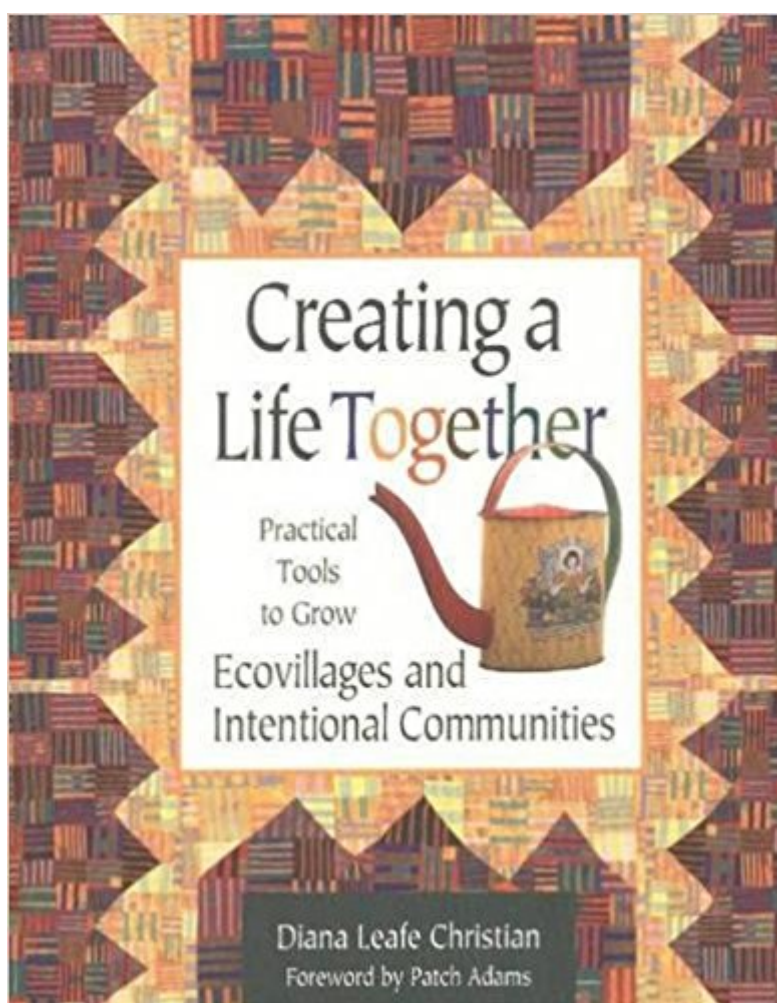


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Creating A Life Together: Practical Tools To Grow Ecovillages And Intentional Communities



Synopsis

Creating a Life Together is the only resource available that provides step-by-step practical information distilled from numerous firsthand sources on how to establish an intentional community. It deals in depth with structural, interpersonal and leadership issues, decision-making methods, vision statements, and the development of a legal structure, as well as profiling well-established model communities. This exhaustive guide includes excellent sample documents among its wealth of resources. Diana Leafe Christian is the editor of Communities magazine and has contributed to Body & Soul, Yoga Journal, and Shaman's Drum, among others. She is a popular public speaker and workshop leader on forming intentional communities, and has been interviewed about the subject on NPR. She is a member of an intentional community in North Carolina.

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Customer Reviews

An intentional community is a group of people who have chosen to live or work together in pursuit of a common ideal or vision. An ecovillage is a village-scale intentional community that intends to create, ecological, social, economic, and spiritual sustainability over several generations. The 90s saw a revitalized surge of interest in intentional communities and ecovillages in North America: the number of intentional communities listed in the Communities Directory increased 60 percent between 1990 and 1995. But only 10 percent of the actual number of forming-community groups actually succeeded. Ninety percent failed, often in conflict and heartbreak. After visiting and interviewing founders of dozens of successful and failed communities, along with her own

forming-community experiences, the author concluded that "the successful 10 percent" had all done the same five or six things right, and "the unsuccessful 90 percent" had made the same handful of mistakes. Recognizing that a wealth of wisdom were contained in these experiences, she set out to distill and capture them in one place. *Creating a Life Together* is the only resource available that provides step-by-step, practical "how-to" information on how to launch and sustain a successful ecovillage or intentional community. Through anecdotes, stories, and cautionary tales about real communities, and by profiling seven successful communities in depth, the book examines "the successful 10 percent" and why 90 percent fail; the role of community founders; getting a group off to a good start; vision and vision documents; decision-making and governance; agreements; legal options; finding, financing, and developing land; structuring a community economy; selecting new members; and communication, process, and dealing well with conflict. Sample vision documents, community agreements, and visioning exercises are included, along with abundant resources for learning more.

Besides editing *Communities* magazine since 1993, Diana Leafe Christian offers workshops nationwide in the USA on the process of forming new ecovillages and intentional communities. She is a member of Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.

Book is very thorough and informative. Gave me a lot of insight into something I've been thinking about doing or a long time. Writer spends a lot of time on legalities, technicalities and the initial formation of the community. Becomes a bit boring and difficult to read. I've been working on this book for weeks now, it's difficult to get through. There is valuable information here but I feel it is not presented in the most efficient manner. Many points are repeated and re-hashed so that it becomes overwhelming to wade through. Would still recommend the book for anyone interested in communities, as there is valuable information in the book. Would recommend the product and seller. Thank you :)

As a member of a group of folks currently planning an intentional community, I can testify to the fact that a million and one totally unexpected questions (not to mention the expected ones!) leap up to bewilder anyone thinking about creating an alternative living experiment. There are philosophical questions--what do we stand for (not just what are we against)? what's our vision?--and there are the nitty-gritty questions that have to do with land ownership, trusts, zoning permits, nonprofit status, and so on. Until you're actually in the process, you have no idea of how complicated the creation of

an intentional community can be. No wonder fewer than 10% of planned communities actually get off the ground! That's why Diana Leafe Christian's book is so invaluable. Written by someone who's been part of the intentional community movement for years, and a member of an ecovillage, "Creating a Life Together" could easily be subtitled "everything you always wanted to know about forming an intentional community but were afraid to ask." Especially valuable is its discussion of composing vision statements, thinking through what kind of land is right for your group, dealing with bankers who are likely to be wary of intentional living in the first place, and different strategies for conducting initial meetings and making group decisions--you'd be surprised how foreign consensus-style decision-making is to most of us. A growing number of folks are searching for meaningful, peaceful, self-sufficient, and eco-friendly lifestyles-in- community that offer alternatives to the consumer-driven world. But building these communities is hard and sometimes perplexing work. Take all the help and advice you can get-and Christian's book is at the top of the list.

This book offers great practical advice for those interested in starting an intentional community, but the wisdom that is shared throughout the book is also very relevant to many situations in life. The suggestions on how to communicate more effectively and using conflict to benefit the community also offers vital information in any co-living situation, including small nuclear families (and marriages). It would also be a great asset for people interested in larger scale community and urban planning. This small book is very dense with information and Christian provides great resources for doing additional research. I would absolutely recommend this book to anyone interested in living in a community, co-housing, family or roommate situation. While not all of the information will be applicable to everyone, I think many people can benefit from reading about the real community issues that Christian uses to fortify each section of this book.

As a cofounder of an aspiring ecovillage I've found this book to be uniquely invaluable to forming a community. Since November 06, a group of us have been using this book to guide us along the path towards making our dreams of a creating a community come true. At each step along the way, the advice that Diana dispenses in this guide have served as discussion tools, as examples and as warnings on how not to proceed. She offers up numerous examples of success stories and of failures. There are many books on life in cohousing, or general overviews of the community concepts, but as far as I know, this is the only one to tackle the nuts and bolts issues of creating a community from scratch. This book is absolutely essential reading to anybody interested in forming a community or cohousing project. [...]

If you are thinking about joining a sustainable community or you are thinking of creating one in your area, this is a must read. This is a complex process and so many fail to make it to fruition. Lack of realistic planning, constant open and clear communication, lack of money and too many ego's seem to be the deciding factor in most cases. It is a delicate balance, but one worth achieving. Read it once, then read it again and again. Little nuggets will will emerge each time to help keep you on track.

We spent 5 years deciding what to do next with our lives after retirement. After many soul-searching evenings with friends and age-peers, we decided that community living addressed many of the concerns we had about aging in "suburbia". This is one of those books that helps put community living into a real context. It is work. It is worth it.

There are a great many concepts and ideas in this book that are absolutely applicable to any group. Even if you don't end up in a formal co-operative living arrangement, many of the scenarios illustrated herein are quite helpful in group activities.

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