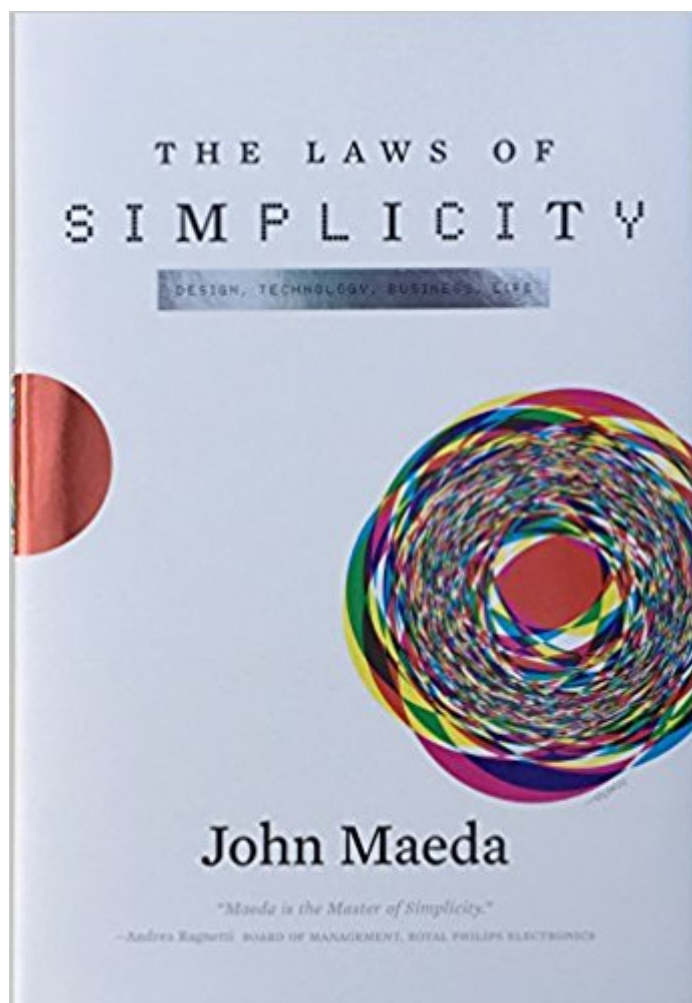The book was found

The Laws Of Simplicity (Simplicity: Design, Technology, Business, Life)

Synopsis

Finally, we are learning that simplicity equals sanity. We're rebelling against technology that's too complicated, DVD players with too many menus, and software accompanied by 75-megabyte "read me" manuals. The iPod's clean gadgetry has made simplicity hip. But sometimes we find ourselves caught up in the simplicity paradox: we want something that's simple and easy to use, but also does all the complex things we might ever want it to do. In The Laws of Simplicity, John Maeda offers ten laws for balancing simplicity and complexity in business, technology, and design -- guidelines for needing less and actually getting more.Maeda -- a professor in MIT's Media Lab and a world-renowned graphic designer -- explores the question of how we can redefine the notion of "improved" so that it doesn't always mean something more, something added on.Maeda's first law of simplicity is "Reduce." It's not necessarily beneficial to add technology features just because we can. And the features that we do have must be organized (Law 2) in a sensible hierarchy so users aren't distracted by features and functions they don't need. But simplicity is not less just for the sake of less. Skip ahead to Law 9: "Failure: Accept the fact that some things can never be made simple." Maeda's concise guide to simplicity in the digital age shows us how this idea can be a cornerstone of organizations and their products -- how it can drive both business and technology. We can learn to simplify without sacrificing comfort and meaning, and we can achieve the balance described in Law 10. This law, which Maeda calls "The One," tells us: "Simplicity is about subtracting the obvious, and adding the meaningful."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this breezy treatise, graphic designer and computer scientist Maeda proposes ten laws for simplifying complex systems in business and life-but mostly in product design. Maeda's upbeat explanations usefully break down the power of less-fewer features, fewer buttons and fewer distractions-while providing practical strategies for harnessing that power, such as SHE: "Shrink, Hide, and Embody." The first three laws, based on principles of reduction, organization and efficiency, form the foundation for increasingly complex and self-referential concepts like the importance of context and the potential for failure in simplification (by the end of the book, Maeda is chiding himself for using too many acronyms). Combined with trust and emotional engagement (laws 7 and 8), Maeda demonstrates how complex systems can become downright lovable: Maeda recalls "the Tamagocchi craze of the late 1990s... showed that anyone could fall in love with a small electronic keychain," drawing a corollary to the almighty iPod (an iconic example referred to throughout). Emphasizing the delicate balance-work involved in simplifying the complex, Maeda admits the process isn't easy, and that his ten laws don't necessarily provide all the answers-in numerous places, he directs readers to the web site where his theories continue to develop. Despite that, this slim book feels complete in itself; not only will it stimulate ideas, it will keep readers thumbing back for a second and third look at Maeda's deceptively simple advice. Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

If brevity is the soul of wit, simplicity is the soul of design. John Maeda uses the concept of simplicity to get at the nature of human thought and perception while drawing out tangible applications for business, technology, and life in general. The Laws of Simplicity is thoroughly optimistic, entertaining, and erudite, just as you would expect from Maeda. It is also the most compelling one hundred pages of design writing I have read this year. (Rob Forbes, Founder, Design Within Reach) Abstract recommends this book particularly to marketing people, product designers and technical writers. (GetAbstract)Our lives and our businesses are faster and broader than ever. As such, they are also more complex and difficult to manage, for both customers and managers. Therefore, achieving simplicity in both our products and our organizations will be crucial for securing market share. No one has seen this more clearly than John Maeda, the Master of Simplicity. The Laws of Simplicity is a clear and incisive guide for making simplicity the paramount feature of our products; it's also a road map for constructing a more meaningful world. (Andrea Ragnetti, Board of

Management, Royal Philips Electronics)FINALLY, a book about simplicity that is not too academic to read.... At the book's heart is the Shinto belief in animism, the spirit in all objects. Nicholas Negroponte, one of Maeda's mentors, once told him to become a lightbulb, not a laser beam. This he has done; all this and more.   (Susan Salter Reynolds The LA Times)I planned to skim/sample John Maeda's book, then decide to endorse it -- or not. I quickly found myself mesmerized -- and thence the only issue was deciding what were the strongest words I could muster in support of The Laws of Simplicity. The book is important; and Maeda has made an absurdly complex subject -- simplicity -- approachable and usable. Bravo! I hope the people who design the products I'll acquire in the next ten years take this book to heart. (Tom Peters)John Maeda's new book, The Laws of Simplicity, is simply terrific. It's exactly 100 pages, the illustrations are brilliant and the 10 Laws of Simplicity (plus Three Keys) are a canon to design one's entire life, much less specific products, services or business models. The subtitle is: Design, Technology, Business, Life. (Bruce Nussbaum BusinessWeek's blog "NussbaumOnDesign")Keep it simple, Stupid" is an old piece of advice, so much so that it's often abbreviated as the "KISS principle." But it's advice that's often ignored, and MIT Professor John Maeda aims to change that.... Designers and marketers will find Maeda's book both interesting and useful.... (New York Post)Maeda's Laws and Keys have an obvious practical application in everyday running of a busy life (and desktop); they also have the potential to translate into a productive methodology for any craft or design practice.... A very humble, enlightened and caring human, John's written a little bible. (Liz Farrelly Crafts Magazine)Maeda's upbeat explanations usefully break down the power of less-fewer features, fewer buttons and fewer distractions-while providing practical strategies for harnessing that power.... Emphasizing the delicate balance-work involved in simplifying the complex, Maeda admits the process isn't easy, and that his ten laws don't necessarily provide all the answers-in numerous places, he directs readers to the web site where his theories continue to develop. Despite that, this slim book feels complete in itself; not only will it stimulate ideas, it will keep readers thumbing back for a second and third look at Maeda's deceptively simple advice. (Publishers Weekly)Technology and life seem to be getting more complicated, yet two great success stories, Google and the iPod, both provide the antidote of simplicity. In The Laws of Simplicity, John Maeda uses humble prose to provide an accessible guide, business and life, observing the principle: 'Simplicity equals sanity.' (David Smith The Observer)

Almost immediately after I began to read this book, I was reminded of two quotations, the first from Oliver Wendell Holmes: "I do not care a fig for simplicity this side of complexity but I would give my

life for the other side of complexity." Also from Albert Einstein: "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." Further along into John Maeda's discussion of each of the ten "laws" and his explanation of why he thinks that "simplicity = sanity," I was reminded of this passage from William Butler Yeats' "The Second Coming":"Turning and turning in the widening gyreThe falcon cannot hear the falconer;Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhereThe ceremony of innocence is drowned;The best lack all conviction, while the worstAre full of passionate intensity."Holmes was right, acknowledging how difficult it is to proceed through complexity to simplicity. In fact, I view complexity in that context as a crucible. More specifically, as container into which alchemists once placed raw materials and subjected them to intense heat, hoping to produce a pure and precious metal, perhaps gold. Like the falcon in Yeats's poem, the human mind circles high above more than it can possibly absorb and process, then make sense of. This is what William Wordsworth suggests in "The World Is Too Much with Us":"The world is too much with us; late and soon,Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers;Little we see in Nature that is ours;We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!"And this is why Maeda believes that "simplicity = sanity." In a world that seems to become more complex each day, his on-going journey of discovery he realized how complex a topic simplicity really is, "and I don't pretend to have solved the puzzle...[and] am inspired to grapple with this puzzle many more years...Like all man-made `laws' [mine] do not exist in the absolute sense - to break them is no sin. However you may find them useful in your own search for simplicity (and sanity) in design, technology, business, and life."It would be a disservice to Maeda as well as to those who read this review to list the ten "Laws." They are best revealed in context, within the frame-of-reference he creates for each. The same is true of the three "Keys to achieving simplicity in the technology domain" with which Maeda concludes his narrative. "Rarely do I have answers, but instead I have a lot of questions just like you." I am amazed by how much material he provides within only 100 pages. Additional resources can be obtained (at no cost) by visiting lawsofsimplicity.com.It is worth noting that when Maeda "set out with youthful zeal to attack the simplicity question, [he] felt that complexity was destroying our world and had to be stopped!" Presumably others have experienced the same frustrations I have encountered when struggling to understand the directions provided in an operations manual or terms and conditions of a service warranty or when struggling to obtain assistance from a customer service representative who speaks slowly enough and clearly enough to be understood. Why does it have to be so (bleeping) complicated? After speaking at a conference, Maeda was approached by a 73-year old artist who took him aside and said, "The world's [begin italics] always [end italics] been falling apart. So relax."

Maeda suggests that his reader take the same advice "and try to LEAN BACK while you read this book, if you can."John Maeda may not get you to the "other side of complexity" but he can help you to preserve your sanity meanwhile. If that isn't a value-added benefit, I don't know what one is.

Rather than listing products to organize your laundry room, this lovely book treats simplicity as a philosophical inquiry. And it does not fall into the voluntary simplicity movement (although those who adhere to that will be enchanted). It's more a meditation using his brilliant background as an artist, engineer, student, and professor. The book is short and thoroughly inspirational. I highly recommend this delightful read.

The book is disjointed and confusing. He rambles from one topic to the next. I learned little.

Wow what a dry book. The cover was the most interesting part..

I agree the core messge : Make it simple!I remember Einstein as well : not more simpler, meaning do not sacrifice the core.I remind that it is required a smart effort to make sth simpler, but it is easy to make sth complex.It is a repetition with nice acronyms for me, not very productive experience of learning.

When I bought this book, I was really expecting a pleasure and a simple reading as its title claims, but the organization of the content, the excessive use of abbreviations created "to simplify" the understanding about some concepts and a not very skilled writing found on its pages make the reading becomes boring.

I had high hopes for this book, based on my enthusiasm for John and his other books. I guess I found the insights illuminating at times, and a bit thin or frustrating at others. It's also interesting to note that his examples in various cases might have been different had the iPhone been known of at the time (the interface, underlying complexity, cohesiveness of layers of data etc). I think it's a worthwhile read, and I'll probably go back through again to distill it better (NOT an example of simplicity!), but it's brevity just doesn't allow for a full realization of the concepts.

I have given 5 stars for the incredible, simple and easy to read book. The Laws of simplicity must be read by designers, engineers and business people or any one who is looking for a fun yet rich and

meaningful read

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