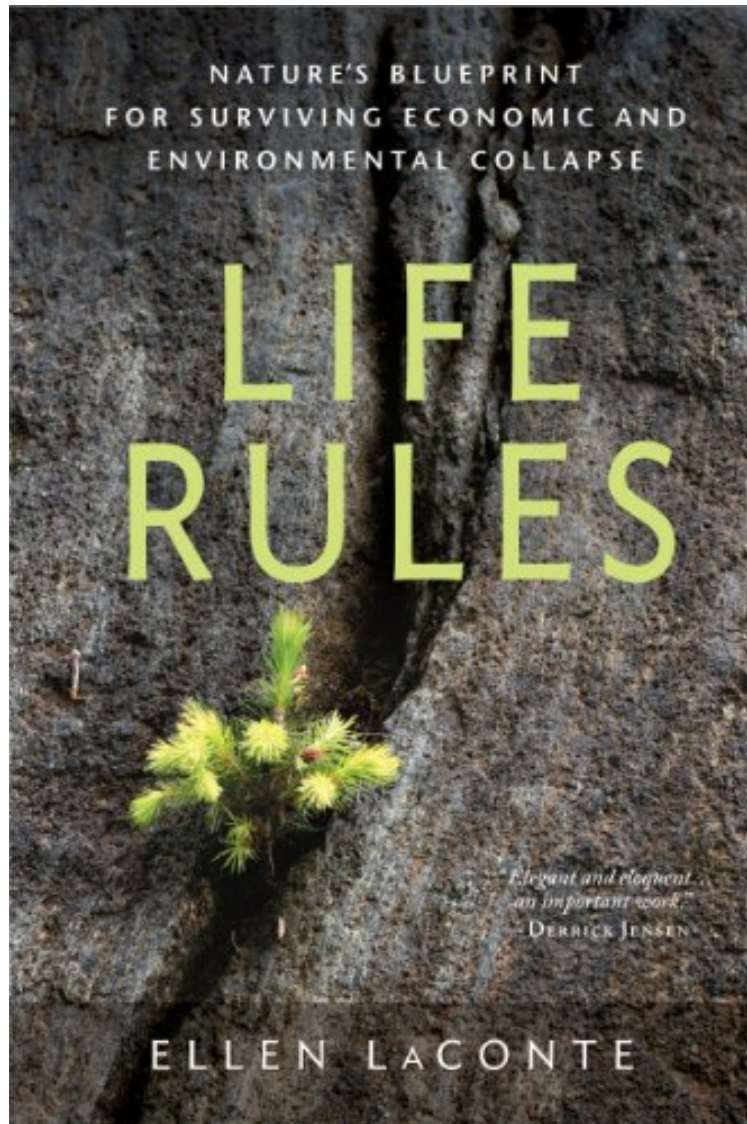


(Read free) Life Rules: Nature's Blueprint for Surviving Economic and Environmental Collapse

## Life Rules: Nature's Blueprint for Surviving Economic and Environmental Collapse

*Ellen LaConte*

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**Ellen LaConte : Life Rules: Nature's Blueprint for Surviving Economic and Environmental Collapse** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Life Rules: Nature's Blueprint for Surviving Economic and Environmental Collapse:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Biological Life as a MetaphorBy Ari Starchus"Life Rules" is a very timely book for a number of reasons.It views the current treatment of the planet by humanity in terms of a "disease" paradigm, suggesting that the multiple symptoms of the "things going wrong" are indeed connected and are being

caused by the same pervasive illness - of which a "Viral Global Economy" is just the most pernicious manifestation. It further suggests that the various maladies, maladaptations and "fails" are due to a single fundamental misreading of how the world works - those who run the world think they are bigger than Life. Oh, the folly of thinking we are bigger and more important than 'Mother Nature'! Ellen La Conte's book is emphatic in asserting - in different ways - that Life Rules. Period. No human enterprise, nor all of them taken together can ever be conducted (over time) in defiance of how Life works and beyond the limits imposed by a finite planet. The convergence of the various ills confounding us she labels as "Critical Mass" in the book and this characterization is meant to impart to the reader the seriousness of the "patient"'s condition and therefore how imperative the need for salutary interventions is at this time (and maybe too late...). It is not the intent of this review to summarize the main themes of the book. Read it for yourself and decide its value to your own "how do we get out of this mess" thinking. However, I would like to point out those aspects of Ms. La Conte's oeuvre that make it very valuable and a fun read, despite the sometimes depressing facts she has to point to. - The book is very readable, written in a very accessible style, at times mimicking a possible conversation between two concerned friends. - Throughout the book, relevant quotes from a wide variety of thinkers and activists are highlighted in boxes inserted into the text. Finding quotes from the likes of Lynn Margulies, Ervin Laszlo, Donella Meadows, Lester Brown, Wendell Berry, Elisabet Sahtouris, Kirpatrick Sale, Duane Elgin, et al, makes it clear that La Conte's book is well-researched and can be a springboard to much more relevant, fascinating and enlightening reading on the topic of "How Life works and what understanding this teaches us". - Endnotes are very helpful. - The book is nicely organized and there is not a lot of "padding" repetition of the main themes and assertions. Most importantly, La Conte is not shy about clearly stating that certain individuals and institutions - which she calls "the Powers" - are who actively, often openly stand in the way of implementing Life-enhancing socio-political, environmental and spiritual set of solutions. Just this bold assertion makes the book of great value, for it states the obvious in no uncertain terms: we are not transitioning to a better world right now not because it's not necessary or not possible but because the Powers won't let us. No amount of individual actions toward "Deep Green" - not that they should NOT be taken - changes the fact that systemic changes will also be necessary contemporaneously with personal and community transformations. The basic meme of the book - that Life's workings strongly suggest that economic arrangements can be - and must be - eco-logical is very important. For those searching for the cultural myths that must replace the current pathological myths of endless growth and dominance of people and nature, La Conte provides many "what it could be like" scenarios for the future as well as examples of experiments going on in the world right now. We need to start to believe the new story and also to live it. However, in this reviewer's opinion, some of the anthropomorphization that creeps into the otherwise well reasoned arguments is not ultimately convincing. For example there is this paragraph: "Life's economic partnerships are not entered into loosely. [...] Every partner is fully liable, responsible for its partners' wellbeing as well as its own." This suggests that Nature's components enter into relationships with each other consciously and ethically - and therefore are worthy of emulation. But Life's relationships, while appearing, from our perspective as self-conscious cultural entities as "purposefully so" are not results of negotiated, a priori or a posteriori intentional arrangements. They work in such (to us) seemingly "democratic and egalitarian" manner - human value judgments - due to undisturbed workings of physico-chemical feedback loops interweaving at all levels of "natural" being. In human affairs on the other hand, interactions of intentional agents who all, from time to time, can and do "game" the system, such "just let the system do its thing" rules are not likely to work without constant vigilance on the part of various groups adopting such rules. The above quibble is not intended to diminish this reviewer's conviction of the great value of this book. In bringing to the fore the idea that of all possible paradigms for organizing Human/Planet v. 2.0 the "Life Knows" thesis offers a most complete, empirical, immediate set of integrated, organic prescriptions La Conte adds a very timely and powerful voice to the chorus of visionaries imagining the world. In effect she is saying that the answer to the question "Says who?" when offering this solution to our ills is "Life" - and there is no greater practical authority. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books on evolutionary systems for the average person yet! By Dominic Well written, interesting, easy to understand considering the subjects of evolutionary biology and our global crisis. Our organization UniverseSpirit.org is recommending this book to our 3,000 members. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Saving our Future By Lanny Sinkin This book is an invaluable guide to the crises we have created by our disconnection from the Natural World and how we can save ourselves and our planet by reconnecting. Philosophically, scientifically, and practically this book is invaluable.

Corporate capitalism has ravaged the planet the same way HIV ravages the human body, triggering a critical mass of cascading environmental, economic, social, and political crises. Economic and climate instability, collapsing ecosystems, peak fossil fuels, and devastating resource wars; if the Earth were a patient, her condition would be critical. Life Rules offers a comprehensive analysis of our present circumstances, combined with a holistic treatment protocol for restoring health to vulnerable human and natural communities. Predicting that Life will last, but if we don't make some fundamental changes, life as we know it; and a lot of us; won't, Life Rules identifies natural laws that have allowed non-human communities to thrive and prosper for several billion years, including:

Local self-reliance Mutual interdependence Reliance on non-fossil sources of energy Resource conservation, sharing, and recycling Radically democratic self-organization and governance This sobering yet essentially optimistic manifesto is required reading for anyone concerned about our ability to live within Earth's means. A powerful tool for community transition and cultural transformation, *Life Rules* offers a solution to our global challenges that is at once authentically hopeful, deeply inspiring, and profoundly liberating. Ellen LaConte is acting director of the EarthWalk Alliance, a contributing editor to *Green Horizon Magazine* and *The Ecozoic*, a frequent talk show guest, and publisher of the *Starting Point* online newsletter. She has written two books about Helen and Scott Nearing, homesteaders and best-selling authors of *Living the Good Life*, and she is the author of the upcoming environmental novel *Afton*.

Elegant and eloquent ... an important work. -- Derrick Jensen, author of *Endgame, A Language Older than Words* and *Deep Green Resistance* (with Aric McBay and Lierre Keith) *Life Rules* brings fresh clarity and urgency to the serious, complex and interrelated issues and crises that we face as a species to either evolve or perish. Any faith unexamined means another life, another generation, un-lived. This book examines those value systems and beliefs that have brought on what some see as the End Time, and offers alternative ways of being and doing that can help our species not only survive, but also evolve. As Albert Schweitzer advised, "Until he extends his circle of compassion to include all living things, man will not himself find peace. — Dr. Michael W. Fox, veterinarian, author of *Bring Life to Ethics: Global Bioethics for a Humane Society* While *Deep Ecologists* explore ways humans can break through to a new level of consciousness in harmony with life, LaConte offers us a compelling reason to provide for ourselves in ways that mimic life: our survival as a species on a livable planet. In a critically challenged world, sustainable means not just Earth-friendly but also lifelike.... A very important attempt to wake us up before our global economy "puts us and life as we know it — as well as itself — out of business." — John Seed, Founder/Director, Rainforest Information Network, co-author of *Thinking Like a Mountain: Toward a Council of All Beings* Ellen LaConte is the steward of the kind of holistic mind that we humans were born into but that, amid the myriad fragmentations of mass global society, so many have lost. She applies her elastic intelligence to the most important topic we face: the destruction of life and the means by which we may survive. *Life Rules* is a tour de force and a book to carry with you in the years to come. — Chellis Glendinning, author of *Off the Map: An Exploration into Empire and the Global Economy* It is the genius of this book that its hard-hitting diagnosis of our global crisis provides the groundwork for its prescription. What we can and must do for the survival of complex life-forms shines ever clearer, as we follow Ellen LaConte's invigorating portrayal of life's systemic principles. Crackling with intelligence and verve, *Life Rules* immediately became required reading among colleagues in the *Work That Reconnects*. — Joanna Macy, author, *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy* I am SO enjoying every word of *Life Rules* and learning from you. You are carrying the ball now! I will tell many about it and wish you a wonderful new year from my paradise on Mallorca. — Elisabet Sahtouris, evolution biologist, author of *EarthDance, A Walk Through Time and Biology Revisioned* (with Willis Harmon) It's as if LaConte googled the world's environmental and economic woes and distilled them down into a construct that we can all easily understand and digest. Critical reading for anyone who cares enough about our planet to try to save it. — Miles Frieden, Director, Key West Literary Seminar A very valuable and important book. I will gladly recommend it to colleagues in the Great Work. It anticipates readers' questions and makes the vast complex of present problems comprehensible. — Herman Greene, Director, The Center for Ecozoic Studies, publisher of *The Ecozoic* Wonderful summary of what's wrong and what we need to do, not just economically and ecologically, but also politically.... The logic is very persuasive. By the time I put down the book, I was laughing at myself for ever thinking that broad national or global policies would be any use in getting us out of this mess. — Edmund "Terry" Fowler, author of *From Galileo to the Greens: Our Escape From Mechanical Thinking and Building Cities That Work* Looking back with more than seventy years of experience, I'm of the opinion that LaConte's conception of democracy, as both characteristic of living systems and the ultimate objective of humanity's political enterprise, is the most inspired and comprehensive I am aware of. — Lloyd P. Wells, co-founder, The Center for Consensual Democracy, author of *Recreating Democracy: Breathing New Life into American Communities* There are many books that focus on one aspect of the ecological problems that mankind is generating, but it is rare to find a book like *Life Rules* that looks at the whole picture. It is a sobering read, and leads to the conclusion that there is a systemic problem in our treatment of Gaia that can justly be compared to a disease process. The current individualistic paradigm can be summed up as "Blow you, Jack, I'm all right." Paradigms can change, and Ellen LaConte shows in which direction our present mind-set should move if humanity and Gaia are to recover from the present disease. — Dr. Richard Lawson, Parliamentary candidate, Green Party UK This is not just one more cultural, economic and ecological Jeremiad. Rather, LaConte accomplishes a brilliant synthesis of the work of visionary economists, environmentalists and social critics alike. She's done our homework for us. But she's much more than an artful synthesizer of others' work. Her perspective, "big picture" observations, guiding metaphors and incisive, scrappy prose are all her own. She deftly manages to speak to young people and scholars with equal clarity and force. She tells it like it is, but never leaves us feeling helpless. It's rare to find a book that tells the dark truth about our current human and planetary condition while simultaneously motivating us to re-think, re-act

and step toward the light. This book does. — Rebecca Kneale Gould, Associate Professor of Religion and Environmental Studies, Middlebury College, author of *At Home in Nature* *Life Rules* is a powerful call to action that Americans in particular and all global citizens need to heed for humanity's survival and transformation. Highly recommended. — Wanda Urbanska, "Simple Living with Wanda Urbanska" (PBS), author of *Less is More* (with Cecile Andrews) An important book with a compelling argument: that we must be able to see the myriad threats facing the planet, not as discrete problems, but as interconnected issues that must be addressed as a single crisis. — Walter Fox, Professor of Journalism, Temple University (ret.), *Writing the News: A Guide for Print Journalists* *Life Rules* shows that more of us are beginning, in the nick of time, to recognize ourselves, our creations and our natural communities and ecosystems as inextricably interdependent. We see that it is no longer OK that our way of life requires that others' ways of life be diminished. It is no longer OK that the preservation of our land, health and jobs requires that others' be destroyed. This book validates those individuals, organizations and movements that are helping to shift the human paradigm from extreme competition, perpetual growth and private gain to cooperation, sustainability and the common good. — Mary Beth Steisslinger, Integral Systems Biologist, Global Commons Group, Sky Trust *LaConte* sounds depths from which will spring new ways to see cities and buildings become tools for healing our planet. Her book may help to inspire a global movement towards a rediscovery of our sacred commitment to serve as loving Earth stewards. — Tim Watson, Eco-Restorative architect and teacher, President, EarthWalk Alliance *LaConte's* well-crafted analogies tie together many environmental and economic issues to show why the world is between a rock and a hard place ... and why millions of us need to get up and serve in the world. — Dwayne Hunn, The People's Lobby; The American World Service Corps, author of *Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things* In proposing that the earth's rapidly cascading and interlocked symptoms of environmental and social malaise constitute a syndrome analogous to HIV/AIDS, Ellen *LaConte* aptly explains how we managed to arrive at thresholds that could bring down life as we know it in rapid order. This is a chilling synthesis. But not hopeless.... It comes down, she says, to tending things in the places we live and work. This is the way out — a return to deep local economies nested in limits and potentials given by nature. She has come up with a book that could change the shape of things to come. — Ted Bernard, Professor, Environmental Studies Program, Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, Ohio University, author of *Hope and Hard Times* and *The Ecology of Hope* I found *LaConte's* analogy in re AIDS fascinating.... an approach that may make the earth's crisis more plausible and understandable. It is the kind of analogy that even the simplest among us can understand and may be the kind of marketing "tool" that could catch on in ways other approaches cannot. — Fred Berger, Vice Chairman (ret.), Hill Knowlton, Inc. The key features of *LaConte's* deeply green vision for the future are economics rooted in sustained commitment to earth, especially to the particular places we live on earth, and politics rooted at the local level in the dialogue of persons in a process she calls "Organic Democracy." Her vision is synchronous with what I believe the Green Party vision must be for its second quarter century. — John Rensenbrink, co-founder of the Green Party USA, founding director of the Green Horizon Foundation, publisher of *Green Horizon Magazine* Nothing is more radical and more necessary for this moment of conscious social invention and conscious human evolution than to return life itself to center stage of human political economy and human spiritual cosmology. By doing this here in her book, *Life Rules*, Ellen *LaConte* is showing the courage, character and wisdom of other leaders whose vision of the possible future changed history. ... — August T. Jaccaci, Founder of Communiversality, author of *General Periodicity: Nature's Creative Dynamics*