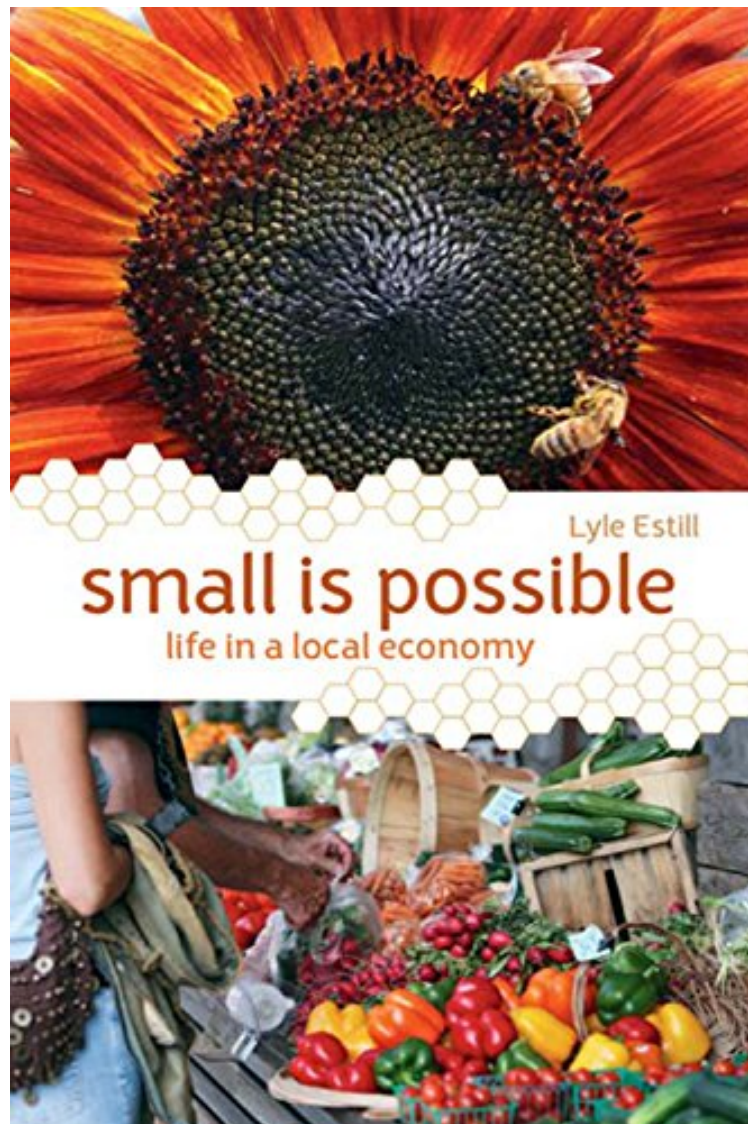


## Small is Possible: Life in a Local Economy

Lyle Estill

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**Lyle Estill : Small is Possible: Life in a Local Economy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Small is Possible: Life in a Local Economy:

19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. After reading "Collapse", read this!By Michael TiemannIt is easy to be overwhelmed with the doom and gloom consequences of American's thoroughly unsustainable lifestyle: climate change, pollution of air, water, and soil, declining ecosystems, and the very real risk that in 60 years, nobody will be living what we today consider to be a first-world lifestyle. What to do?For starters, read Lyle Estill's Small Is Possible, a wonderful collection of writings that chronicles Lyle's own shift from get-setting deal-maker to homesteading community-builder.Lyle's writing style is excellent: concrete, humorous, and often self-deprecating, Lyle's stories

spring to life from the pages, and then linger in details which keeps the community and its members, not Lyle himself, in the foreground. This book variously strikes me as: non-fiction Huckleberry Finn, a North Carolinian Omnivore's Dilemma, a contemporary Guns, Germs, and Steel, and The Tipping Point as played by actors in Chatham County. Let me say again: the book is very well written, the material is extremely compelling and relevant to the 21st century, and, in the great tradition of open source software (which Lyle himself acknowledges), it is designed to be a resource for others who believe that small is possible. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Surprising Intersection of Informative and Enjoyable By H. Messinger I am a journalist that writes a blog about how and why to buy local. I came across this book as part of my research. When it arrived, it certainly was not what I had expected. After having read Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age by Michale H. Shuman, I was anticipating a book full of statistics and academic references. I was slightly disappointed, but decided to read on anyway. I completely forgot that I was doing work, research, or anything of the like. I simply enjoyed myself. Small is Possible is an enchanting web of stories about how and why specific local businesses work. Estill gives faces and names to the statistics and studies of Shuman's work. Although he provides several helpful statistics, he always does it in reference to something concrete. For example, when discussing Chatham Marketplace, a grocery store that sells only local products, he notes that by comparison, Whole Foods only carries 6% local products. He takes the issue of localism and makes it personal and relatable. When I came back down to earth and remembered that I was doing work, I tried to find the "multiplier" for Davidson County online ("The multiplier is a number than counts how many times a dollar travels through our local economy before heading for some place else," p.96). I was unsuccessful, so I employed the modern solution: I found Lyle Estill on Facebook and sent him a message. He replied to me that same evening and was very helpful. 12 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Frantic and chaotic By Dave There are some books that sound good and turn out otherwise; this was one. I had recently read and completely enjoyed New Society Publisher's "The New Village Green" and thought I would read another on their publication list. Unfortunately a common publisher does not ensure that one book's as good as the other. The author's life seems to run at warp speed, and his book reflects this pace. Even the author's biography in the back reads like an ADHD trip through various careers and endeavors. Chapter One starts with the author's description of his therapist, which is hardly a good sign. In the span of a SINGLE PAGE later in the book, he discusses: Mother's Day, software sales, a train ride from Germany to Sweden, a technology trade show, Easter, his plans for divorce, a garden-sized wooden chess set, a decision to have children (controlled, he says, by his ability to possess such a life-size chess set), the continuation of his marriage, disillusionment with corporate life, and his wife's decision to become an art dealer. Tired yet?? I sure was! This book is frenetic and confusing, chaotic and disappointing. If you feel like boarding a runaway train, be my guest. If not, I would urge you to avoid this book. P.S.: You might also consider that several of the 5-star reviewers are local to the book's setting (North Carolina) or are friends / relatives of the author. I'm just sayin' .....

"In Small is Possible, Estill chronicles the failures and victories of an ongoing movement for sustainability and local resiliency in Chatham County, located in the piedmont region of North Carolina. Estill is a legitimate source on the subject: he co-founded Piedmont Biofuels, a biodiesel co-op that went from backyard operation into an industrial plant in a few short years. The characters in Estill's world are both entertaining and endearing. Many of them show a flinty defiance, positioning themselves as courageous Daniels against the Goliaths of corporate greed and globalization. Readers interested in academic arguments for local economies can find other books on the subject, but if they want a compelling story about noble attempts to walk the talk, Small is Possible delivers. - Brian Baughan, Sustainablog "In an age of increasing globalization, it is hopeful to be reminded that there are still communities where transactions are handled in handshakes rather than receipts. Estill takes us on a loving stroll through his North Carolina neighborhood and shows us how small-scale sustainability - feeding, fueling, and financing locally - is both possible and preferable." - Book Notes, Orion Magazine One of my favorite ideas in this book is the idea of open source. Once you let go of this idea that everything must be copyrighted, everything must be owned and protected in order to make money, you become free. Open source ideas quickly foster a more open community, a more open and honest society. A group of people or organizations all start working toward a common goal rather than all working against one another. Beautiful, isn't it? Another beautiful idea is that a community needs a variety of people and businesses to thrive. And that as you begin living locally- and begin working toward a healthy community - people and businesses find their niches. And when you find your own niche within the local economy, your own happiness rises. Your sense of well-being increases when you realize your positive and necessary contribution to society. As we go further into debt and economic security throughout the world, nurturing our small, local, sustainable businesses and infrastructure will become increasingly important. I recommend this book. Reviewed by Melinda on The Blogging Bookworm In an era when incomprehensibly complex issues like Peak Oil and climate change dominate headlines, practical solutions at a local level can seem somehow inadequate. In response, Lyle Estill's Small is Possible introduces us to "hometown security," with this chronicle of a community-powered response to resource depletion in a fickle global economy. True stories, springing from the soils of Chatham County, North Carolina, offer a positive counterbalance to the bleakness of our age. This is the story of how one small southern US town found actual solutions

to actual problems. Unwilling to rely on the government and wary of large corporations, these residents discovered it is possible for a community to feed itself, fuel itself, heal itself, and govern itself. This book is filled with newspaper columns, blog entries, letters, and essays that have appeared on the margins of small-town economies. Tough subjects are handled with humor and finesse. Compelling stories of successful small businesses, from the grocery co-op to the biodiesel co-op, describe a town and its people on a genuine quest for sustainability. Everyone interested in sustainability, local economy, small business, and whole foods will be inspired by the success stories in this book.