

The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible. 2013. Charles Eisenstein. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books. 288 pages.

Even though quality professionals routinely challenge each other to think "outside the box," we tend to believe that the social, technological, and organizational systems to which we devote our lives, while not perfect, are basically on-target. We believe that by embracing the principles and practices of quality management - by driving out fear, breaking down barriers, and creating the conditions where everyone can feel ownership and pride over their efforts - we are helping to move the world gradually and inexorably toward a better place. We have passion for our work because we know that our actions solve problems and make a real difference in people's lives.

Except sometimes, it can feel like they don't. If you take an honest look at all of the poverty, violence, environmental degradation, political corruption, bald selfishness, and spiritual emptiness that exists locally, nationally, and globally, it is hard to say with a straight face that the seemingly small improvements we implement really matter on a global scale. We quail to think that anything we do as individuals could possibly have any meaningful impact in the face of the enormity of such problems. Even worse, we sometimes see ourselves as enabling the more efficient and effective destruction of our world. On our darkest days we may wonder: Why bother? Can we really make a difference? It is easy to slip into self-delusion, or despair, or both.

In his book, *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know is Possible*, Charles Eisenstein addresses these extremes head on. Without donning rose-colored glasses, nor avoiding the most inhumane deeds of humanity, he makes an eloquent and erudite case for why self-delusion and despair are not our only options. By elucidating and questioning the fundamental assumptions that lead us to these extremes, Eisenstein shows how our actions, both small and large, can help all of us traverse the space between what he refers to as the Age of Separation and the Age of Reunion. This is an extraordinarily powerful work, one that could have reverberations through the quality community for years to come as it challenges us to revisit our assumptions about the systems we work within.

Reviewed by
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