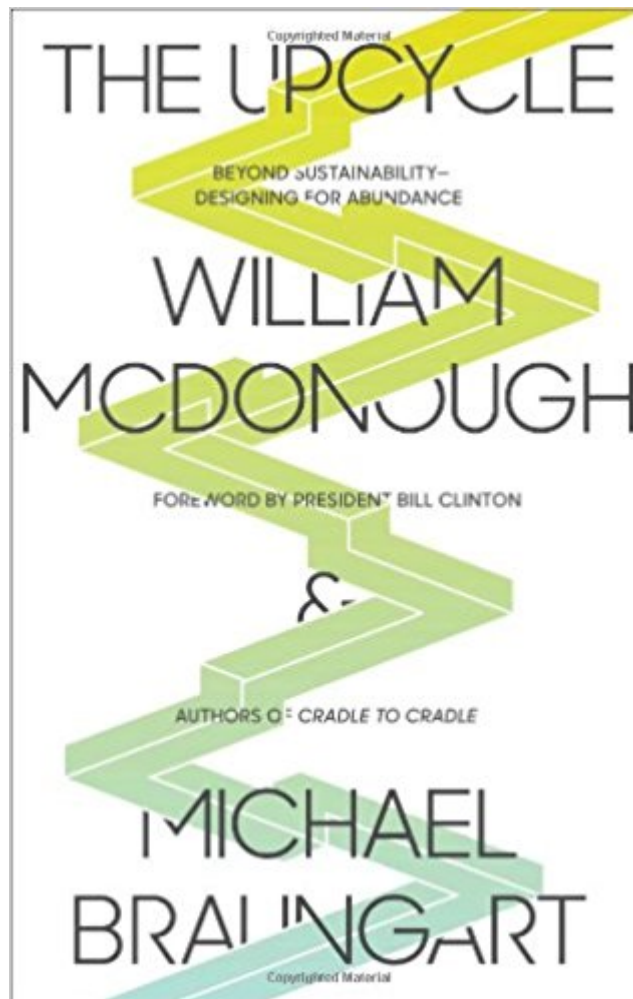


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# The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability--Designing For Abundance



## Synopsis

From the authors of *Cradle to Cradle*, we learn what's next: *The Upcycle*. *The Upcycle* is the eagerly awaited follow-up to *Cradle to Cradle*, one of the most consequential ecological manifestoes of our time. Now, drawing on the green living lessons gained from 10 years of putting the *Cradle to Cradle* concept into practice with businesses, governments, and ordinary people, William McDonough and Michael Braungart envision the next step in the solution to our ecological crisis: We don't just use or reuse and recycle resources with greater effectiveness, we actually improve the natural world as we live, create, and build. For McDonough and Braungart, the questions of resource scarcity and sustainability are questions of design. They are practical-minded visionaries: They envision beneficial designs of products, buildings, and business practices—and they show us these ideas being put to use around the world as everyday objects like chairs, cars, and factories are being reimagined not just to sustain life on the planet but to grow it. It is an eye-opening, inspiring tour of our green future as it unfolds in front of us. *The Upcycle* is as ambitious as such classics as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*—but its mission is very different. McDonough and Braungart want to turn on its head our very understanding of the human role on earth: Instead of protecting the planet from human impact, why not redesign our activity to improve the environment? We can have a beneficial, sustainable footprint. Abundance for all. The goal is within our reach.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you are already familiar with the work of Bill McDonough ("BM") and Michael Braungart ("MB",

together "BMMB"), then my glowing praise should come as no surprise and you can probably stop reading my review and go get your copy now. As a bioentrepreneur running a company, I am well read on current thinking involving sustainability, biomimicry, biology, and futurism. All the same I just checked out and devoured this book in a day. My high expectations were not disappointed, and the marathon read spurred my creativity not just in business but all the way through the cycle down to my family life, which was the intention. In 1992 BMMB publicly presented the "Hannover Principles", a sustainability manifesto which advocates transcending basic design principles by also considering the impact on health and the environment, how the design impacts things on the periphery and identifying those relationships, eliminating waste and optimizing efficiency, and striving to holistically improve the end product. Together they identified and analyzed thousands of industrial materials and produced a ranking system that delineated their qualities along the lines of toxicity and true recyclable sustainability (as opposed to "downcycling", or reusing the materials of a primary product to produce something else with less and less quality/utility in the future). This work led to a major series of high level consultations producing a "butterfly effect" that is positively impacting us all, and will continue to do so ad infinitum. Ten years later they wrote "Cradle to Cradle", which looked at how products could be made better by applying the Hannover Principles, and that doing so would make companies more profitable.

C2C and The Upcycle William McDonough, an American architect, and Michael Braungart, a German chemist, combined to write Cradle to Cradle (C2C). C2C, published in 2002, discusses product design, with emphasis on materials utilization efficiency in an environmental context. C2C proposes that product design consider negative effects, especially toxicity, to humans and the natural world at every step in the product's value chain, including disposition when the product is no longer useful. In essence, C2C goes beyond "cradle to grave" design, which ends at a landfill or an incinerator, to "cradle to cradle" design, where non-toxic materials are reclaimed, recycled or reused in generation after generation of products. Recently, the same two authors published The Upcycle. The Upcycle isn't really a sequel to C2C. Rather, as its title implies, it is an expansion on C2C, based on experience -- in this case, two decades of experience. Think of The Upcycle as another generation of the same product, rather like release 1.0 and release 2.0 of a software package. Here are a few of the key ideas from The Upcycle: >> More good, rather than less bad: The general approach to environmental impacts and human well-being is to do less bad -- reduce atmospheric emissions, reduce industrial accidents and reduce waste to landfill, for example. The Upcycle asserts that reduction, even reduction to zero, isn't sufficient. Production should aim beyond

shrinking its negative footprint on the world to producing an increasing positive footprint.

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