



Living Lessons of Biomimicry, by Janine Benyus

Biomimics are men and women who are exploring nature's masterpieces -- photosynthesis, self-assembly, natural selection, and more--and then copying these designs and manufacturing processes to solve our own problems. I call their quest biomimicry -- the conscious emulation of life's genius.

In a society accustomed to dominating or "improving" nature, this respectful imitation is a radically new approach, a revolution really. Unlike the Industrial Revolution, the Biomimicry Revolution introduces an era based not on what we can extract from nature, but on what we can learn from her. [...]

When we stare this deeply into nature's eyes, it takes our breath away, and in a good way, it bursts our bubble. We realize that all our inventions have already appeared in nature in a more elegant form and at a lot less cost to the Planet. Our most clever architectural struts and beams are already featured in lily pads and bamboo stems. Even the wheel, which we always took to be a uniquely human creation, has been found in the tiny rotary motor that propels the flagellum of the world's most ancient bacteria. [...]

I can't help but wonder how we will use these new designs and processes. What will make the Biomimicry Revolution any different from the Industrial Revolution? Who's to say we won't simply steal nature's thunder and use it in the ongoing campaign against life?

This is not an idle worry. The last really famous biomimetic invention was the airplane. We flew like a bird for the first time in 1903, and by 1914, we were dropping bombs from the sky.

Perhaps in the end, it will not be a change in technology that will bring us to the biomimetic future, but a change of heart. Our tools are always deployed in the service of some philosophy or ideology. If we are to use our tools in the service of fitting in on Earth, our basic relationship to nature--even the story we tell ourselves about who we are in the universe--has to change. [...]

At the same time that ecological science is showing us the extent of our folly, it is also revealing the pattern of nature's wisdom reflected in all life. This time we come not to learn about nature so that we might circumvent or control her, but to learn from nature, so that we might fit in, at last and for good, on the Earth from which we sprang.

We have a million questions. How should we grow our food? How should we make our materials? How should we power ourselves, heal ourselves, store what we learn? How should we conduct business in a way that honors the Earth? As we discover what nature already knows, we will remember how it feels to be a part of, not apart from, the genius that surrounds us.

Let the living lessons begin.

--Janine Benyus, in *Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature* [1]

Links:

[1]

http://www.amazon.com/Biomimicry-Innovation-Inspired-Janine-Benyus/dp/0060533226/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1332272933&sr=1-1

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