



Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist

By Mitchell Thomashow

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Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist By Mitchell Thomashow

Mitchell Thomashow, a preeminent educator, shows how environmental studies can be taught from different perspective, one that is deeply informed by personal reflection. Through theoretical discussion as well as hands-on participatory learning approaches, Thomashow provides concerned citizens, teachers, and students with the tools needed to become reflective environmentalists. What do I know about the place where I live? Where do things come from? How do I connect to the earth? What is my purpose as a human being? These are the questions that Thomashow identifies as being at the heart of environmental education. Developing a profound sense of oneself in relationship to natural and social ecosystems is necessary grounding for the difficult work of environmental advocacy. In this book he provides a clear and accessible guide to the learning experiences that accompany the construction of an "ecological identity": using the direct experience of nature as a framework for personal decisions, professional choices, political action, and spiritual inquiry. Ecological Identity covers the different types of environmental thought and activism (using John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, and Rachel Carson as environmental archetypes, but branching out into ecofeminism and bioregionalism), issues of personal property and consumption, political identity and citizenship, and integrating ecological identity work into environmental studies programs. Each chapter has accompanying learning activities such as the Sense of Place Map, a Community Network Map, and the Political Genogram, most of which can be carried out on an individual basis. Although people from diverse backgrounds become environmental activists and enroll in environmental studies programs, they are rarely encouraged to examine their own history, motivations, and aspirations. Thomashow's approach is to reveal the depth of personal experience that underlies contemporary environmentalism and to explore, interpret, and nurture the learning spaces made possible when people are moved to contemplate their experience of nature.

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Editorial Review

Review

This book opens up the doors of ecological perception with a unique integration of scientific knowledge, creative imagery, and compassionate insight. Mitchell Thomashow gives us the lenses to see what is essential for our collective future -- the intrinsic connection between the local and the global. We are all in his debt.

(Mary Evelyn Tucker, Yale University)

"At a moment when the environmental crisis seems so intractable to so many, Mitch Thomashow enacts here the perennial service of the wise and compassionate educator-citizen: to help us find greater power for what we do in a deeper understanding of who we are."

(Paul Gorman, Executive Director, National Religious Partnership for the Environment)

"In its density and strong voice alike, this fine book reflects Mitchell Thomashow's years of teaching in an innovative environmental studies program. I enormously admire both his probing discussions of spiritual, psychological, and political issues and his highly practical exercises for developing a sense of ecological identity."

(John Elder, Professor of English and Environmental Studies, Middlebury College)

"Mitch Thomashow has written a thoughtful, thought-provoking book that offers radical insights into our common ecological ignorance: How do the places we live influence who we are? Where does one discover the ecological self? How does healing the earth lead to personal empowerment? What if we lived our lives as if nature mattered? What if we became truly 'reflective' environmentalists? To explore these fascinating questions, read this book."

(Ed Grumbine, Director, Sierra Institute Field Studies program, University of California Extension)

"*Ecological Identity* is a pathbreaking and compelling work that sheds clear light on how we establish a stable, satisfying, and grounded identity. This book is particularly important for teachers, educators, and psychologists --- those charged with helping the young to establish a thoughtful, informed, and competent sense of themselves in relation to the earth."

(David W. Orr, Environmental Studies Program, Oberlin College)

"Mitch Thomashow draws on his solid authority as an environmental educator in this coherent and insightful pedagogy for environmental professionals. His creative teaching activities generate an unusual degree of integrative and transformative learning. Thomashow takes the next step in ecological literacy work as he

articulates the experiential steps to a contextual/relational way of thinking. I particularly applaud his illumination of the role of personal values and experience of place as central in shaping human response to the environment. Student quotes bring the material alive, providing a sense of real people grappling with real problems. Thomashow's work makes a major contribution to the environmental literature, one which will be appreciated by many teaching in this area."

(Stephanie Kaza, author of *The Attentive Heart*)

"Mitchell Thomashow has created a gem. *Ecological Identity* is probing, thoughtful, and profoundly evocative. Thomashow reminds us that environmentalism is much more than a set of practices; it is a way of being. Developing, consciously cultivating, an ecological identity takes us on a path of self-knowledge and wisdom. *Ecological Identity* speaks to educators but implies that we are all educators. Its concepts and innovative learning tools are adaptable to a wide range of groups and settings."

(Frances Moore Lappe, author of *Diet for a Small Planet*, co-author of *The Quickening of America: Rebuilding our Nation, Remaking Our Lives*, co-founder and co-director of the Center for Living Democracy and co-founder of the Institute for Food and Development Policy)

From the Back Cover

The author shows how environmental studies can be taught from a perspective that is deeply informed by personal reflection. Through theoretical discussion as well as hands-on participatory learning, Thomashow provides concerned citizens, teachers, and students with the tools needed to become reflective environmentalists

About the Author

Mitchell Thomashow is the Chairperson of the Department of Environmental Studies at Antioch New England Graduate School.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gina Keller:

This Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is definitely information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper you actually read a lot of information you will get. This particular Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist without we realize teach the one who reading through it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't become worry Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist can bring whenever you are and not make your bag space or bookshelves' turn into full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even telephone. This Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist having very good arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

Vanessa Palacios:

Now a day individuals who Living in the era where everything reachable by connect with the internet and the

resources included can be true or not call for people to be aware of each info they get. How a lot more to be smart in having any information nowadays? Of course the answer is reading a book. Reading a book can help individuals out of this uncertainty Information specifically this Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist book because book offers you rich details and knowledge. Of course the details in this book hundred per-cent guarantees there is no doubt in it you may already know.

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Jeffrey Cooks:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray you, why because this Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist book written by well-known writer who knows well how to make book that could be understand by anyone who read the book. Written in good manner for you, dripping every ideas and composing skill only for eliminate your current hunger then you still question Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist as good book but not only by the cover but also through the content. This is one e-book that can break don't determine book by its protect, so do you still needing another sixth sense to pick this!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

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