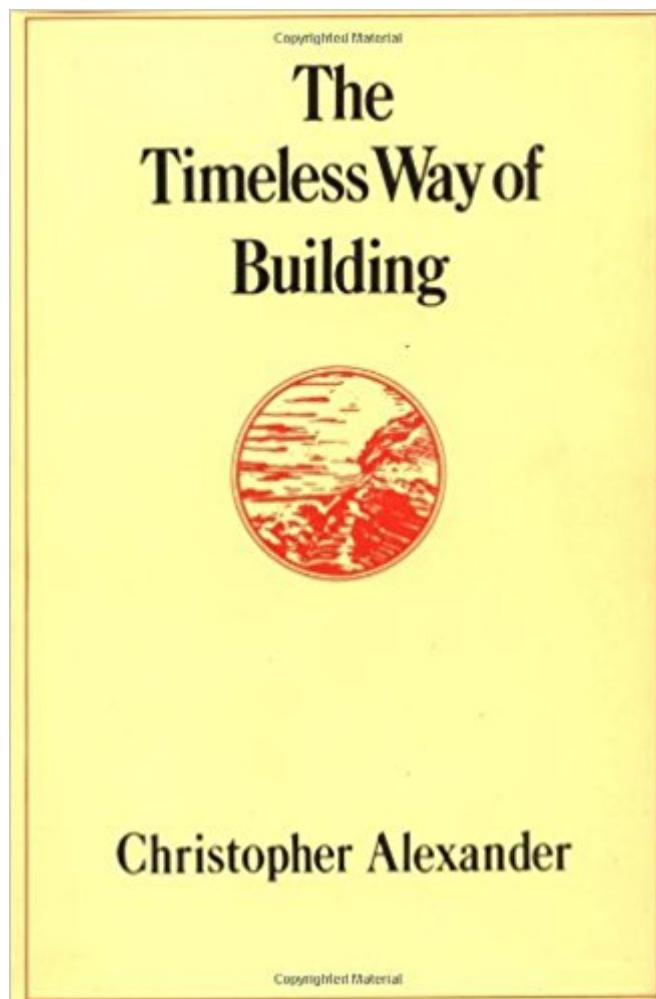


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# The Timeless Way Of Building



## Synopsis

The theory of architecture implicit in our world today, Christopher Alexander believes, is bankrupt. More and more people are aware that something is deeply wrong. Yet the power of present-day ideas is so great that many feel uncomfortable, even afraid, to say openly that they dislike what is happening, because they are afraid to seem foolish, afraid perhaps that they will be laughed at. Now, at last, there is a coherent theory which describes in modern terms an architecture as ancient as human society itself. The Timeless Way of Building is the introductory volume in the Center for Environmental Structure series, Christopher Alexander presents in it a new theory of architecture, building, and planning which has at its core that age-old process by which the people of a society have always pulled the order of their world from their own being. Alexander writes, "There is one timeless way of building. It is thousands of years old, and the same today as it has always been. The great traditional buildings of the past, the villages and tents and temples in which man feels at home, have always been made by people who were very close to the center of this way. And as you will see, this way will lead anyone who looks for it to buildings which are themselves as ancient in their form as the trees and hills, and as our faces are."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Excellent text for architectural theory and design--a must for design students."--Brad Grant, California Polytechnic State University

Christopher Alexander is a builder, craftsman, general contractor, architect, painter, and teacher. He taught from 1963 to 2002 as Professor of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and is now Professor Emeritus. He has spent his life running construction projects, experimenting with new building methods and materials, and crafting carefully articulated buildings--all to advance the idea that people can build environments in which they will thrive. Acting on his deeply-held conviction that, as a society, we must recover the means by which we can build and maintain healthy living environments, he has lived and worked in many cultures, and built buildings all over the world. Making neighborhoods, building-complexes, building, balustrades, columns, ceilings, windows, tiles, ornaments, models and mockups, paintings, furniture, castings and carvings--all this has been his passion, and is the cornerstone from which his paradigm-changing principles have been derived.

This book renders a poetic viewpoint to our build environment. The attempt to generate a vocabulary for this culture of designing a space is applaudable. The authors' enlightenment to the process of learning and unlearning is refreshing. This book is a timeless classic, one that every planner/architect must read, once every year if not just once!

Great price. Shipped quickly.

Classic and insightful; highly recommended. It's unfortunate that most of the construction industry/developers/home owners don't apply these principles.

This book is a spiritual experience in the guise of an architecture book. Non-dualist thought in action.

The concrete examples are there, but you have to wait for them sometimes. Alexander's method frees architecture from the prison of professional jargon and technical terminology. Buildings should be designed with the use in mind. What events, human or non-human will most often occur? Design should encourage the fullest expression of these events. Chapters 1-10 outline Alexander's whole philosophy of language, when perhaps it would have been more effective to give more specific examples. But the examples do come, good ones too. One he gives is that of a fountain. Should a fountain within a secluded garden have a trickle of water that spreads outward in four directions

from the center? Or would a gushing flow be better? Thinking about intellectually likely tells us nothing, but anyone who experiences the two will instantly prefer the gush to the trickle. It is the feeling of freedom and aliveness. All architecture should seek to promote such a quality in the events that recur there. Another good example comes on page 300 when he talks about building houses in Peru. He was criticized for wanting to put in an "Entrance Transition" room that would allow guests to experience a change in surroundings from the formal street to the comfort of a home. Most considered this room totally unnecessary, with an attitude that "people should be beyond such trivialities." A good architect moves beyond values when designing. It is authentic feelings that are important, that must be taken into account when designing, not our opinions about how things ought to be. A complete pattern language for a building is one that recognizes all the authentic feelings that recur in and around the building. These smaller components make up the larger components that guide the decisions of the architect. Alexander's vision is insightful and well worth the look.

So you think you can design a house? I would argue that unless you have read this book then you do not have a clue! Man has been building for centuries, living space design is a finely honed skill ... yet in recent times we have had the arrogance to ignore our entire wealth of knowledge and history as we strive to 'do something different'. Don't worry, you will not be transported back to the 'traditional' nor will you be constrained by a 'formula' for there is still endless possibility for design working with the principles that Alexander reminds us of. Read this book to take yourself back to what is really important, what really harmonises with the human spirit and with nature, and re-acquaint yourself with reality. Once you have enjoyed this volume Alexander offers a number of others which will compliment and enhance your introduction. Houses, towns, entire cities, will be gentler on the spirit if these books are read by all who have the authority to approve and plan building works.

FANTASTIC BOOK, CONTAINS A LOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT CITY PLANNING AS WELL AS ADVICE FOR DAY TO DAY LIFE.

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