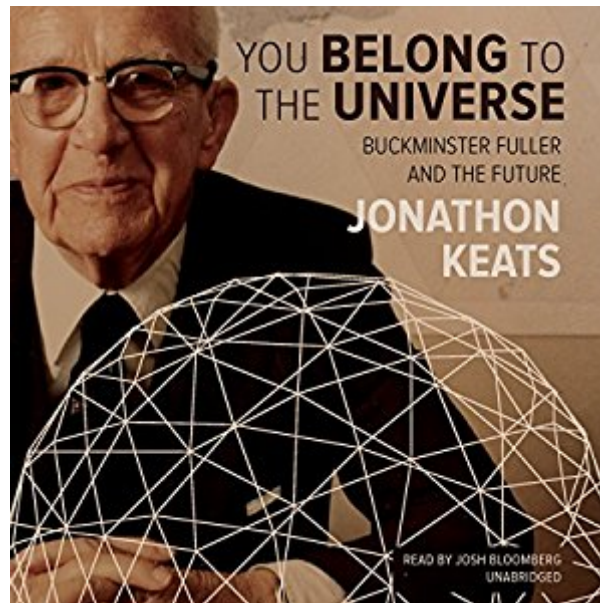




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# **You Belong To The Universe: Buckminster Fuller And The Future**



## Synopsis

A compelling call to apply Buckminster Fuller's creative problem solving to present-day problems. A self-professed "comprehensive anticipatory design scientist", the inventor Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) was undoubtedly a visionary. Fuller's creations often bordered on the realm of science fiction, ranging from the freestanding geodesic dome to the three-wheel Dymaxion car to a bathroom requiring neither plumbing nor sewage. Yet in spite of his brilliant mind and lifelong devotion to serving mankind, Fuller's expansive ideas were often dismissed, and have faded from public memory since his death. *You Belong to the Universe* documents Fuller's six-decade quest to "make the world work for 100 percent of humanity". Critic and experimental philosopher Jonathon Keats sets out to revive Fuller's unconventional practice of comprehensive anticipatory design, placing Fuller's philosophy in a modern context and dispelling much of the mythology surrounding Fuller's life. Keats argues that Fuller's life and ideas, namely doing "the most with the least", are now more relevant than ever, as humanity struggles to meet the demands of an exploding world population with finite resources. Delving deeply into Buckminster Fuller's colorful world, Keats applies Fuller's most important concepts to present-day issues, arguing that his ideas are now not only feasible, but necessary. From transportation to climate change, urban design to education, *You Belong to the Universe* demonstrates that Fuller's holistic problem-solving techniques may be the only means of addressing some of the world's most pressing issues. Keats' timely book challenges each of us to become comprehensive anticipatory design scientists, providing the necessary tools for continuing Fuller's legacy of improving the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have been waiting for this book since 1982, when I spent the better part of two days listening to a one-on-one Bucky lecture entitled "Urgent Warnings for Humanity." I promised Bucky I would write the book that Jonathon Keats has at long last written. Thank you, Mr. Keats. Because Buckminster Fuller is one of Spaceship Earth's greatest thinkers, it has been difficult to muster the confidence to write about him and the things he told me those thirty plus years ago. But with this book my confidence grows. What Jonathon Keats has beautifully done is capture the genius of this amazing man, in a way that will tingle your spine with knowing. If any single person captures both the early spirituality and the technologically driven evolution of our country, it is Buckminster Fuller. And if anyone has captured the Bucky's magic it is Keats. The only thing I see missing is some of Bucky's damning of capitalism and the fossil fuel industry in particular. It omits mention of Bucky's GRUNCH of Giants, which reads like the perfect preface to Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign, and is very timely. But Bucky was such a comprehensivist, you can hardly fault a book that leaves something out. Bucky truly was the Leonardo da Vinci of the twentieth century. And Keats shows it takes one to know one.

Overall, *You Belong to the Universe* is an excellent read. It's both educational and entertaining. More important, it provokes even more curiosity in readers for ways to apply some of Bucky's most famous ideas to problems (still) facing the world today. My background with Bucky was in having read *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* and *Critical Path* a few years ago. Both helped form my beliefs to an extent, and I had held Fuller in very high esteem since that time. Keats' book shines light on some of the less flattering qualities of Bucky's life--specifically that he was as talented a self-promoter as he was a scientist. That said, I now see Bucky as the flawed human that we all are, as opposed to some mythological figure, and that has made all of his thinking feel both more accessible and more readily adaptable to my needs. It's truly a gift. The only reason for 4 stars instead of 5 is the shocking choice by the publishers to completely omit any figures in the hardcover edition of this book. An example in relation to the Dymaxion maps: "...Fuller replaced his fourteen-sided cuboctahedron with a twenty-sided icosahedron, in which all faces were triangular." I felt I had to read this book next to my computer with a google window ready to go, and that's coming from someone who has a Dymaxion Map hanging on their office wall.

Interesting bio on an apparently complicated and possibly narcissistic man who really was ahead of his time. The Fuller of his own imagination is well contrasted with the public Fuller - and the failing

Fuller, not much that he did was successful - and I enjoyed the telling.

A fascinating and honest look at the polarizing figure.

Buckminster Fuller would have approved of the structure of *You Belong To The Universe*. It dispenses with his biography in the introduction, delineating the various myths that Fuller himself propagated. It's the standard hagiography that everyone who is interested already knows. Keats devotes the rest of the book to putting Fuller's ideas into perspective and criticizing many of his concepts with real world applications and criticisms. It is a wonderful approach, smartly executed, and immensely enlightening. From cars to shelter, Keats examines Fuller's dreams and shows how they have been realized (or bypassed) today, differently, and often in more sophisticated fashion, thanks to new materials, 3D printers and new inspiration. At some level, Fuller was little more than a dreamer, predicting a Jetsons-like future, because he had no way to execute. Keats calls him a techno-utopian. This sort of "comprehensive anticipatory design science" is fully realized only if the scientist thinks through the details: the materials, the stresses, and the environment. Fuller did not do that. He just proselytized his ideas in talks all over the world, for decades, without debate, according to Keats. Keats takes each of Fuller's major themes and shows their pre-history, where Fuller was right and was wrong, and how developments soon left him behind. These include the Dymaxion car, home, and map, geodesic domes, world peace games and distance learning, each of which gets a chapter. Despite contradicting himself and changing course as needed, Fuller remained so convinced of his rightness that alternatives were meaningless to him. This clear-eyed view of a futurist saint is a valuable eye-opener, providing much needed light where only heat has been apparent. David Wineberg

*You Belong to the Universe* by Jonathon Keats is an interesting overview of Buckminster Fuller. I am somewhat hesitant to call it a biography since it is less about telling his life's story than it is about discussing Fuller's strengths and weaknesses as they were then and what they might say about our future. But, yeah, it is still basically a biographical type of book so... This is a fairly balanced assessment of Fuller, which can be a difficult achievement to accomplish. It is easy to either overly admire the legend or overly criticize the self-promoter, but Keats manages a nice middle ground of justifiable criticism and acknowledgement that shows a bit more of who the man was. I will admit I am not an admirer of Fuller, which isn't to say I don't acknowledge some of his

insights, I just find inflexible people less admirable. That said, this book gave me a better understanding of the man and why he had some of his idiosyncrasies. I would recommend this for anyone interested in this man who in so many ways represents his era as well as anyone. Reviewed from a copy made available by the publisher via NetGalley.

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