



The Way Life Works: The Science Lover's Illustrated Guide to How Life Grows, Develops, Reproduces, and Gets Along

By Mahlon Hoagland, Bert Dodson

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In the tradition of David Macaulay's *The Way Things Work*, this popular-science book--a unique collaboration between a world-renowned molecular biologist and an equally talented artist--explains how life grows, develops, reproduces, and gets by. Full color.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Subtitled *The Science Lover's Illustrated Guide to How Life Grows, Develops, Reproduces, and Gets Along*, *The Way Life Works* is what happens when a biologist and artist share an interest in life from bacteria to humans, and collaborate on taking their knowledge public. The result is a most magnificent science book, devoted to the wonder and unity of the natural world. The chapters start with Patterns and Energy, continue with Information, Machinery, Feedback, and Community, and end with Evolution. Each is superbly written, delightfully illustrated, and supremely informative.

Take the chapter on energy and its explanation of ATP, a.k.a. the conversion of light energy into chemical energy. The metaphor is dance, with an illustration showing electrons as jitterbuggers in the Chloroplast Ballroom. The text explains that

as the lights spin and the band breaks into "Sugar Jump," the dancers go wild. Suddenly a bystander inspired by a couple on the floor gets dancing feet. This in turn excites a second bystander to dance and before long a chain reaction takes place, each new dancer energizing the next bystander.

It's a brilliant start to a lucid explanation of a subject that plunges many a biology student into a panic, here made so readily accessible that readers, ages 10 to 100, can come away with a working mental model of the process. And so it goes for division of cells, DNA double helixes, fermentation, and the adaptation of genes. Hoagland and Dodson have succeeded in producing that most beautiful of reference books, the resource that makes you interested in what you had thought was dull as dishwater, then, once you're hooked, raises your understanding to a high standard of comprehension. It's a truly laudatory work of science and art. --*Stephanie Gold*

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David Pell:

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