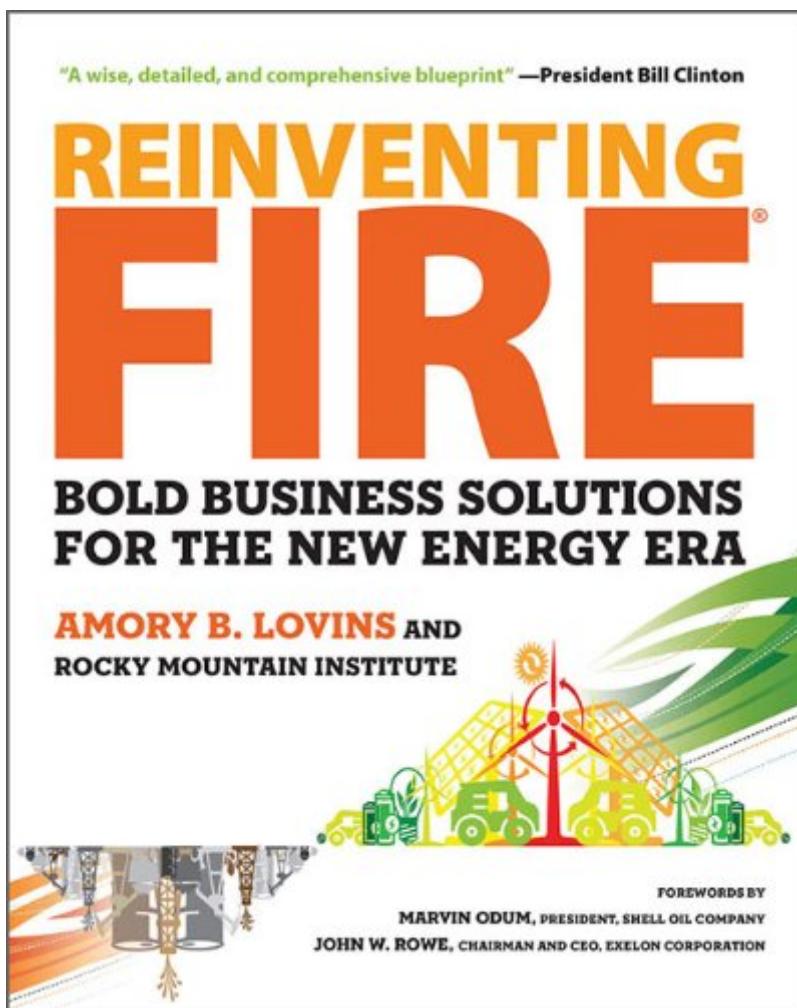


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# Reinventing Fire: Bold Business Solutions For The New Energy Era



## **Synopsis**

Oil and coal have built our civilization, created our wealth, and enriched the lives of billions. Yet their rising costs to our security, economy, health, and environment now outweigh their benefits.

Moreover, that long awaited energy tipping point—where alternatives work better than oil and coal and compete purely on cost—is no longer decades in the future. It is here and now. And it is the fulcrum of economic transformation. A global clean-energy race has emerged with astounding speed. The ability to operate without fossil fuels will define winners and losers in business—and among nations. Now, in *Reinventing Fire*, Amory Lovins and Rocky Mountain Institute offer a new vision to revitalize business models, end run Washington gridlock, and win the clean-energy race—not forced by public policy but led by business for enduring profit. Grounded in thirty years' practical experience, this ground-breaking, peer-reviewed analysis integrates market-based solutions across transportation, buildings, industry, and electricity. It maps pathways and competitive strategies for a 158%-bigger 2050 U.S. economy that needs no oil, no coal, no nuclear energy, one-third less natural gas, and no new inventions. This transition would cost \$5 trillion less than business-as-usual—without counting fossil fuels' huge hidden costs. It requires no new federal taxes, subsidies, mandates, or laws. The policy innovations needed to unlock and speed it need no Act of Congress. Whether you care most about profits and jobs, national security, health, or environmental stewardship, *Reinventing Fire* charts a pragmatic course that makes sense and makes money. With clarity and mastery, Lovins and RMI reveal the astounding opportunities for enterprise to create the new energy era.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

I was reluctant to order the Kindle edition as a reviewer had suggested it was "unreadable". That problem apparently has been solved as of December 2015. It reads perfectly on my standard Kindle. The sidebars have a colored background. It's easily legible, at standard or slightly larger type fonts and with a black, sepia or white background. This is a very large book, the kindle edition makes a great deal of practical sense and is a bargain. Do NOT, repeat, do NOT hesitate to purchase the kindle edition. As far as the content goes...Dr. Lovins has the sharpest critical analysis of this issue, the central one affecting our planet, completely data based, exhaustively researched, and his message is simple. Politics won't solve our problem, capitalism just might. Put a profit margin in the problem and stand back, engineers and businessmen from around the world will attack it without mercy, and the winners will make a fortune.

Reinventing Fire is the definitive vision on clean energy, efficiency and the future of transportation. Amory Lovins is like the MacGyver of sustainability - he sees the same set of current technologies and policies as everyone else but he is somehow able to reassemble them in brilliant new ways that address the problems other see as intractable. While not every one of his ideas may will survive the test of time, the most important contribution of Reinventing Fire is the concept of Integrative Design - looking beyond the individual components of technology and policy and thinking about solutions across the entire system. Lovins teaches the reader to think about the entire solution rather than just the individual parts.

The book is not perfect, but its scale and the amount of work that went into it is incredible. There are over 750 references and the bibliography represents a lifetime of energy reading and research. The book provides an optimist's vision of American and global energy generation and energy efficiency strategies leading to an ideal mix by 2050. Lovins lays out the big picture of how this is possible, economically advantageous, and even probable. Best of all, Lovins stays apolitical - my favorite quote is "we just need to stop insisting that others embrace our differing why and together get on

with doing the shared what." He stays positive throughout and insists that reducing CO2 emissions (through efficiency and smarter fuels/grids) and increasing the use of renewables is good business for America and the developing world. I hope he's right. Lovins picks winners though, he clearly is not a believer in nuclear power's usefulness and lays out a compelling case for his position. He also incorporates biofuels into his vision without making a solid case for how. Lovins also takes some creative liberties in applying the costs of hidden subsidies to fossil fuels - suggesting that the entire bill for CENTCOM and all conflicts in the Middle East should be added to the price of oil. The book is sometimes hard to follow with sidebars and graphics interrupting the flow. There's also a fair amount of redundancy - some of the graphics make multiple appearances and Lovins tends to drive an idea home by repeating it over and over again. I found myself zoning out and having to repeat sections often. Overall it's an incredible book, I would recommend it to anyone interested in the future of energy.

I have been a huge fan of Amory Lovins for decades going back to about 1976 (The Road Less Traveled) and his all time best book pertaining to energy security (with L. Hunter Lovins) Brittle Power in 1982. Reinventing Fire takes up where Brittle Power and some other works left off and presents four scenarios for consideration of just where we ought/need to go and, maybe more importantly, how we get there and where "there" will be. At the same time, it does present a bit of confusion on keeping the scenarios straight as parts of them can conflict with each other and even with the basic tenets of Brittle Power. On the one hand, harnessing large wind farms, on shore or offshore, can be very advantageous BUT on the other hand long runs of transmission are not only very expensive (and the money might be used for more local renewable generation) but if they go hundred if not thousands of miles, they are prone to not just some line losses (even using HVDC) but also any number of threats which would leave those on the distant receiving end possibly in a dire circumstances. How do we reconcile this? I do not have a good answer but Amory has always been the chief advocate for distributed power systems BUT in Reinventing Fire, some of the scenarios make a case for this large offshore wind to supply a significant portion of load. This seems in conflict with his distributed generation position requiring short links. Additionally, in other portions of the book, he also advocates SmartGrid technology which makes lightning fast decisions without user input. Many in the cybersecurity realm would voice objection to more SmartGrid as it would increase vulnerabilities by expanding the attack surfaces. All his previous works talk about eliminating cascading failures by maintaining a high degree of user controllability. These need to be reconciled. Granted we do not live in a perfect world where all requirements for secure systems can

be economically realized but more thought needs to be put into the more near term cyber threats and not just into the totally game changing climate threats. STILL, this is a book totally worth reading and in the future I look forward to one that adds additional scenarios.

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