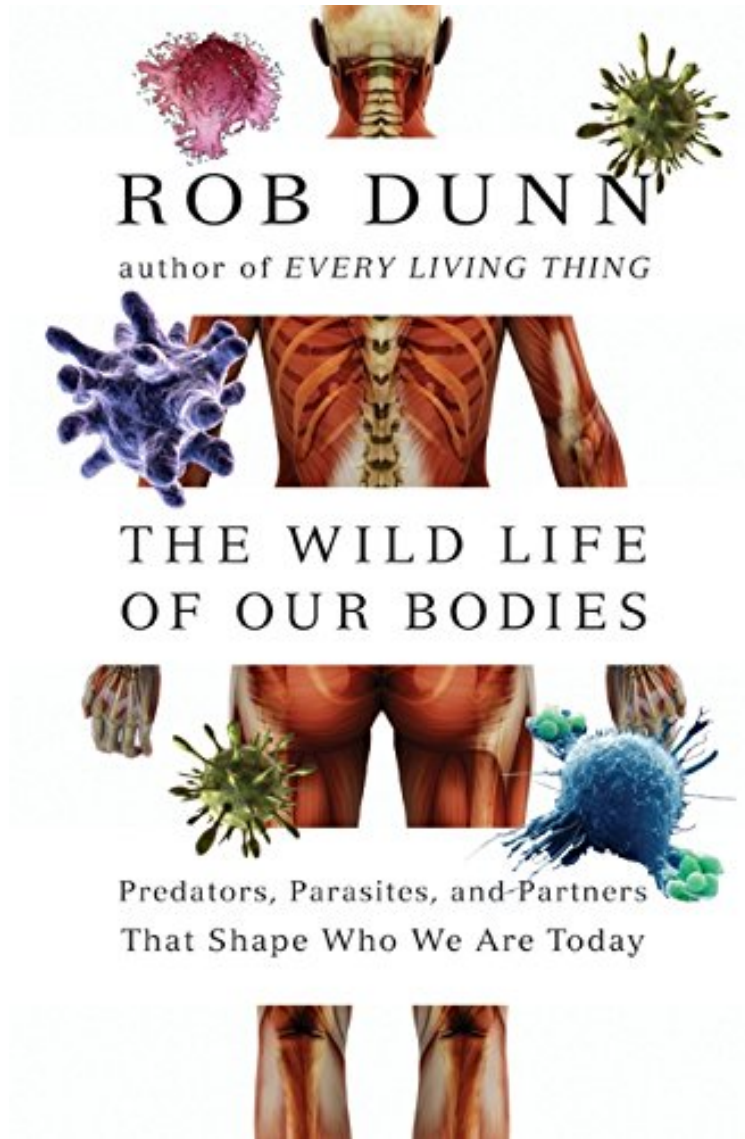


[Free] The Wild Life of Our Bodies: Predators, Parasites, and Partners That Shape Who We Are Today

The Wild Life of Our Bodies: Predators, Parasites, and Partners That Shape Who We Are Today

Rob Dunn

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Rob Dunn : The Wild Life of Our Bodies: Predators, Parasites, and Partners That Shape Who We Are Today before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wild Life of Our Bodies: Predators, Parasites, and Partners That Shape Who We Are Today:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Some intriguing stuffBy Steven WilliamsThis book examines what

are lives are like without the various species we evolved with. In a lot of cases we face issues we never had to face with them. There are plenty of things to think about when reading this book. After an introduction in part one, part two explores why we might be afflicted with Crohn's Disease and other auto-immune diseases in the developed world, but not in other parts of the world. The answer very well might be that we in the modern world with its cleanliness and health care are missing the worms that infect the rest less fortunate part of the world. Less fortunate in the sense that they live without what we have come to rely on and aspect. If we factor in their lack of Crohn's Disease and its like, the matter might not seem so clear. One scientist wondered about our lack of worms, and if it could be responsible for these diseases. In an actual clinical trial Crohn's patient were given a benign species of hookworms, and most of those given the worms either improved or went in to remission. The reason that auto-immune diseases are prevalent might be that without the worms in our bodies for the immune system to fight it attacks our own bodies. Of course, there is a lot more research needed to provide that direct link. It's possible that there could be alternative explanations, or it might be only a part of the explanation. The next part covers the trillions of bacteria that live in and on us. Research has shown that a lot of the bacteria in our guts are beneficial. These bacteria help us digest fiber and play a role in our immune system. Other research has shown a correlation between low fiber diets and colon cancer. The appendix is discussed as being a beneficial organ, long thought to be a relic and useless. Studies have shown that a particular antibody we have actually benefits good bacteria in our appendix. In the developing world where the incidence of appendicitis is rare the appendix replenishes their guts with the good bacteria that live in the appendix after a bout with common diarrheal diseases. Without the need to repopulate our guts in the developed world the appendix can become blotted and rupture, sending the bacteria into the body cavity where it can have deadly consequences. Again more research is needed to improve our understanding of our interaction with the bacteria that could be considered a part of us. Part four covers how domestication of plants and animals have changed us. For me there was not much of interest in this part, except for lactose intolerance was reverse in cultures that domesticated cows and other milk producing species. The subject of part five is the relationship we had and now have with predators. There is a theory that poisonous snakes are responsible for our excellent color vision. In other primates, the better the vision, the more poisonous snakes were in the environment. There are other explanations for color vision, such as the ability to spot nutritious fruits. The modern plague of anxiety disorders may involve a misdirection of fear from predators we used to come across with some frequency. In part six the creatures that live on or did live on us are discussed. There is a theory that our hairlessness, which evolved in relation to lice, ticks, and other bugs that dine on our blood, has led to xenophobia. This theory could be a stretch, but is plausible. Our hairlessness has also led to our being prone to skin cancers. The final part is on how we could make our city environments more like those we evolved in. Massive rooftop gardens and whole vacant buildings acting as natural cliff environments, which are thought to be part of our evolutionary environment. This section I view as pie in the sky type thinking. Although I believe we need people to dream big, because good things have often come with those dreams and people. The book as a whole is pretty good. It was for the most part interesting throughout. I like the fact that the author presents experiments that support the various theories proposed in the book. The author also did not actually do any of the experiments or propose any of the theories explained in the book. But, like a good scientist he assesses the different theories and their weaknesses, which all of them basically had. I would recommend the book for those interest in our evolution with other species in our environments, and what might be the result of not having them in our environment anymore. Like I said the author is careful in presenting the facts, based on experiments, and the proposed theories. This should be appreciated by readers who value honesty by an author in presenting hers or his ideas. I think it is incumbent upon an author to present known and possible problems with his or hers ideas being presented.

49 of 51 people found the following review helpful.

Dunn Did It Again By Rebecca Walden I've been reading Rob Dunn's articles, essays, poems and now books, since he held up a sign in an airport saying "Will Count Bugs for Food" at the onset of an early internship so that the doctorate candidate would find him. He's "done" it again with *The Wild Life of Our Bodies*. Done what? Communicated information he's obviously very passionate and learned about that both educates and entertains. Rob Dunn peppers his prose with humor and "slices of life" uncommon to typical scientific studies. I always get the feeling when reading writings by Rob that he so wants to share the boundless joy his field of study has brought him with the rest of us, infect us with the same enthusiasm. He delights his readers and still makes his points. Most of us can write and talk "peer to peer". It takes a true artist to convey his material in such a way that a "non-scientifically inclined" person such as myself still anxiously turns each page. Rob will no doubt be rewarded with readership beyond his immediate sphere because of his rare talent.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Clever Science By J. Dawg After hearing an interview with Rob Dunn on NPR I decided I had to read this book. I was not disappointed. As an Evolutionary Biologist this was definitely right up my alley but I do think this book would be enjoyed by anyone who has an interest in the interconnectedness of species. Dunn's writing is superb. It is witty and informative without bogging down in long technical descriptions. He does however provide enough detail to spark a researcher's curiosity to delve into the topic further at a later time. My husband, also a Biologist, was a little disappointed that there were no pictures of Whipworms since he considered invertebrates to be the coolest organisms on the planet! I've always argued that we did not evolve in a bubble and I find it refreshing to read a well thought review of how important co-evolution was in

shaping who we are today. I highly recommend this book and look forward to more from Dr. Dunn.

An extraordinary book. With clarity and charm [Dunn] takes the reader into the overlap of medicine, ecology, and evolutionary biology to reveal an important domain of the human condition. Edward O. Wilson, author of *Ant Hill* and *The Future of Life* Biologist Rob Dunn reveals the crucial influence that other species have upon our health, our well-being, and our world in *The Wild Life of Our Bodies* a fascinating tour through the hidden truths of nature and codependence. Dunn illuminates the nuanced, often imperceptible relationships that exist between homo sapiens and other species, relationships that underpin humanity's ability to thrive and prosper in every circumstance. Readers of Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* will be enthralled by Dunn's powerful, lucid exploration of the role that humankind plays within the greater web of life on Earth.

A pleasure to read. He is not a biologist moonlighting as a writer; he is both. Dunn also does a wonderful job interspersing history, research, and speculation with real-life human beings. He has a natural flair for drama and tension . . . a highly readable, informative mashing of ideas and disciplines. (Boston Globe) Grabbing the reader from the start . . . Dunn moves through the answer to these and other questions with a sure use of language, scientific research, and humor—all of which combined keep the reader highly engaged. . . . Mr. Dunn is a thorough and talented writer. (New York Journal of Books) An extraordinary book about a previously little explored subject. With clarity and charm the author takes the reader into the overlap of medicine, ecology, and evolutionary biology to reveal an important domain of the human condition. (Edward O. Wilson, University Research Professor Emeritus, Harvard University) [Dunn is] a master at applying the principle of administering a spoonful of sugar (i.e., humor) to make the medicine of complicated scientific information not merely interesting but gripping. Nothing less than an every-person's handbook for understanding life, great and small, on planet Earth. (Booklist (starred review)) Adding touches of humor along the way, Dunn deftly explains complex biological systems for the general reader. [] Highly recommended for nature aficionados, this book should inspire many lively discussions. (Library Journal) From the Back Cover A biologist shows the influence of wild species on our well-being and the world and how nature still clings to us and always will. We evolved in a wilderness of parasites, mutualists, and pathogens, but we no longer see ourselves as being part of nature and the broader community of life. In the name of progress and clean living, we scrub much of nature off our bodies and try to remove whole kinds of life—parasites, bacteria, mutualists, and predators—to allow ourselves to live free of wild danger. Nature, in this new world, is the landscape outside, a kind of living painting that is pleasant to contemplate but nice to have escaped. The truth, though, according to biologist Rob Dunn, is that while "clean living" has benefited us in some ways, it has also made us sicker in others. We are trapped in bodies that evolved to deal with the dependable presence of hundreds of other species. As Dunn reveals, our modern disconnect from the web of life has resulted in unprecedented effects that immunologists, evolutionary biologists, psychologists, and other scientists are only beginning to understand. Diabetes, autism, allergies, many anxiety disorders, autoimmune diseases, and even tooth, jaw, and vision problems are increasingly plaguing bodies that have been removed from the ecological context in which they existed for millennia. In this eye-opening, thoroughly researched, and well-reasoned book, Dunn considers the crossroads at which we find ourselves. Through the stories of visionaries, Dunn argues that we can create a richer nature, one in which we choose to surround ourselves with species that benefit us, not just those that, despite us, survive. About the Author Rob Dunn is an associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at North Carolina State University and the author of several books, including *Every Living Thing*. A rising star in popular-science journalism, he writes for *National Geographic*, *Natural History*, *Scientific American*, *BBC Wildlife*, and *Seed* magazine. He lives in Raleigh, North Carolina, with many thousands of wild species, including at least one species of mite living on his head.