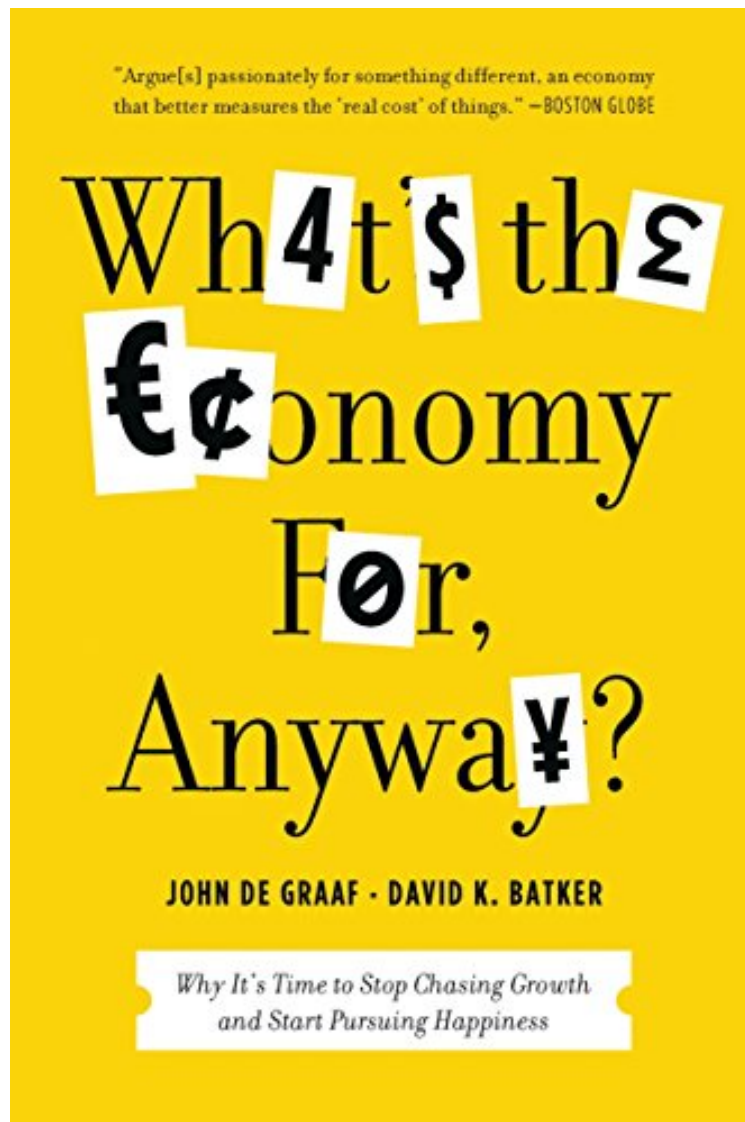


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What's the Economy For, Anyway?: Why It's Time to Stop Chasing Growth and Start Pursuing Happiness

John de Graaf, David K. Batker

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John de Graaf, David K. Batker : What's the Economy For, Anyway?: Why It's Time to Stop Chasing Growth and Start Pursuing Happiness before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What's the Economy For, Anyway?: Why It's Time to Stop Chasing Growth and Start Pursuing Happiness:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Left Leaning, Right ThinkingBy Edward J. BartonWithin the pages of this little yellow book is a profound message that anyone should be able to grasp - and probably anyone should be

able to agree with. That being that the measure of success, of value, of worth, of externalities, and situations like the tragedy of the commons cannot be measured in dollars alone, and that GDP, or GNP, or any other pure dollar measure of economic "success" will fail to capture many important elements. As a fundamental tenet of management, in the measurement is the incentive to manage, and that the management of the economy purely by dollar measures will create incentives for "misbehavior" in the economic markets. This is the "right thinking" I mentioned in the title of the review, and the authors do a fine job of making a cogent case for this inherent flaw in the GDP/GNP focused system. This is the "what" of the problem. The "left leaning" is the "how" to fix the problem, and it is here that I philosophically differ with the authors. The authors support a significant amount of central government intervention, management and taxation to help manage the economy to ensure a sustainable measure of economic growth and management. However, their data on statistics like happiness in the US or other countries being equated to higher tax rates fail to look at other variables that may influence behavior and feeling. Looking to countries outside the US as a model, the authors tended to overlook things like the Swedish banking crisis of the mid-90's and the fact that the model country for happiness - Bhutan - has a top marginal tax rate of only 25% on individual income and since 1989 has significantly reduced taxes and introduced tax reforms nationwide. So, while the premise of the book is solid, the how to fix it proposed by the authors could use some analysis. As a rather libertarian economic thinker, I agree that there's a better way to approach the measurement and incentives for the economy that will internalize the externalities and provide for sustainable growth. However, more government intervention in the process is probably not the optimal solution.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Kept buying more copies
By Sierra Momma
This book is really about our values and how to develop the society that really reflects our values. It challenges our assumptions and offers practical strategies from many countries. After buying the Kindle edition a year ago, I convinced two friends to buy it. Recently I purchased hardback copies for my book group. We are now on Chapter 4 and feedback is very positive.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Sad commentary on the United States
By Lois Field
This book did a fine job addressing the US economic choices and how workers are treated compared to the rest of the first world. As the economy continues to stagnate and fall this book presents a blueprint of how we can make the necessary changes to both value the worker and adjust to a new economy...if we want to.

In this funny, readable, and thought-provoking book based on the popular film of the same name, activists John de Graaf (coauthor of the bestselling *Affluenza*) and David Batker tackle thirteen economic issues, challenging the reader to consider the point of our economy. Emphasizing powerful American ideals, including teamwork, pragmatism, and equality, de Graaf and Batker set forth a simple goal for any economic system: The greatest good for the greatest number over the longest run. Drawing from history and current enterprises, we see how the good life is achieved when people and markets work together with an active government to create a more perfect economy—one that works for everyone. Beginning by shattering our fetish for GDP, *What's the Economy For, Anyway?* offers a fresh perspective on quality of life, health, security, work-life balance, leisure, social justice, and perhaps most important, sustainability. This sparkling, message-driven book is exactly what those lost in the doldrums of partisan sniping and a sluggish economy need: a guide to what really matters, and a map to using America's resources to make the world a better place.

Offer[s] dozens of examples and practical solutions to help us choose another way forward
— Boston Globe