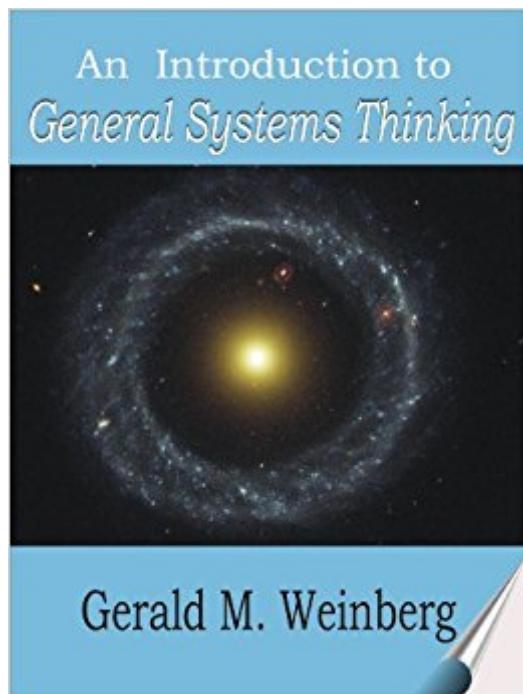


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# An Introduction To General Systems Thinking



## Synopsis

For more than thirty-five years, *An Introduction to General Systems Thinking* has been hailed as an innovative introduction to systems theory, with applications in software development and testing, medicine, engineering, social sciences, architecture, and beyond. Used in university courses and professional seminars all over the world, the text has proven its ability to open minds and sharpen thinking. Originally published in 1975 and reprinted more than twenty times, the book uses clear writing to explore new approaches to projects, products, organizations, and virtually any kind of system. Scientists, engineers, organization leaders, managers, doctors, students, and thinkers of all disciplines can use this book to dispel the mental fog that clouds problem-solving. As author Gerald M. Weinberg writes, "I haven't changed my conviction that most people don't think nearly as well as they could had they been taught some principles of thinking." With more than 50 helpful illustrations and 80 examples from two dozen fields, and an appendix on a mathematical notation used in problem-solving, *An Introduction to General Systems Thinking* may be your most powerful tool in working with problems, systems, and solutions. John D. Richards said, ". . . this is one of the classics of systems or science of computing. I recommend it to all; it will cause both scientists and nonscientists to examine their world and their thinking. This book will appear on my reading table at regular intervals, and one day I hope to update to the golden anniversary edition." He continues, "I've found myself returning to *An Introduction to General Systems Thinking* again and again in the twenty-plus years since I first stumbled across it. I know no better spark to revive a mind that's stuck in dead-end thinking than to open this book, dive into one of Gerald Weinberg's wonderful open-ended questions, and rediscover how one looks at the world." "This is a book that is a true classic, not in computing but in the broad area of scholarship. It is partly about the philosophy and mechanisms of science; partly about designing things so they work but mostly it is about how humans view the world and create things that match that view. This book will still be worth reading for a long time to come ..." - Charles Ashbacher

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

I've spent most of my life wondering why I am drawn to chemists, computer scientists and the law. Although Weinberg doesn't necessarily explain the first part of my quandary, he does give significant insight into what the three listed items have in common. The answer is that they all relate to systems. I believe that most people are exposed to systems thinking intermediate and advanced math classes in high-school and college, but I don't believe that we ever that we are ever taught how to use those models and apply them in a practical way to real-world problems. Weinberg presents a mode of thinking to do just this: see the world, even our day-to-day, in a way that lends itself to rational, systematic analysis and decision-making. In order to do this he has to find a way to merge the creative and logical thought processes. I think he pulls it off extremely well in this book.

Gerald Weinberg book "An Introduction to General Systems Thinking" is one of the best books I ever read. When I started to think about system theory in the early 70s when my English was too weak to read English books I had only access to several translated books including of course authors like John von Neumann and Ross Ashby and alike. Now I'm doing research on service systems and discovered Weinberg's wonderful book. It's not only a book for experts in the field it is also a book for people who are interested in thinking. It offers a lot of great insights which are easy to understand but also challenge classical ontological thinking. For example it makes clear that a system is a set of entities which "we sat down". It's not pre-given. It is the way off looking at the world. It also makes clear that if science reduces the observable reality there always is another

perspective to reduce it which is condensed in the generalized law of complimentary. The content of the book is too rich to be summarized in this short review each chapter is a gold mine but you have to dig. In addition the book is not only something to read but it is something to work with. After each chapter it contains wonderful exercises and challenging questions. Everybody can train his thinking abilities which I think is very important for learning society. I definitely recommend this book to everybody who wants to improve her or his thinking. Who ever goes to university should, from my perspective, read this book. This book is also an entertaining one as it offers nice surprises in the way we usually think. I am very thankful to Gerald Weinberg that I had the opportunity to read his wonderful book.

Read and read again. Foundational to every 'smart guy' are these concepts. This will teach you how to be more analytical, and will demonstrate the ways in which you already are.

Honestly, now. How many people can recollect a life-changing book? Or even an event? Well, this book was life-changing (my first reading was some 32 years ago, bought the Kindle version recently) in both regards. Difficult to explain, but read it and see. (Quick plug - another life-changer was The Brothers Karamazov. The two books have a strange affinity) It is not a General Systems textbook. Nevertheless, if you are planning to read General Systems, then read this book first. Even if General Systems is not your turn-on, this book will make you think so hard, smoke may come out of your ears. Joyous smoke. This book should be compulsory beginning reading for any Masters or PhD candidate. The print version is more than 35 years old, recently reprinted, costs some \$50. Get the Kindle version and send the balance to me, but you may well want the print version after you Kindle it.

## IS A CLASIC VERY USEFUL FOR DESIGNERS

This book I bought more than 5 years ago after I recognized that systems approach was needed for memory dump analysis. However, I read it only recently while preparing to talk on systemic software diagnostics. While reading I realized that I already applied some systems theory ideas, for example, about isomorphism of disciplines as systems (which I named as metaphorical bijection): from literary narratology to software narratology and from that to network trace analysis. So if you are interested in systems either computer software ones or human organizational then I would greatly recommend this book as an introduction. The recommended literature in exercises is also useful.

This book is excellent. I first read this book in graduate school in 1976, and I continue to find Weinberg's ideas useful. It was outstanding then, and it has held up with time.

Changes your way of thinking. Amazing book!

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