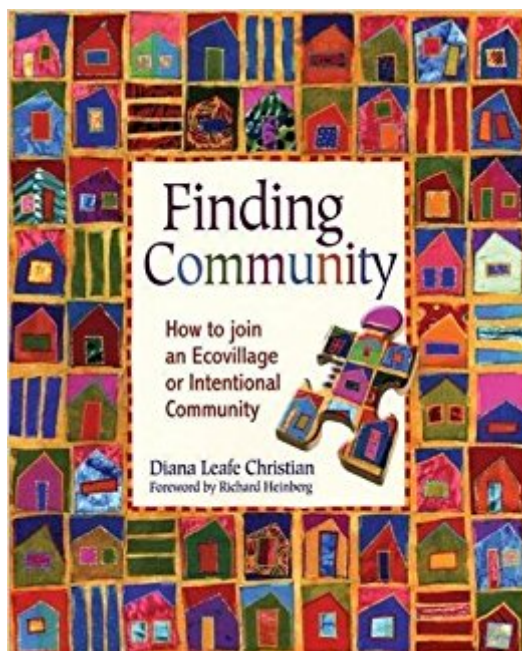


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# Finding Community: How To Join An Ecovillage Or Intentional Community



## Synopsis

Finding community is as critical as obtaining food and shelter, since the need to belong is what makes us human. The isolation and loneliness of modern life have led many people to search for deeper connection, which has resulted in a renewed interest in intentional communities. These intentional communities or ecovillages are an appealing choice for like-minded people who seek to create a family-oriented and ecologically sustainable lifestyle—a lifestyle they are unlikely to find anywhere else. However, the notion of an intentional community can still be a tremendous leap for some—deterred perhaps by a misguided vision of eking out a hardscrabble existence with little reward. In fact, successful ecovillages thrive because of the combined skills and resources of their members. Finding Community presents a thorough overview of ecovillages and intentional communities and offers solid advice on how to research thoroughly, visit thoughtfully, evaluate intelligently, and join gracefully. Useful considerations include:

- Important questions to ask (of members and of yourself)
- Signs of a healthy (and not-so-healthy) community
- Cost of joining (and staying)
- Common blunders to avoid

Finding Community provides intriguing possibilities to readers who are seeking a more cooperative, sustainable, and meaningful life. Diana Leafe Christian is the author of *Creating a Life Together* and editor of *Communities* magazine. She lives at Earthaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.

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null (2007-04-23) Finding community is as critical as obtaining food and shelter, since the need to

belong is what makes us human. The isolation and loneliness of modern life have led many people to search for deeper connection, which has resulted in a renewed interest in intentional communities. These intentional communities or ecovillages are an appealing choice for like-minded people who seek to create a family-oriented and ecologically sustainable lifestyle—a lifestyle they are unlikely to find anywhere else. However, the notion of an intentional community can still be a tremendous leap for some—deterred perhaps by a misguided vision of eking out a hardscrabble existence with little reward. In fact, successful ecovillages thrive because of the combined skills and resources of their members. Finding Community presents a thorough overview of ecovillages and intentional communities and offers solid advice on how to research thoroughly, visit thoughtfully, evaluate intelligently and join gracefully. Useful considerations include: important questions to ask (of members and of yourself) signs of a healthy (and not-so-healthy) community cost of joining (and staying) common blunders to avoid. Finding Community provides intriguing possibilities to readers who are seeking a more cooperative, sustainable and meaningful life. (2006-11-06)

Diana Leafe Christian is the author of *Creating a Life Together* and editor of *Communities* magazine. She lives at Earthhaven Ecovillage in North Carolina.

Covered the information well, including topics I had never even considered to such depth that I realized they were deal makers or breakers for me. The book is organized well enough with great titles so areas that simply don't apply to you can be easily skipped or skimmed. This book is a must have for anybody looking at joining or is just curious about living in an intentional community.

I bought this book to give me a high level view on the industry at large. It was the first step in my research - and what a wise choice. Diane's book gave me an understanding of the many forms of community, resources to explore them more deeply and insider information on the inner workings of each group. The author's life-long devotion to, and personal and professional engagement in the industry provided insight and knowledge only a person who has lived in this field can provide. I highly, highly reco this book.

Excellent book that answered a lot of questions. Highly recommended for anyone looking for community living alternatives, regardless of age. Lots of very good discussions of the good, bad, and unknowns of taking on a new lifestyle. These aren't communes, although you can still find those too.

The book is well thought out and includes everything one should consider with great humor and insight. It is highly recommended.

Environmental issues are becoming more urgent and more prominent with each passing year. More and more members of the general public are trying to live 'eco-friendly' lifestyles. For many, this includes living in eco-villages or communities of like-minded people. "Finding community: How To Join An Ecovillage Or Intentional Community by environmental activist Diana Leafe Christian is, quite literally, a 'how to' manual of instructions, case studies, anecdotes and information about life in an eco-village and becoming a member of a eco-friendly community. Of special note is a North American 'What It Costs' table covering both the United States and Canada and such issues as questions to be asked of community members and oneself, signs of a healthy (and not-so-healthy) community, the costs of joining and staying in a community, as common blunders to be avoided. Enhanced with sample community membership documents and an essay 'Can Living in Community Make a Difference in the Age of Peak Oil?', "Finding Community" should be considered a 'must read' by every environmentally conscious and conscientious man and woman in North America, as well as an essential addition to school and community library Environmental Studies reference collections and supplemental reading lists.

To me, Finding Community was even more useful and entertaining than Diana Leafe Christian's previous book, *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*. It is full of inside information and tips for those of us interested in the possibility of joining an intentional community. The book is also witty and highly entertaining, with lots of anecdotes from specific communities. The book explains the variety of communities on the spectrum from income-sharing communes, to ecovillages, to co-housing, to Christian communities. It de-mystifies the financial issues and also the process of applying and actually joining. Particularly valuable to me, in light of global warming and peak oil, were the forward by Richard Heinberg and the appendix on ecovillages as lifeboat communities after the oil crash.

If you feel that the world is crumbling all around you into chaos and feel that you absolutely must escape from the city, then this is the book that you need to read. It's definitely a sound introduction to ecovillages, communes, and intentional communities. Whether you are a "cultural creative" or someone seeking "voluntary simplicity," if you're ready to move now to one then you should, don't

wait any longer just join the wave. With that said, I still feel that you will fare much, much better if you read this first and go tomorrow, as opposed to not reading it and going today. I hope that made sense. With this book in hand you should have just enough head knowledge in order to make your dreams a reality. It'll help you understand the different types of communities that are out there, and will help you to understand that you will fit better into certain types of them instead of just "whatever's closest." But for those who are already familiar with ICs and ecovillages, I'd say there are probably better books out there for you. All in all, I found Finding Community to be a solid introduction to the subject.

As one who last toured communities in the 70's (think Koinonia Farms in GA, Reba Place in IL, Bruderhof in PA, etc.), I found this re-introduction to the communitarian way very welcoming to this newly re-invigorated yet clueless sojourner--clueless, that is, regarding the ins and outs of community living today..., 30+ years later. Appropriately sobering and provocative of honest soul-searching, this is a valuable resource whether or not one chooses to live in an intentional community.

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