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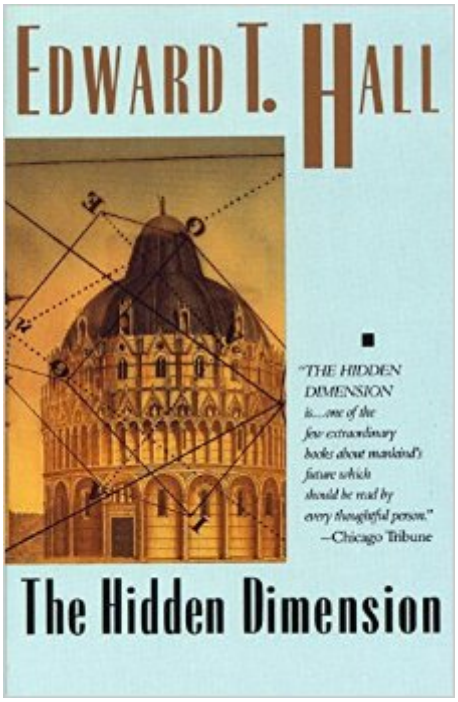
The Hidden Dimension (Anchor Books A Doubleday Anchor Book)



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Synopsis

An examination of various cultural concepts of space and how differences among them affect modern society. Introducing the science of "proxemics," Hall demonstrates how man’s use of space can affect personal business relations, cross-cultural exchanges, architecture, city planning, and urban renewal.

Book Information

Series: Anchor Books a Doubleday Anchor Book

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Anchor (October 1, 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0385084765

ISBN-13: 978-0385084765

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

A captivating scholarly writing on how human beings react to and make use of spatial distance from a physical and psychological viewpoint, i.e.. the study of Proxemics. The book also deals with cultural differences in the use of space. Hall examines the French, German, English, Japanese, and Arab world comparing each with the American context and with one another. The concluding chapters look at the world of 1950’s and 1960’s and seek to explain the ways in which we must design our cities to reflect proxemics values.Many readers would immediately disagree with Hall’s claims that there are inherent differences between the races that could not be overcome but Hall is rather persuasive. Though this is an old classic it is not outdated. This book is very different from "Management Science" books, as it requires broader general cultural knowledge from the reader by venturing into the domains of art, classical history and psychology. Students of international management and cross cultural studies should read this book.

It had been required reading when I was in college, but I found it hadn’t aged very well on a second

reading. Hall tried to make his case against urban overcrowding, citing the "behavioral sinks" that were being created in the 1960's. He presented numerous examples, starting with mice, that showed the debilitating effects overcrowding has on animals, and applied this to the overpopulated urban environments.More interesting was the study he did on the way persons from different culture perceive space, drawing from American, European, Arab and Asian societies. Even between Americans and English the differences were startling, but it seemed to me that he made too much of these differences, that affluence has as much a role in shaping the way people perceive space as does culture, which Hall did not touch upon.Hall was pessimistic of the modern cities in America, noting that the race riots, in his mind, resulted from the cultural differences between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics. I think it had more to do with social inequalities than it did race, but Hall seemed convinced there are inherit differences between the races that could not be overcome, which I found to be too deterministic.

Ed Hall is one of the preeminent cultural anthropologists of all times. His work, studies, and insights into the rich modern anthropology reflect a life long passion he developed as a teenager in the 1930's Southwest U.S. assigned to work on white-managed WPA crews alongside Navajo workers whose cultural bearings and world views were vastly different than his own people's views.Hidden Dimensions examines the cultural contexts of space, how peoples define their personal and community spaces as part of their cultural norms.How far apart or close do people of a similar culture feel comfortable standing or sitting next to one another and in what circumstances? When do you feel someone is "in your space"? This personal comfort zone differs culture to culture. Yours may be different than mine. Hall develops these "proxemics" (proximity) in this book by observing and visiting with peoples from around the globe, and shares the wisdom gained with you so that you might expand your own world views and spatial orientations when mixing with foreign cultures to your own.Well worth the sheckles to add this great work to your life's library. Collect all of Hall's works.

A fabulous writing on how human beings react to and make use of spacial distance from a physical and psychological viewpoint, i.e.. the study of proxemics. The type of book that should be reissued without fail by the publisher, though it is old, since it is a classic in its field. Actual numerical distances and their effect/use/experience by humans are explained as well as much about eyesight and its abilities. Hall also explains how different Euro cultures (German, French, and others) plus how Americans use space differently. I'm seldom this positive about any book but must give this one

a highest rating.

This book serves as an introduction to the field of proxemics. Hall exams how people interact and how they live together. He begins with an examination of the animal world and how animals share space. Although not directly related to humans it is interesting to know that crowding among rats leads to massive population decline.The book also deals with cultural differences in the use of space. Hall examines the French, German, English, Japanese, and Arab world comparing each with the American context and with one another. The concluding chapters look at the modern world and seek to explain the ways in which we must design our cities to reflect proxemics values. This is even more valuable advice today as American seeks to integrate more and more immigrants from very different cultures.Although a little dated this book is worth a read.

I read this book in the 70's and loved it. It was eye-opening, and I was astounded by his level of perception. I owned it, lost it in a move, and finally couldn't stand to be without it. So after 20 years, I got this book and a number of his other books. Edward T. Hall is an American gem, and all of his books are worth reading. His greatest works are roughly 30 years old, but I think the information stands up to the test of time.

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