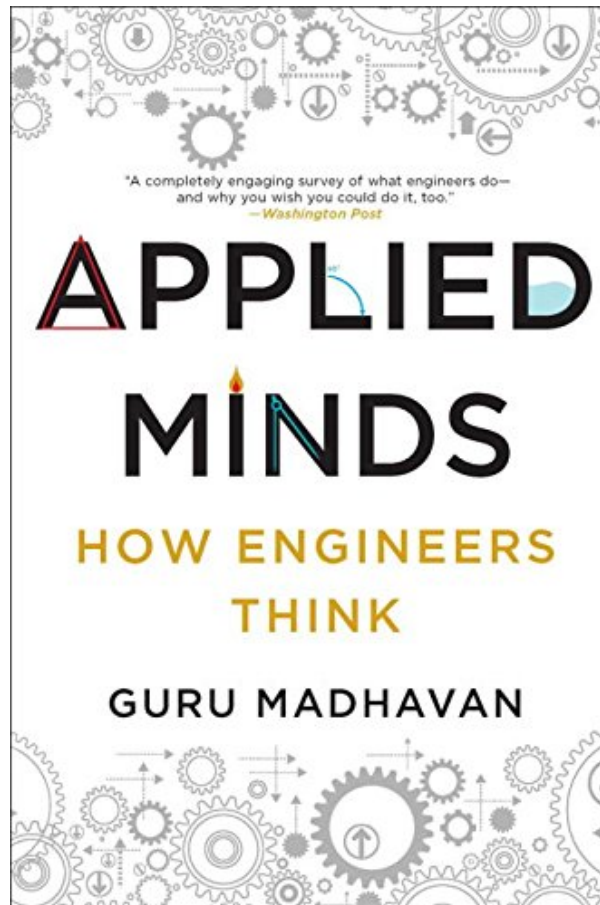
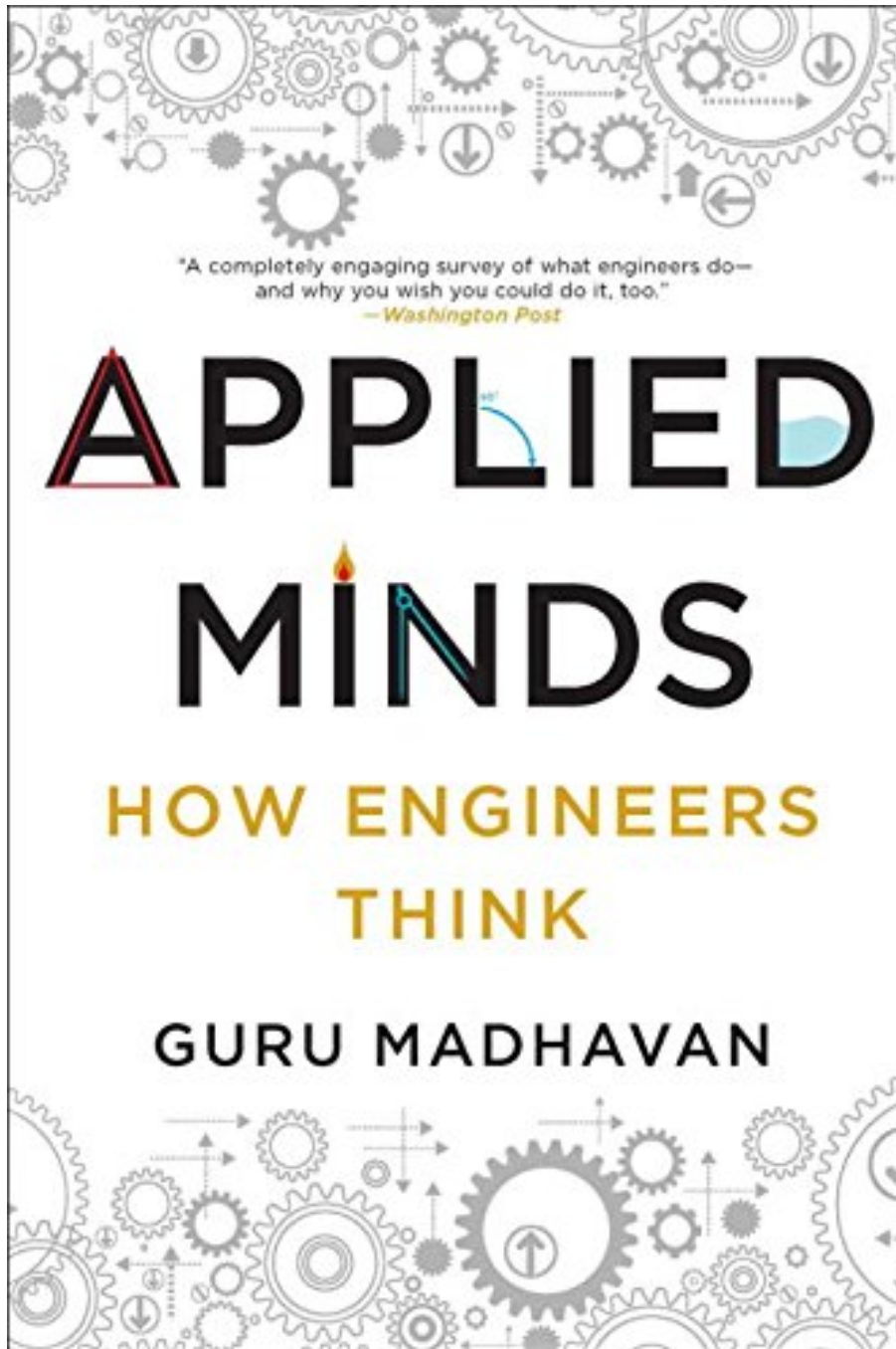


APPLIED MINDS: HOW ENGINEERS THINK BY GURU MADHAVAN



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Review

“Anyone trying to interest America’s young people in technical careers should read Applied Minds.... Writing with a liveliness that reflects the energized, creative, problem-solving people he talks about, Madhavan, a biomedical engineer, presents a completely engaging survey of what engineers do?and why you wish you could do it, too.”

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“Engineers are titans of real-world problem-solving. . . . In this riveting study of how they think, [Guru Madhavan] puts behind-the-scenes geniuses . . . center stage.”?Nature

Dubai's Burj Khalifa?the world's tallest building?looks nothing like Microsoft's Office Suite, and digital surround sound doesn't work like a citywide telecommunication grid. Yet these engineering feats have much in common.

Applied Minds explores the unique visions and mental tools of engineers to reveal the enormous?and often understated?influence they wield in transforming problems into opportunities. The resulting account pairs the innovators of modern history?Thomas Edison, the Wright brothers, Steve Jobs?with everything from ATMs and the ZIP code system to the disposable diaper.

An engineer himself, Guru Madhavan introduces a flexible intellectual tool kit called modular systems thinking as he explains the discipline's penchant for seeing structure where there is none. The creations that result from this process express the engineer's answers to the fundamental questions of design: usefulness, functionality, reliability, and user friendliness.

Through narratives and case studies spanning the brilliant history of engineering, Madhavan shows how the concepts of prototyping, efficiency, reliability, standards, optimization, and feedback are put to use in fields as diverse as transportation, retail, health care, and entertainment.

Equal parts personal, practical, and profound, Applied Minds charts a path to a future where we apply strategies borrowed from engineering to create useful and inspired solutions to our most pressing challenges.

- Sales Rank: #327994 in Books
- Brand: Madhavan Guru
- Published on: 2016-08-16
- Released on: 2016-08-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.30" h x .80" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 272 pages

Features

- Applied Minds How Engineers Think

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18 of 19 people found the following review helpful.

Written in a very conversational style with lots of interesting historical anecdotes

By Kent Price

There is lots of good material organized in chapters: (Prologue) Invisible bridges; (1) Mixing and matching; (2) Optimizing; (3) Enhancing efficiency and reliability; (4) Standardizing with flexibility; (5) Solutions under constraints; (6) Crossing over and adapting; (7) Prototyping; (8) Learning from others; (Fadeout) A mindset for the multitudes. At the end there is a long section "Sources and resources", "Acknowledgments", and a comprehensive "Index".

The book is written in a very conversational style with lots of interesting anecdotes from history such as the Rosie Ruiz fake marathoner story (she took public transportation) that led to the need to track each individual runner. But sometimes the story is overly long or convoluted and reader may lose track of the point the author is making. The chapters could have used editing to restore focus.

All in all, I enjoyed the book but wished for more focus by the author.

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