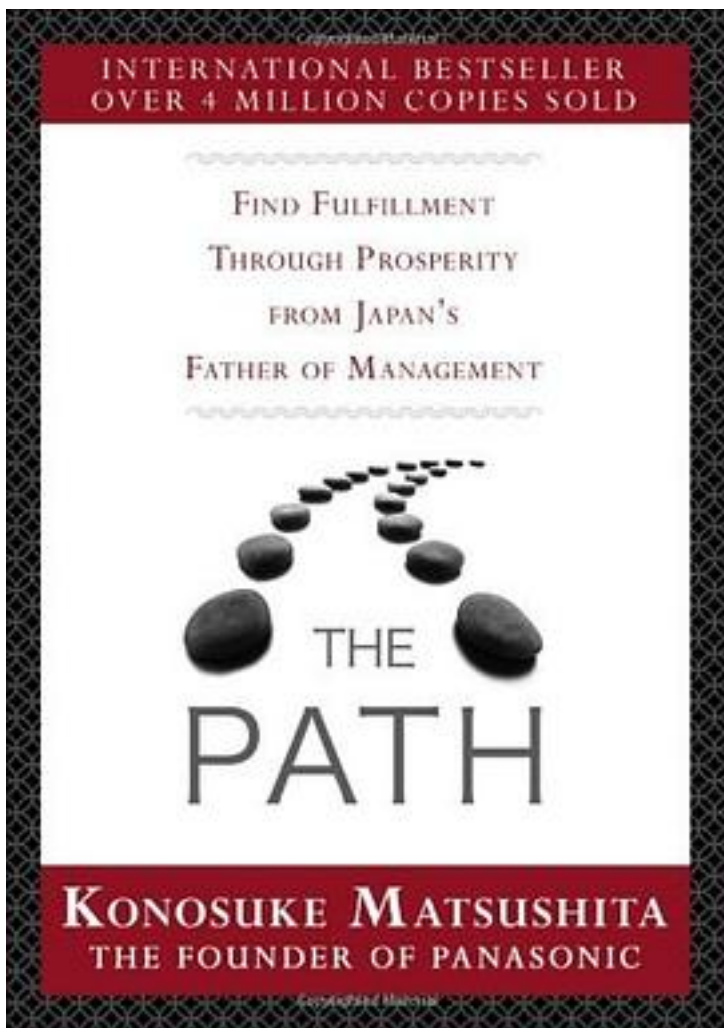


The Path



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出版者:Walker & Company

出版时间:2003-3-1

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780802714022

For nearly forty years, Chet Raymo has walked a one-mile path from his house in North

Easton, Massachusetts, to the Stonehill College campus where he has taught physics and astronomy. The woods, meadows, and stream he passes are as familiar to him as his own backyard, yet each day he finds something new. "Every pebble and wildflower has a story to tell," Raymo says. In "The Path," Raymo chronicles the universe he has found by closely observing every detail of his route. He connects the local to the global, the microscopic to the galactic, with a scientist's curiosity, a historian's respect for the past, a child's capacity for wonder. With each step, the landscape he traverses becomes richer and more multidimensional, opening door after door into astronomy, geology, biology, history, and literature. "The flake of granite in the path was once at the core of towering mountains pushed up across New England when continents collided," he writes. "The purple loosestrife beside the stream emigrated from Europe in the 1800s as a garden ornamental, then went wantonly native in a land of wild frontiers. The light from the star Arcturus I see reflected in the brook beneath the bridge at night has been traveling across space for forty years before entering my eye. I have attended to all of these stories and tried to hear what the landscape has to say I have attended, too, to language. How did the wood anemone and Sheep Pasture get their names? What does the "queset" of Queset Brook signify in the language of Native Americans? Scratch a name in a landscape, and history bubbles up like a spring." The path also reveals the stories of nineteenth-century industrialists who transformed natural resources into power, and turn-of-the-century landscape architects, such as Frederick Law Olmsted, who championed an ideal of nature tamed by conscious intent. In its transformations over the centuries, Raymo writes, the path "encapsulates in many surprising ways the history of our nation and of our fickle love affair with the natural world." Recognizing that his path is commonplace, and that we all have such routes in our lives, Raymo urges us to walk attentively, stopping often to watch and listen with care. His wisdom and insights inspire us to turn local paths--whether through cities, suburbs, or rural areas--into doorways to greater understanding of nature and history.

作者介绍:

Chet Raymo is the noted author of *An Intimate Look at the Night Sky*, *Skeptics and True Believers*, *Natural Prayers*, and *365 Starry Nights*. His column, "Science Musings," appears weekly in the *Boston Globe*. A professor emeritus of physics and astronomy at Stonehill College, he lives in North Easton, Massachusetts.

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