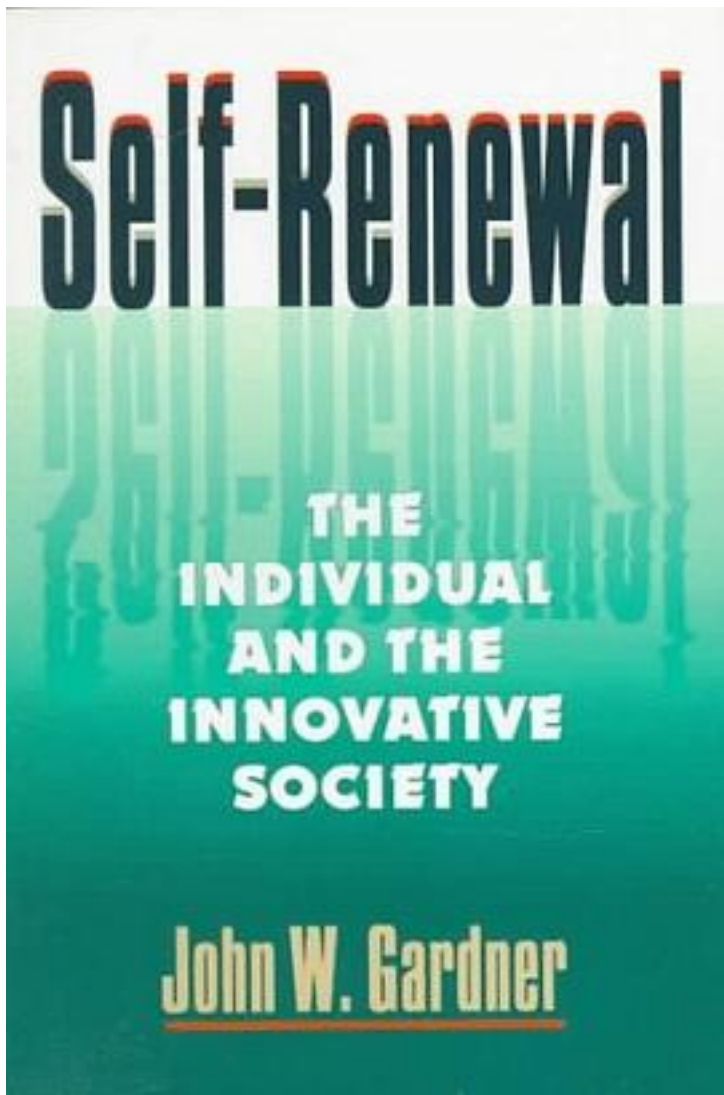


Self-Renewal



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CHAPTER 1
The working person of yesterday was most likely concerned with direct production. He or she worked either at home or in a shop or factory. Today the majority of workers are concerned with information and service. People work with customers or clients transferring information, preparing reports, and often interacting intensely with each other. This new environment demands vast new sets of skills. Instead of physical stamina and routine tasks, we are today presented with multiple demands, many choices and decisions, and a world in which we need to work together on complex tasks. Instead of physical activity, the primary demands are mental and interpersonal. At work and in personal and family life many people find themselves feeling overwhelmed and struggling to get things under control. They feel pressured by time and continually need to respond and act often without having a clear idea of the outcome. Life is made up of pressures and uncertainty to which we need to adapt. People respond to the modern world with a body and a mind that were designed to function well in a far simpler world. Our primary mental and physical characteristics evolved several million years ago, whereas the world we inhabit today was created by us not even a generation ago. The things that we demand of ourselves are often the things that we were designed to do. As a result, we are prey to all manner of physical and emotional forms of illness and distress, and we experience difficulty and distress with the life we lead. At an extreme many people have begun to use the term "burnout" to refer to a generalized depletion of energy, lack of involvement, and inability to function well and achieve satisfaction. Many people feel burned out and helpless to do anything to overcome it. There must be a better way, we think to ourselves. How can we

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