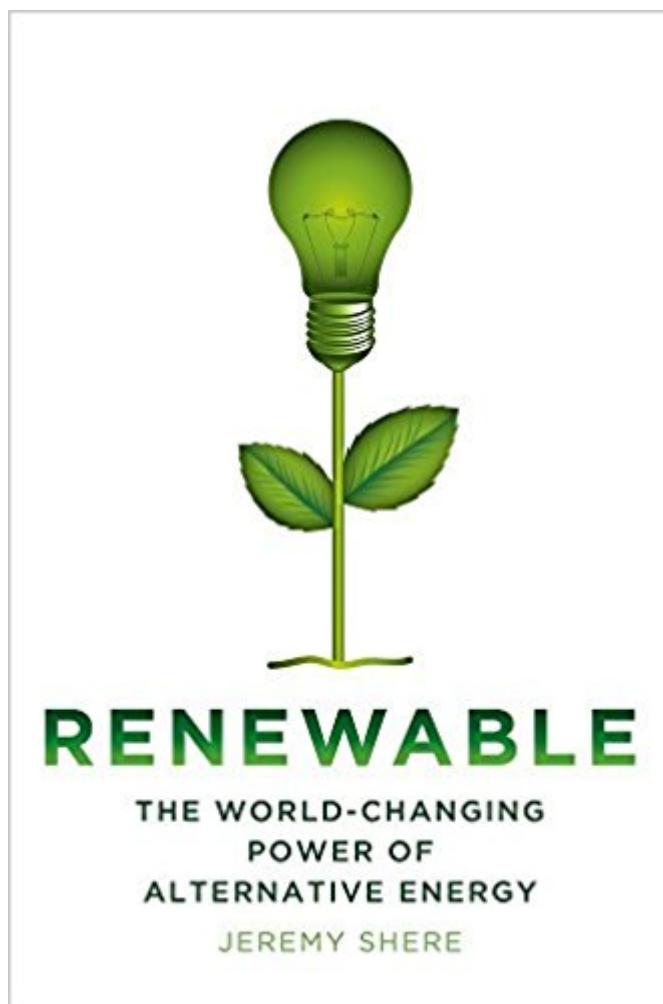


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# Renewable: The World-Changing Power Of Alternative Energy



## Synopsis

Where does the energy we use come from? It's absolutely vital to every single thing we do every day, but for most people, it is utterly invisible. Flick a switch and the lights go on. It might as well be magic. Science writer Jeremy Shere shows us in *Renewable: The World-Changing Power of Alternative Energy* that energy is anything but magical. Producing it in fossil fuel form is a dirty, expensive—*but also* hugely profitable—enterprise, with enormous but largely hidden costs to the entire planet. The cold, hard fact is that at some point we will have wrung the planet dry of easily accessible sources of fossil fuel. And when that time comes, humankind will have no choice but to turn—or, more accurately, return—to other, cleaner, renewable energy sources. What will those sources be? How far have we come to realizing the technologies that will make these sources available? To find the answers, Shere began his journey with a tour of a traditional coal-fueled power plant in his home state of Indiana. He then continued on, traveling from coast to coast as he spoke to scientists, scholars and innovators. He immersed himself in the green energy world: visiting a solar farm at Denver's airport, attending the Wind Power Expo and a wind farm tour in Texas, investigating turbines deep in New York City's East River, and much more.

Arranged in five parts—Green Gas, Sun, Wind, Earth, and Water—*Renewable* tells the stories of the most interesting and promising types of renewable energy: namely, biofuel, solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower. But unlike many books about alternative energy, *Renewable* is not obsessed with megawatts and tips for building home solar panels. Instead, Shere digs into the rich, surprisingly long histories of these technologies, bringing to life the pioneering scientists, inventors, and visionaries who blazed the way for solar, wind, hydro, and other forms of renewable power, and unearthing the curious involvement of great thinkers like Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, and Nicola Tesla. We are at an important crossroads in the history of renewable technologies. The possibilities are endless and enticing, and it has become increasingly clear that renewable energy is the way of the future. In *Renewable*, Jeremy Shere's natural curiosity and serious research come together in an entertaining and informative guide to where renewable energy has been, where it is today, and where it's heading.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**Starred Review.** In this rigorous, impassioned, and nonpartisan study, science writer Shere blends first-person reportage and anecdotal history, bringing the state of renewable energy vibrantly alive. A quick glimpse of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison riding together in a Model T through the Florida Everglades in search of land to grow ethanol-producing crops gives way to Shere, standing in the pouring rain, looking over a field of swaying Chinese silver grass—“the best choice to replace corn as the basis for ethanol. A description of elegantly attired British colonialists sipping champagne and marveling excitedly at a solar-powered irrigation system in early 20th-century Egypt transitions to an account of researchers at Purdue University and MIT who are making unprecedented advances in solar energy efficiency using nanotechnology. Unfailingly positive, never speculating about entrenched interests, profit margins, or global greed, the stories nevertheless generate provocative contrasts. The fascination, awe, and excitement with which our forbearers viewed advances in alternative energy contrasts markedly with the skepticism, cynicism, and outright hostility that colors the conversation today. While the debate over renewable energy remains mired in politics, Shere’s approach provides a refreshingly optimistic outlook, grounded, but not suffocating, in technical detail, and confirming that, while the relatively low price of oil keeps advances on the margins, the work necessary to wean ourselves off fossil fuels is ongoing. Agent: Irene Goodman, Irene Goodman Agency. (Nov.)

With the emerging worldwide consensus that humanity needs to reduce greenhouse gases and prepare for the depletion of oil reserves, more and more books are appearing on alternative-energy schemes. Most of them present how-to or where-and-when approaches. In a change of focus, this lively and informative overview by prolific radio science reporter Shere looks at green energy from another angle, highlighting its surprising history, dynamic contemporary development, and looming

probable future. Readers may be astonished to learn, for instance, that solar power devices have been around for almost a century and that the earth's abundant hot rocks, if properly tapped, could easily supply all the world's energy needs. Beyond interesting facts, however, Shere also gives an in-depth report on each major renewable energy source, including green gas, solar, wind, water, and geothermal, demonstrating how engineers are overcoming the limitations of each. In contrast to many of alternative energy's critics, Shere provides many sound reasons for optimism about a future in which power generation causes minimal damage to the environment. --Carl Hays

I found Jeremy Shere's book to be well-researched, informative, relevant, and refreshingly unbiased towards the subject material. His trips through history are factual and wonderfully written, transporting the reader through time to witness the people and events that brought new renewable technologies into this world. And you are able to witness their unfolding stories - how those new technologies played out, how they were accepted or rejected, and as a result where things are today with or without them. I would recommend this book to just about anyone; it is a very good read, and leaves the reader better informed about the topic so they can draw their own conclusions about where we should go "from here".

This was a reasonably good basic summary of the main renewable energy options, but left me with a mixed reaction to the coverage of historical approaches to these technologies -- coverage that at times was interesting and at times seemed like filler. The interjection of personal accounts of writing the book also felt like filler; Shere would have better used these pages to focus on promising future advances leading to a stronger conclusion as to which are most likely to dominate our energy future.

new book , everything clear and understanding. so interesting about how we can create energy and how important is to human life!

Great, thanks

I preordered this and read it as soon as it arrived. It's full of interesting stories about the history and future of development of alternative energy technologies. Shere writes in an easily accessible and clear way, so it's easy to read, but it's also very informative and complete. Definitely recommend to anyone interested in understanding more about alternative energy.

This book perfectly summarizes the past present and future of energy and leaves you with vast knowledge. I personally liked the book because it introduced me to some different energy technologies I had never heard of before. If you are even the slightest interested in energy or want some unique tidbits about its history I highly recommend this book.

Excellent writing. Crisp, timely, really a definitive text on the area. Areas of controversy are explained and the truth driving choices in the area becomes more clear.

Good analysis of alternative energy sources

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