



Patterns

You're Doing It Completely Wrong

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What is Completely Wrong?

- Human well-being
- QWAN, wholeness, life, beauty
- Generativity
- Morality
- Patterns build something
- Mirror of Self
- Goal of Tears

Human Well-Being

*The National Institutes of Health (NIH) wanted to know if there was a **relationship between the built environment and human well-being**. They would pay for research. Alexander and colleagues responded...they got the job.*

*Many 'walkabouts' and discussions later, the team formulated the concept of pattern and catalogued 253 instances of **spatial configurations that supported well-being in everyday, ordinary life**.*

Volume 1: The Timeless Way of Building

Volume 2: A Pattern Language

Volume 3: The Oregon Experiment

A Search for Beauty

A Struggle with Complexity: Christopher Alexander

–Gabriel & Quillien

QWAN & All That

*The elements of this language are entities called **patterns**. Each pattern describes a **problem** which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then describes the core of the **solution** to that problem, in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice.*

Yes, that's part of it...

A Pattern Language
–Christopher Alexander, et al
–Quoted in *Design Patterns*, GoF

QWAN & All That

6. The specific **patterns** out of which a building or a town is made may be **alive or dead**. To the extent they are alive, they let our inner forces loose, and set us free; but when they are dead, they keep us locked in inner conflict.

7. The more **living patterns** there are in a place—a room, a building, or a town—the more it **comes to life as an entirety, the more it glows, the more it has that self maintaining fire which is the quality without a name.**

The Timeless Way of Building
–Christopher Alexander, et al
–Not quoted in *Design Patterns*, GoF

QWAN & All That

To reach the quality without a name we must then build a living pattern language as a gate.

9. *This quality in buildings and in towns cannot be made, but **only generated**, indirectly, by the ordinary actions of the people, just as a flower cannot be made, but only generated from the seed...*

The Timeless Way of Building
–Christopher Alexander, et al
–Not quoted in *Design Patterns*, GoF

Morality & Generativity

*...it looks to me more as though mainly the pattern concept, for you, is an inspiring format that is a good way of exchanging fragmentary, atomic, ideas about programming. Indeed, as I understand it, that part is working very well. But these other two dimensions, (1) **the moral capacity to produce a living structure** and (2) **the generativity of the thing, its capability of producing coherent wholes**—I haven't seen very much evidence of those two things in **software pattern theory**. Are these your shortcomings? Or is it just because I don't know how to read the literature?*

OOPSLA Keynote, 1996
—Christopher Alexander

Patterns Build Something

...the solution—the heart of the pattern—which describes the field of physical and social relationships which are required to solve the stated problem, in the stated context. This solution is always stated in the form of an instruction—so that you know exactly what you need to do, to build the pattern.

Be sure you know what each pattern builds.

A Pattern Language
—Christopher Alexander, et al

Mirror of Self



(a)



(b)

If you had to choose one of these two carpets, as a picture of your own self, which one would you choose?

Mirror of Self



(a)



(b)

...choose the one which seems better able to represent your whole being, the essence of yourself, good and bad, all that is human in you.

Mirror of Self

A Foreshadowing of 21st Century Art
—Christopher Alexander



(a)



(b)

I believe that almost everyone, after careful thought, will choose the left-hand example [a]... I believe most people will conclude that the left-hand one is more profound: that one feels more calm looking at it; that one could look at it, day after day, for more years, that it fills one more successfully, with a calm and peaceful feeling. All this is what I mean by saying that, objectively, the left-hand carpet is the greater—and the more whole, of the two.

Goal of Tears

The I, that blazing one, is something which I reach only to the extent that I experience, and make manifest, my feeling. What feeling, exactly? What exactly am I aiming for in a building, in a column, in a room? How do I define it for myself, so that I can feel it clearly, so that it stands as a beacon to steer me in what I do every day?

The Nature of Order
–Christopher Alexander

Goal of Tears

*What I aim for is, most concretely, **sadness**. I try to make the volume of the building so that it carries in it all feeling. To reach this feeling, **I try to make the building so that it carries my eternal sadness**. It comes, **as nearly as I can in a building, to the point of tears**.*



A single material, in variations: Sadness in a beam, ornament, ceiling, columns, and windows.

Sadness in a beam, ornament, ceiling, columns, and windows.

