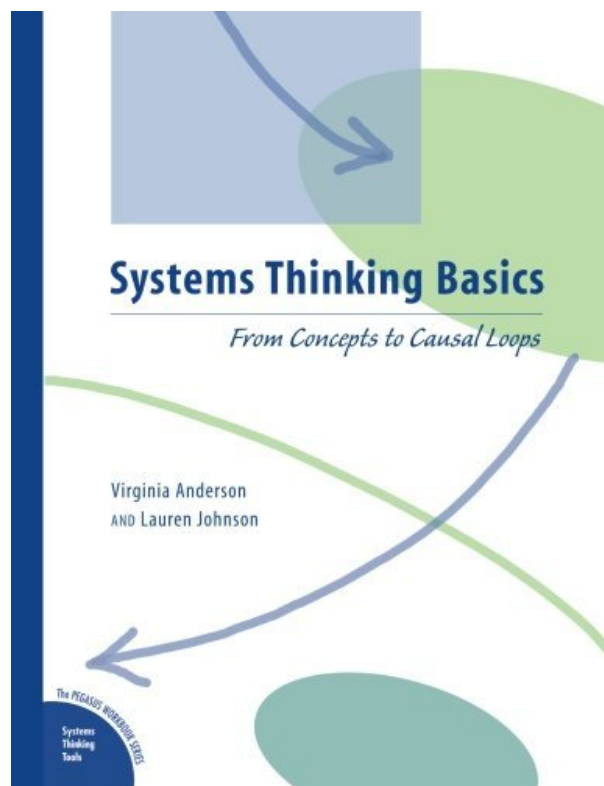# SYSTEMS THINKING BASICS: FROM CONCEPTS TO CAUSAL LOOPS (PEGASUS WORKBOOK SERIES) BY VIRGINIA ANDERSON, LAUREN JOHNSON

Systems Thinking Basics

From Concepts to Causal Loops

Virginia Anderson
AND Lauren Johnson

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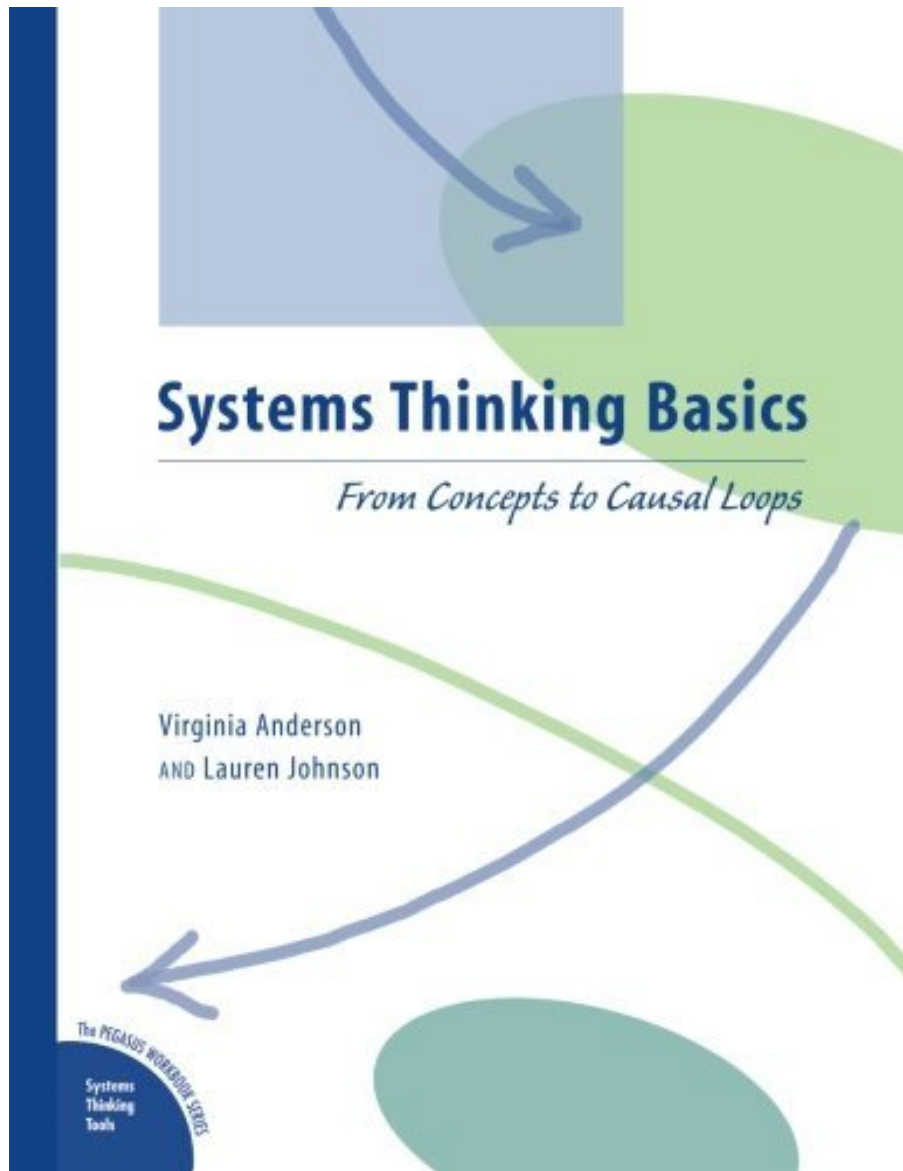**SYSTEMS THINKING BASICS: FROM CONCEPTS TO CAUSAL LOOPS (PEGASUS WORKBOOK SERIES) BY VIRGINIA ANDERSON, LAUREN JOHNSON**

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About the Author
Anderson attended the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Lauren Johnson is a freelance writer and editor living and working in North Carolina. In her spare time she likes to read, paint, and practice marital arts (like the moves found in this book!).

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Systems Thinking Basics is a self-study, skill-building resource designed to introduce you to the power of systems thinking tools. With an emphasis on behavior over time graphs and causal loop diagrams, this workbook guides you step by step through: Recognizing systems and understanding the importance of systems thinking Interpreting and creating behavior over time graphs and causal loop diagrams Applying and practicing systems thinking day-to-day Each of the book's six main sections contains a wealth of examples from the business world, as well as learning activities that reinforce concepts and provide you with the opportunity and space to practice. An array of appendices offers: Extra practice activities A summary of key points and suggested responses to the learning activities A table showing the "palette" of systems thinking tools available A glossary of systems thinking terms A list of additional resources A summary of the systems archetypes The many diagrams within the book clarify concepts and visually reinforce key principles. Systems Thinking Basics is ideal for aspiring systems thinkers eager to try their hand at using these powerful tools

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About the Author
Anderson attended the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Lauren Johnson is a freelance writer and editor living and working in North Carolina. In her spare time she likes to read, paint, and practice marital arts (like the moves found in this book!).

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89 of 90 people found the following review helpful.
Best used as a course book
By Mike Tarrani
At 144 pages this book is a short introductory text and workbook that is designed to introduce systems thinking. It starts by building an awareness of systems thinking as a discipline, and by providing a series of

learning activities that lead you through the basics.

The two main techniques that this book teaches are (1) behavior over time graphs and causal loops, both of which are the main tools employed in systems thinking. These are also the foundation of system dynamics of which systems thinking is a subset (system dynamics uses expanded techniques such as simulation models and analysis of alternatives).

What I like about this book is the clear explanation of the basics and the use of illustrations and learning activities. I also like the summaries of system archetypes and system thinking tools included in the appendices, which provide starting points for further study. It's not the best book for self-study because it is written more as a workbook than an introductory text. As such it is best used in an instructor-led course, or in conjunction with more in-depth books about system thinking (my favorite is Systems Thinking: Managing Chaos and Complexity by Jamshid Gharajedaghi).

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.
Quick guide to Systems Thinking
By Alicia Crumpton
Touted as a 'basics' book, this lives up to its promise. Each chapter has some instructional text, super graphics, tables, and/or figures that augment the text, and activities that include examples. The book's organization walks you through key concepts including:
What Are Systems?
What is Systems Thinking?
Uncovering systemic Structures: Drawing Behavior Over Time Graphs
Uncovering Systemic Structures: Building Causal Loop Diagrams
Complex Systems
From Loops to Leverage: Applying and Practicing Systems Thinking

The Appendices are practical also including:
Additional learning activities
Key Points
Systems Thinking Tools
Systems Archetypes
Glossary
Additional Resources

For the practical, read this book. For additional background and a more theoretical treatment, read:
Checkland, P. (1999). Systems thinking, systems practice includes a 30-year retrospective. Chichester [Sussex]: J. Wiley.

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful.
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By S. Berg
This book is a quick and easy read...packed full of great ideas. Reading it got me to apply organizational behavior knowledge I already had in a different way. Lots of ah ha moments while reading. I'd recommend this to people who are responsible for analyzing/solving problems in an organization. I've already recommended this to others I know.

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