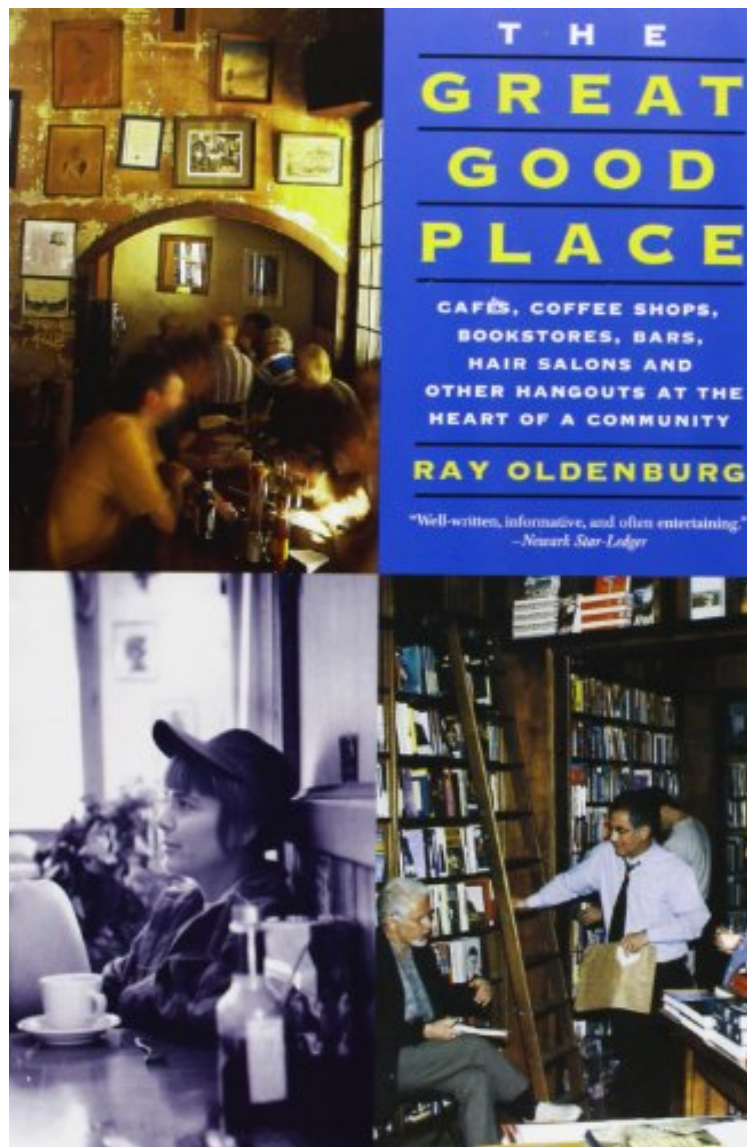


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The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community

Ray Oldenburg

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Ray Oldenburg : The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts at the Heart of a Community before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons, and Other Hangouts

at the Heart of a Community:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Human Interaction: The Importance of Third Spaces for Sense of Community By Alicia Crumpton Jane Jacobs (1992) in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* described the challenges to peoples' sense of community derived from urban planning and design when little attention is paid to creating spaces for routine, informal human interaction. Why is it that Starbucks and the coffee shop in general has become a meeting and gathering place? Why is the local pub such a fun place to be, a place where I look forward to seeing my 'friends' loosely defined as those who hang out there most Friday nights? Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place* describes sociologically the role and importance of Third places - (places other than home or work) (p. xvii). Important qualities of third places: 1) They are inclusive and local 2) They create an environment in which everybody knows just about everybody 3) They serve as ports of entry for visitors 4) They offer a 'neutral ground' space for conversation, idea sharing, and the transmittal of social norms 5) Create places for fun and enjoyment 6) Create a sense of belonging and connectedness This is a must read for anyone interested in belonging, community, and placemaking. I would also recommend this book for those interested in starting a restaurant or coffee shop, a gathering place, a community center, or church. Additional reading that might be helpful: Block, P. (2008). *Community: The structure of belonging*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. McKnight, J., Block, P. *The abundant community: Awakening the power of families and neighborhoods* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I liked the central idea of Third Places but don't feel ... By Julie Heiland I liked the central idea of Third Places but don't feel like the author added enough interesting examples or insights to make the extra length of a book worthwhile. There's too many cliches about Irish pubs and Parisian coffeehouses and too many out-of-nowhere digs at cliches of California and yoga. The cumulative effect gives the impression of Third Places as refuges from overbearing bosses and nagging wives. I longed for a greater attention to detail and a look at unexpected venues that might be working as Third Places.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. "The survival of the coffeehouse depends upon its ability to meet present day needs..." By frumiousb The project of *The Great Good Place* is to demonstrate why public spaces-- particularly gathering spaces-- are essential to the health of the community. It is an interesting and attractive thesis-- one that will speak clearly to most of his intended audience. Who does not harbor a nostalgia (even if an inherited nostalgia) for the town pub or the "place where everybody knows your name"? Oldenburg does a good job building his case. He looks at characteristics and benefits of third places and then chooses examples from history and other cultures to illustrate the ideas. A friend of mine remarked that *The Great Good Place* was one good idea repeated over and over again for 300 page. Not entirely fair, but there is some truth to it. The book also suffers from being oversold. For instance, the publisher's subtitle implies that hair salons are part of the topics that are covered. In fact, they are barely even mentioned. I suppose that the publicity that this relatively academic text made it nearly irresistible for the publishing house to try to spice things up for the average reader. Honestly, three stars might be the most fair rating for the book. In addition to what feels like some occasionally thin material, I feel that the author elides or ignores the potential negatives of his third places. All the same, I ended up rating it four stars because I generally agreed with his ideas. That agreement made me predisposed to enjoy it. So for me, the fourth star is because I found it pleasant to read. Recommended for people with an interest in the social value of public spaces.

The Great Good Place argues that "third places" - where people can gather, put aside the concerns of work and home, and hang out simply for the pleasures of good company and lively conversation - are the heart of a community's social vitality and the grassroots of democracy.

The Great Good Place has put into words and focus what I've been doing all my life, from the barbershop I remember as a child to the bookstore I now own. My goal at Horizon Books is to provide that third place in which people can "hang out." Ray Oldenburg has defined those good places while still recognizing the magical chemistry they require. *The Great Good Place* is a book to read, to recommend, and to quote. -- Victor W. Herman, owner of Horizon Books, with locations in Traverse City, Petoskey, and Cadillac, Michigan

A book that should be read by everyone in North America over the age of 16 -- *The World of Beer* A day doesn't go by that I don't refer to Ray Oldenburg's *The Great Good Place*. At a time when all great, good independent bookstores everywhere are under siege, we're fortunate that Mr. Oldenburg has articulated our message so clearly. -- Mitchell Kaplan, owner of Books Books, Miami, Florida

Examines gathering places and reminds us how important they are. People need the 'third place' to nourish sociability. -- Parade

Oldenburg believes that the powerful need in humans to associate with one another will inevitably lead to the revival of places where, as the theme song to the TV show *Cheers* so aptly put it, 'everyone knows your name.' We'll drink to that. -- Booklist

Ray Oldenburg is inspirational. He is the first to recognize and articulate the importance of the greeting place (third place) for the well-being of the individual and society at large. -- Ron Sher, President, Terranomics Development and founder of Third Place Books, Seattle, Wash.

The great value of this book is that Mr. Oldenburg has given us an insightful and extremely useful new lens through which to look at a familiar problem. -- New York Times Book

This wonderful and utterly important book verifies our need for fun through

conversation in "great good places." Oldenburg writes passionately of our country's current and urgent problems resulting from our ever-increasing social isolation and provides us with a very simple solution. America must read and react to this rational common-sense solution to salving our stressed lives. And our government needs to promote, permit, and zone responsible neighborhood hospitality, recognizing the value of "a vital informal life." -- Lynne Breaux, owner, Tunnickliff's Tavern, Washington, D.C. Well-written, informative, and often entertaining. -- Newark Star-Ledger
About the Author Ray Oldenburg lives in Pensacola, FL.