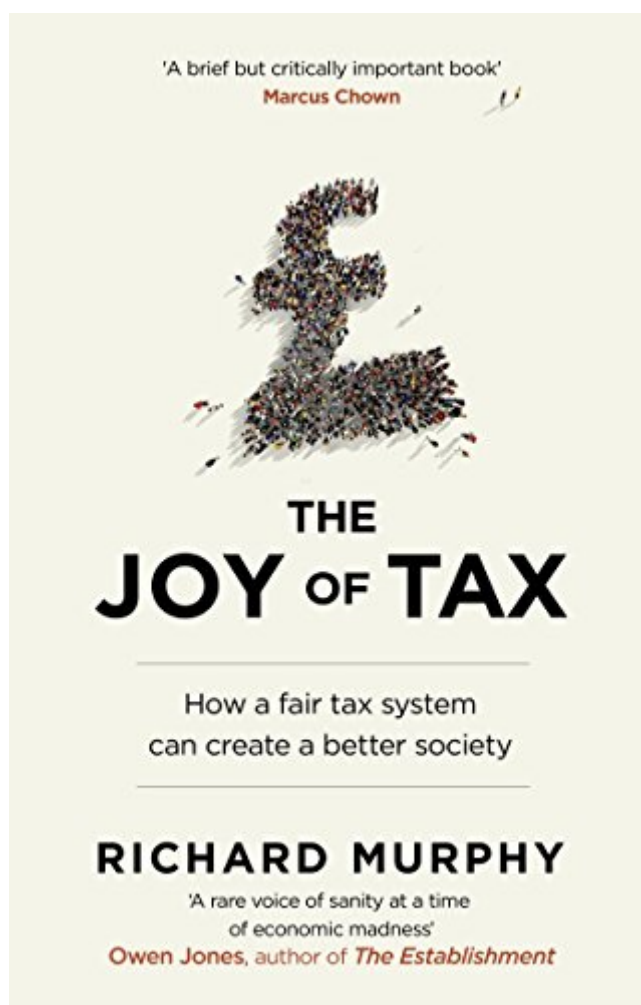


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# The Joy Of Tax



## Synopsis

'A brief but crucially important book' Marcus Chown  
In *The Joy of Tax*, tax campaigner Richard Murphy challenges almost every idea you have about tax. For him, tax is fundamentally about the ideas that shape the sort of society we want to live in, not technicalities. His intention is to demonstrate that there is indeed a joy in tax, and by embracing it we can create a fairer society and change the world for the better. Tax has been a feature of human society for a very long time. Almost no one gives tax a good press even though, as Richard Murphy argues, it has been fundamental to the development of democracy the world over. Whilst we may not like tax very much, in contrast it is clear that we really do like the public services which governments provide. So much so, in fact, that for most of the last 300 years, people have been more than happy for governments to run deficits by spending more than they raise in taxation. 2008 apparently changed all that. The issues of debt, deficits, cuts and austerity have dominated the political agenda ever since. Virtually every aspect of the government's finances and how to rearrange them in the forlorn hope of balancing the books has been discussed in great detail. Despite that, there has been almost no real discussion during this period about what tax is for and how it contributes to the creation of the society we aspire to.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

After David Cameron gave Richard Murphys "The Joy of Tax" a bum review at the Tory party conference I ordered myself a copy, after all being ridiculed by the ridiculous has to be a positive? The book opens with a whirlwind history of taxation from the time of the Ancients through the rise of Christianity and on to the present. Murphy then answers the question of what tax is, what money is, and how it gets created, before attempting to re-conceptualise tax as something that comes after spending and is not a pre-condition of spending, but rather the government clawing back money it has already spent to prevent inflationary pressures building up in the economy. This has implications in the current situation where Austerity is held up as the only way forward while the economy stutters and splutters onwards, shedding social obligations at an alarming rate. In Murphys view, as long as there is no sign of inflation (its 0% for the moment) money can be created, after all private banks can do it, and the State has done it with £300bn+ fed into the Financial Sector. Why can't it be done to meet social obligations and bring the economy back to life? As someone who has been a leading light of the Tax Justice Network, Murphy unsurprisingly addresses problems with the fairness of the current tax system. An interesting graph (p140) makes it clear that the UK tax system is far from progressive, and in fact taking as a whole it almost functions as a flat tax with all deciles paying about 31-36% of income in taxes, apart from the poorest decile which pays out 48%! Some are evidently in it more than others.

This book is a must-read for anyone who cares about world of civilisation and poverty. "the Joy of Tax" by Professor Richard Murphy represents the best that taxation has to offer. •Writers like Mr Murphy have one consistency, which is being against the totalitarian " on the extreme left and on the extreme right. The Totalitarian is the enemy ...A refreshingly clear, well-structured argument against the standard approach to tax reform, this book, while intended for academics and tax analysts should provide an essential wake-up call for any reader. Keven Maguire, associate editor of the Daily Mirror made the most valuable observation about the prolific blogger and commentators Richard Murphy: "We've got to take sides on tax. Rich individuals, corporations, well-funded special interest groups and much of Fleet Street is on one (the wrong) side and then there is Richard Murphy plus a few others, including yours truly. But it is Murphy who is the heroic figure. Tireless and forensic, driven by an admirable moral fervour, I take my hat off to a campaigner with Duracell batteries." Economists along the lines of Thomas Piketty and James Cumes are watching the ideas inside the Joy of Tax with interest as tax reformers tend to be aware that price of civilisation is taxation. Richard Murphy and James Cumes have a lot in common as they both care

about the quality of life for all citizens as James observed:"In his famous Four Freedoms speech in 1941, President Roosevelt called for Freedom from Want. Sixty years later ...

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