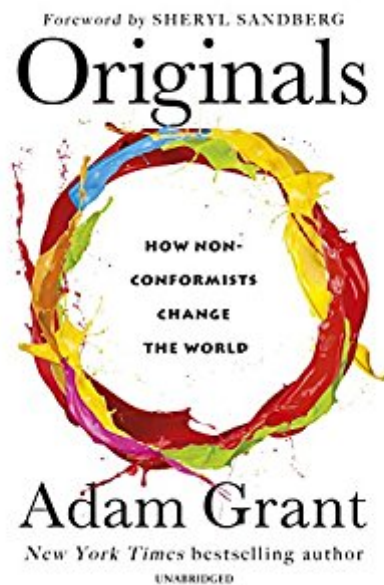


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Originals: How Non-Conformists Change The World



Synopsis

The New York Times best-selling author examines how people can drive creative, moral and organisational progress - and how leaders can encourage originality in their organisations. How can we originate new ideas, policies and practices without risking it all? Adam Grant shows how to improve the world by championing novel ideas and values that go against the grain, battling conformity and bucking outdated traditions. Using surprising studies and stories spanning business, politics, sports and entertainment, Grant explores how to recognize a good idea, speak up without getting silenced, build a coalition of allies, choose the right time to act and manage fear and doubt. Parents will learn how to nurture originality in children, and leaders will discover how to fight groupthink to build cultures that welcome dissent. Told through dazzling case studies of people going against the grain, you'll encounter an entrepreneur who pitches the reasons not to invest, a woman at Apple who challenged Steve Jobs from three levels below, an analyst who challenged secrecy at the CIA, a billionaire financial wizard who fires employees who don't criticize him and the TV executive who saved Seinfeld from the cutting room floor. Originals will give you groundbreaking insights about rejecting conformity and how to change the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World by Adam Grant "Originals" is an entertaining social-science book on how we can become more original. Referencing research and many studies, best-selling author Adam Grant explores what it takes to be creative and champion new ideas. This enlightening 335-page book includes the following eight chapters: 1. Creative Destruction, 2. Blind

Inventors and One-Eyed Investors, 3. Out on a Limb, 4. Fools Rush In, 5. Goldilocks and the Trojan Horse, 6. Rebel with a Cause, 7. Rethinking Groupthink, and 8. Rocking the Boat and Keeping It Steady.

Positives:

1. A well-researched, well-written book. It's entertaining and fun to read.
2. Interesting topic, the social science of originality.
3. Very good format. Each chapter begins with a chapter-appropriate quote and it's broken out by subtopics. Grant also does a good job of introducing the main goal for each chapter.
4. Does a good job of defining originality and staying on topic. "By my definition, originality involves introducing and advancing an idea that's relatively unusual within a particular domain, and that has the potential to improve it."
5. In many respects this narrative resembles books from the likes of Malcolm Gladwell and Daniel H. Pink and that's not a bad thing.
6. The faults in defaults. "To get Firefox or Chrome, you have to demonstrate some resourcefulness and download a different browser. Instead of accepting the default, you take a bit of initiative to seek out an option that might be better. And that act of initiative, however tiny, is a window into what you do at work."
7. The hallmark of originality is rejecting the default and exploring whether a better option exists.

It took me a while to get around to Adam Grant's first book, *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success*, but it turned out to be life-changing. Now I tell everyone about it and even host a monthly free favor exchange event based on its principles. So I was stoked to get my hands on "Originals." Besides being an enjoyable read, full of insider case studies of true revolutionaries, it's also a life-affirming book for all the creative folks out there who think they're just not good enough to go big. For example, Grant makes the case for the upside of procrastination. Did you know that Leonardo da Vinci didn't get his big break till his mid-40s and was a world-class procrastinator, tinkering with the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper for over 15 years? Or that Martin Luther King Jr didn't write his "I have a dream" speech until the night before, and then winged its most memorable parts? All these stories make the business of originality not the domain of the chosen, but something more human and approachable. Steve Wozniak had to be pried away from his job at HP with a crowbar to co-found Apple. Larry Page and Sergey Brin head the highest-valued company in the world because they failed at selling Google for \$2M early on. These were not prescient demigods but people who made good and bad decisions just like us. Grant is a master at telling these stories of Promethean feats, sound judgment and serendipity, extracting from them the essence that we can apply to our own lives.

This is a book which is very readable, flows well, and sticks to the theme of how non-conformists

move the world. The book resonates with stories and examples to make each point. In some cases, the examples are around a particular success story. In other cases, the examples are around research efforts. The combination of the two lends both credibility and a convincing approach for people who might like a story over research or vice-versa. "Originals" is full of counter-intuitive ideas from the conventional wisdom as well as re-packaging some conventional wisdom. Some key points that resonated for me were:- For U.S. Presidents, the least effective leaders were those who followed the will of the people and the precedents set by their predecessors; the greatest were those who challenged the status quo and brought about sweeping changes that improved the lot of the country- When pitching a new, novel idea, it is more effective to accentuate the flaws in your idea; it disarms and lets people know youâ™re not a brainless advocate- Our best allies on original ideas can be the ones who started out against us and then came around to our side- It is hard to change other peopleâ™s ideals; it is much easier to link our agendas to familiar values that people already hold- It is best to vet ideas with a group and get dissenting opinions and talking them through before launching a big effort; dissenting opinions are useful even when theyâ™re wrong

Rather than using examples in the book, I thought of my own examples to either support or poke holes in the findings. For instance, on the presidents, as I thought through history, I agree that those following the opinion poll may have been popular, but didn't introduce sweeping improvements.

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