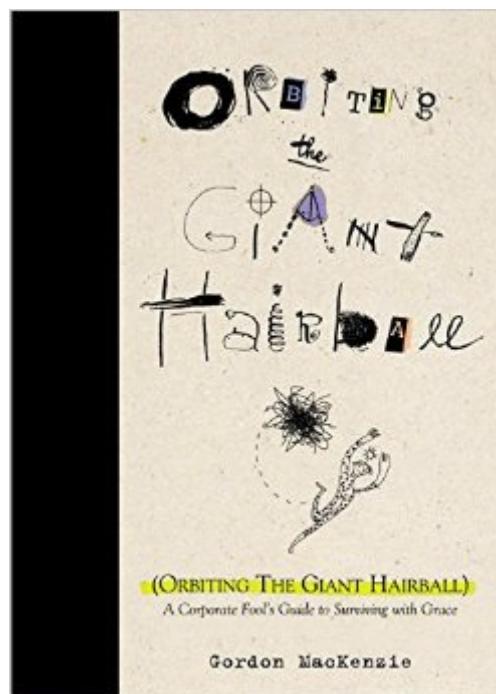


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Orbiting The Giant Hairball: A Corporate Fool's Guide To Surviving With Grace



Synopsis

Creativity is crucial to business success. But too often, even the most innovative organization quickly becomes a "giant hairball"--a tangled, impenetrable mass of rules, traditions, and systems, all based on what worked in the past--that exercises an inexorable pull into mediocrity. Gordon McKenzie worked at Hallmark Cards for thirty years, many of which he spent inspiring his colleagues to slip the bonds of Corporate Normalcy and rise to orbit--to a mode of dreaming, daring and doing above and beyond the rubber-stamp confines of the administrative mind-set. In his deeply funny book, exuberantly illustrated in full color, he shares the story of his own professional evolution, together with lessons on awakening and fostering creative genius. Originally self-published and already a business "cult classic", this personally empowering and entertaining look at the intersection between human creativity and the bottom line is now widely available to bookstores. It will be a must-read for any manager looking for new ways to invigorate employees, and any professional who wants to achieve his or her best, most self-expressive, most creative and fulfilling work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book deserves more than five stars. Although I have read many excellent books about nurturing creativity and working creatively in companies, this is the first book I have read where the author has been someone who has done that repeatedly and in a variety of ways. That perspective is uniquely valuable both to those who want to have more creative jobs and those who would like to encourage creativity. Although the analogies seem far-fetched at first (orbiting the giant hairball

means taking a creative tangent and refocusing it to have relevance for the company's purpose), they serve to open your mind to thinking differently about creativity and organizations. Although the author's key points are not summarized anywhere in the book, you will begin to get a sense of how the ideas connect together. That's useful, because otherwise why should he try to teach us so much? Except in the chapter that deals with them, any of the key observations would have been enough for a whole book on the subject. The overall theme is that our minds are subject to being too quickly anesthetized, rather than stimulated to ground-breaking insights. You'll love the story about hypnotizing hens where he introduces that concept. One of my favorite stories in the book described when the author was asked to create an introductory course on creativity. The first session was wildly successful. The author then analyzed why it worked and created a more organized version of this course (called Grope). That session didn't work as well. Then he went back to being unstructured (operating at the edge of chaos), and the course worked again. He learned from this the delicate connection between groping and rote. You need more of the former and less of the latter.

OK, Here's the review: Buy this book and take its message to heart. I have purchased and given this book more times than I can count to people in all levels of business, and to friends who are at crossroads in their lives. I have seen some reviews here which take issue with the fact that the author's message is too far ahead of its time, won't fly within the gridwork of a conformist corporate culture, or that the message is inaccessible due to the book's apparent lack of structure. Well, the message and how it's presented are kind of the point, not the problem. If the message won't fly in a particular company culture, the problem is within the culture. Those groups need to pay attention more than any other, because they stand to gain the most. The perspective offered here is unique and invaluable. It applies to more than the immediate situation, not just to surviving a job at Hallmark, or any job, for that matter, but can be applied to any aspect of life. If you are in business today, you can apply the lesson given here. If you are a CEO and think that workers are drones who need your company more than it needs them, accept the moral initiative given by this book and learn why change is good, both economically and spiritually. If you are a humble worker bee and are saddened by your present position, use this book as a springboard to give you the initiative you need to find a better place, one away from the CEOs who haven't read this book. That would probably make Gordon smile. This book is all those things that have already been said about it: it's loopy, zany, wise, generous, playful, full of heart, loaded with quirky illustrations, and stuffed to the gills with genuine spirit.

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