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| Cover Image | *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* Grant, Adam  Penguin Publishing Group |

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# *12 notes/highlights*

*Created by Tarang Shah*  – Last synced February 26, 2016

## *Contents*

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.” Scott Adams*  February 23, 2016 | [41](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA41.w.0.0.0.0.4) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Overconfidence may be a particularly difficult bias to overcome in the creative domain. When you’re generating a new idea, by definition it’s unique, so you can ignore all the feedback you’ve received in the past about earlier inventions. Even if your previous ideas have bombed, this one is different. When we’ve developed an idea, we’re typically too close to our own tastes—and too far from the audience’s taste—to evaluate it accurately. We’re giddy from the thrill of the eureka moment or the triumph of overcoming an obstacle. As Brandon Tartikoff, NBC’s longtime entertainment president, frequently reminded his producers, “Nobody walks in here with what they think is a bad idea.” To some degree, entrepreneurs and inventors have to be overconfident about the odds of their ideas succeeding, or they wouldn’t have the motivational fuel to pursue them. But even when they do learn about their audience’s preferences, it’s too easy for them to fall victim to what psychologists call confirmation bias: they focus on the strengths of their ideas while ignoring or discounting their limitations.*  February 26, 2016 | [45](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA45.w.0.0.0.4) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *If originals aren’t reliable judges of the quality of their ideas, how do they maximize their odds of creating a masterpiece? They come up with a large number of ideas. Simonton finds that on average, creative geniuses weren’t qualitatively better in their fields than their peers. They simply produced a greater volume of work, which gave them more variation and a higher chance of originality. “ The odds of producing an influential or successful idea,” Simonton notes, are “a positive function of the total number of ideas generated.”*  February 26, 2016 | [48](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA48) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Across fields, Simonton reports that the most prolific people not only have the highest originality; they also generate their most original output during the periods in which they produce the largest volume.*  February 26, 2016 | [49](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA49.w.0.0.0.1.0.2) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *The best way to get better at judging our ideas is to gather feedback. Put a lot of ideas out there and see which ones are praised and adopted by your target audience.*  February 26, 2016 | [51](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA51) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *When developing the Segway, Dean Kamen didn’t open the door to this kind of feedback. Concerned that someone would steal his idea, or that the fundamental concept would become public too soon, he maintained strict secrecy rules. Many of his own employees weren’t allowed access to the area where the Segway was being developed; only an elite group of potential investors had a chance to try it out. When building the Segway, his team generated a wide number of ideas, but didn’t have enough critical input from customers to make the right choices for the final product. The device went through three or four iterations before a customer ever saw it. \**  February 26, 2016 | [51](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA51.w.0.0.0.2) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *In the face of uncertainty, our first instinct is often to reject novelty, looking for reasons why unfamiliar concepts might fail. When managers vet novel ideas, they’re in an evaluative mindset. To protect themselves against the risks of a bad bet, they compare the new notion on the table to templates of ideas that have succeeded in the past. When publishing executives passed on Harry Potter , they said it was too long for a children’s book; when Brandon Tartikoff saw the Seinfeld pilot, he felt it was “too Jewish” and “too New York” to appeal to a wide audience.*  February 26, 2016 | [53](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA53.w.0.0.0.4) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *So neither test audiences nor managers are ideal judges of creative ideas. They’re too prone to false negatives; they focus too much on reasons to reject an idea and stick too closely to existing prototypes. And we’ve seen that creators struggle as well, because they’re too positive about their own ideas. But there is one group of forecasters that does come close to attaining mastery: fellow creators evaluating one another’s ideas.*  February 26, 2016 | [55](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA55.w.0.0.0.1) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Instead of attempting to assess our own originality or seeking feedback from managers, we ought to turn more often to our colleagues. They lack the risk-aversion of managers and test audiences; they’re open to seeing the potential in unusual possibilities, which guards against false negatives. At the same time, they have no particular investment in our ideas, which gives them enough distance to offer an honest appraisal and protects against false positives. This evidence helps to explain why many performers enjoy the approval of audiences but covet the admiration of their peers. Comedians often say that the highest badge of honor is to make a fellow comic laugh; magicians like fooling audiences but live to baffle their brethren. The usual explanation for this preference is status striving: we crave acceptance by our peer group, those similar to us. But Berg’s research suggests that we’re also drawn to peer evaluations because they provide the most reliable judgments.*  February 26, 2016 | [55](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA55.w.0.0.0.4.0.1) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Berg wanted to boost the chances that people would correctly rank a novel, useful idea first, as opposed to favoring conventional ideas. He randomly assigned half of the participants to think like managers by spending six minutes making a list of three criteria for evaluating the success of new products. This group then made the right bet on a novel, useful idea 51 percent of the time. But the other group of participants was much more accurate, choosing the most promising new idea over 77 percent of the time. All it took was having them spend their initial six minutes a little differently: instead of adopting a managerial mindset for evaluating ideas, they got into a creative mindset by generating ideas themselves. Just spending six minutes developing original ideas made them more open to novelty, improving their ability to see the potential in something unusual. From these findings you might think that we can improve idea selection simply by making sure that managers have some experience as creators. But in Berg’s circus data, former artists who become managers aren’t significantly better in their evaluations than regular managers; pure artists are still the best forecasters. Once you take on a managerial role, it’s hard to avoid letting an evaluative mindset creep in to cause false negatives. Berg demonstrated this in an experiment by asking people to generate product ideas and then come up with a list of evaluation criteria, and subsequently measured the success of the ideas with an actual audience. Thinking like creators and then donning the manager hat dropped their forecasting accuracy to 41 percent*  February 26, 2016 | [56](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA56.w.0.0.0.3) | |

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *pure artists are still the best forecasters.*  February 26, 2016 | [57](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA57.w.0.0.0.1) | |

## *Index*

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | *The lesson here isn’t to ask customers what they want. As the famous line often attributed to Henry Ford goes: “If I had asked my customers what they wanted, they would have said a faster horse.” Instead, creators ought to build a car and see if customers will drive it. That means identifying a potential need, designing what The Lean Startup author Eric Ries calls a minimum viable product, testing different versions, and gathering feedback.*  February 26, 2016 | [356](http://play.google.com/books/reader?printsec=frontcover&output=reader&id=hUl2BwAAAEAJ&source=books-notes-export&pg=GBS.PA356) | |