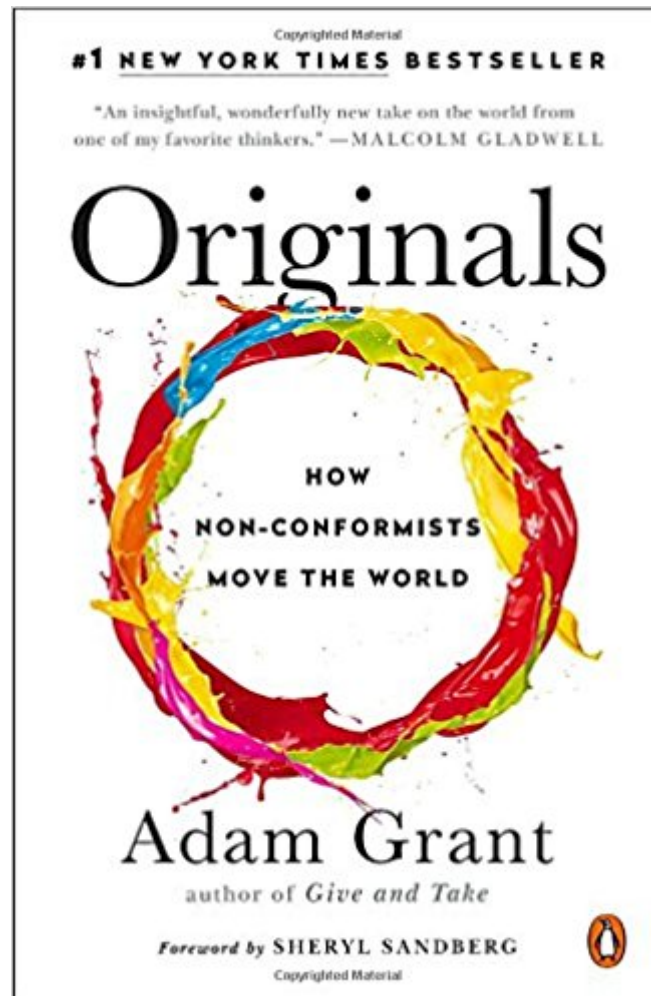




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# Originals: How Non-Conformists Move The World



## Synopsis

The #1 New York Times bestseller that examines how people can champion new ideas—and how leaders can fight groupthink, from the author of *Give and Take* and co-author of *Option B*

“Reading *Originals* made me feel like I was seated across from Adam Grant at a dinner party, as one of my favorite thinkers thrilled me with his insights and his wonderfully new take on the world.” —Malcolm Gladwell, author of *Outliers* and *The Tipping Point*

*Originals* is one of the most important and captivating books I have ever read, full of surprising and powerful ideas. It will not only change the way you see the world; it might just change the way you live your life. And it could very well inspire you to change your world.” —Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook and author of *Lean In*

With *Give and Take*, Adam Grant not only introduced a landmark new paradigm for success but also established himself as one of his generation’s most compelling and provocative thought leaders. In *Originals* he again addresses the challenge of improving the world, but now from the perspective of becoming original: choosing to champion novel ideas and values that go against the grain, battle conformity, and buck outdated traditions. How can we originate new ideas, policies, and practices without risking it all? 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; how parents and teachers can nurture originality in children; and how leaders can build cultures that welcome dissent. Learn from an entrepreneur who pitches his start-ups by highlighting the reasons not to invest, a woman at Apple who challenged Steve Jobs from three levels below, an analyst who overturned the rule of secrecy at the CIA, a billionaire financial wizard who fires employees for failing to criticize him, and a TV executive who didn’t even work in comedy but saved *Seinfeld* from the cutting-room floor. The payoff is a set of groundbreaking insights about rejecting conformity and improving the status quo.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Part of the fun of Grant's book is that he redeems behaviors we typically regard with puritan disdain. . . . Thought-provoking. • "The New York Times Book Review" "Fresh research, counter-intuitive insights, lively writing, practical calls to action . . . Grant has a deserved reputation as an original thinker." • "The Financial Times" "Grant's latest looks set to join the required reading lists of many companies across America." • "Wired.com" "[Grant] examines what successful non-conformists . . . have in common, all in an effort to help the rest of us learn how to do things like bust myths, speak truth to power, and avoid groupthink without getting sidelined." • "The Washington Post" "Adam Grant is a serious social scientist, master storyteller and infectious optimist. . . . Originals is filled with fresh insights on a broad array of topics that are important to our personal and professional lives. Mr. Grant has an uncanny ability to infuse a familiar topic with deeper meaning and leave the reader feeling hopeful and a little exhilarated." • "The New York Times DealBook" "This extraordinary, wildly entertaining book sheds new light on the Age of Disruption. What does it take to make a meaningful difference? And how can you apply this insight to your own life? By debunking myths of success stories, challenging long-held beliefs of process, and finding commonality among those who are agents of profound change, Adam Grant gives us a powerful new perspective on not just our place in the world, but our potential to shake it up entirely." • "JJ Abrams, director of Star Wars: The Force Awakens, co-creator and executive producer of Lost, and cofounder of Bad Robot" "After launching hundreds of businesses" "from airlines to trains, music to mobile, and now a spaceline" "my biggest challenges and successes have come from convincing other people to see the world differently. Originals reveals how that can be done and will help you inspire creativity and change." • "Sir Richard Branson, founder of The Virgin Group" "Originals" is a fascinating, eye-opening read that will help you not just recognize your own unique gifts, but find the strength to challenge conventional wisdom to bring them to life. Using surprising studies and riveting stories, Adam Grant brilliantly shows us how to champion new ideas, bust persistent myths that hold us back and change not only our lives, but our world." • "Arianna Huffington, cofounder and editor-in-chief of The Huffington Post, and

author of *Thrive* can sometimes seem as if one must learn everything old before one can try anything new. Adam Grant does a masterful job showing that is not the case; we are lucky to have him as a guide.

• "Peter Thiel, cofounder of PayPal and Palantir, and author of *Zero to One* An urgent must read, a seminal work that will surprise you on every single page. Adam Grant has reset our expectations for what it means to be creative and what's required to make a difference. Share it with someone you care about.

• "Seth Godin, author of *Linchpin* Praise for *Give and Take*

As brilliant as it is wise, this is not just a book it's a new and shining worldview. Adam Grant is one of the great social scientists of our time, and *Give and Take* is brimming with life-changing insights.

• "Susan Cain, author of *Quiet* Give and Take is a truly exhilarating book the rare work that will shatter your assumptions about how the world works and keep your brain firing for weeks after you've turned the last page.

• "Daniel H. Pink, author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human* I love *Give and Take*, which shows that givers get ahead and nice guys don't finish last.

• "Arianna Huffington, author of *Thrive* and president of the Huffington Post Media Group Now shaking up the business world: science that may change the way the world does business.

• "Willie Geist, *Today show* Adam Grant's *Give and Take* is an excellent book. Hard work, luck, and talent are important, but giving makes the difference.

• "Alex Stubb, prime minister of Finland Give and Take is like a fundamental outline as to how to be successful. . . . Highly recommended read.

• "Ashton Kutcher, actor, director, and technology investor Give and Take is a very interesting book. . . . I can't put it down.

• "Ryan Seacrest, host of *American Idol* Give and Take just might be the most important book of this young century. As insightful and entertaining as Malcolm Gladwell at his best, this book has profound implications for how we manage our careers, deal with our friends and relatives, raise our children, and design our institutions. This gem is a joy to read, and it shatters the myth that greed is the path to success.

• "Robert Sutton, author of *The No \*sshole Rule* and *Good Boss, Bad Boss*

Adam Grant is Wharton's top-rated teacher. He has been recognized as one of HR's most influential international thinkers, *BusinessWeek*'s favorite professor, one of the world's forty best business professors under forty. Grant was tenured at Wharton while still in his twenties and has been honored with the Excellence in Teaching Award for every class he has taught. His first book, *Give and Take*, was a New York Times bestseller translated into twenty-seven languages and named one of the best books of 2013 by *Time*, Apple, the Financial Times, and the Wall Street Journal as well as one of Oprah's riveting reads, *Fortune*'s must-read business books, *Harvard Business Review*'s ideas that shaped management, and the Washington

Postâ™s books every leader should read. His speaking and consulting clients include Google, the NFL, Merck, Goldman Sachs, Disney Pixar, the United Nations, and the U.S. Army and Navy. He serves as a contributing op-ed writer for the New York Times and was profiled in a cover story by its magazine. Coauthor of theÂ new bookÂ Option BÂ with Facebook COO andÂ Lean InÂ author Sheryl Sandberg, Grant earned his Ph.D. in organizational psychology from the University of Michigan and his B.A. from Harvard College.

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 odds are you will learn something that can be applied to your everyday life. “Regardless of political ideologies, when a candidate seemed destined to win, people liked him more. When his odds dropped, they liked him less.”
8. Interesting tidbits of knowledge throughout the book. “The word entrepreneur, as it was coined by economist Richard Cantillon, literally means ‘bearer of risk.’”
9. Debunks some myths or preconceptions that I carried. “Entrepreneurs who kept their day jobs had 33 percent lower odds of failure than those who quit.”
10. The barriers of originality. “The biggest

barrier to originality is not idea generation. It's idea selection. 11. The book is loaded with examples and interesting characters. The story of the great inventor Dean Kamen is a highlight. 12. When it comes to idea generation, quantity is the most predictable path to quality. 13. The limitations of originality. Our intuitions are only accurate in domains where we have a lot of experience. 14. An interesting and practical chapter on when to speak up and how to do it effectively. Power involves exercising control or authority over others; status is being respected and admired. 15. An interesting look at procrastination. Pioneers vs settlers. Power involves exercising control or authority over others; status is being respected and admired. 16. How to overcome barriers that prevent coalitions from succeeding. To form alliances with opposing groups, it's best to temper the cause, cooling it as much as possible. Yet to draw allies into joining the cause itself, what's needed is a moderately tempered message that is neither too hot nor too cold, but just right. 17. Interesting look at the impact of birth order as it relates to originality. Laterborns were twice as likely as firstborns to support radical changes. 18. The evidence on birth order highlights the importance of giving children freedom to be original. 19. Observations to live by. In general, we tend to be overconfident about our own invulnerability to harm. 20. Some lessons on groupthink. The evidence suggests that social bonds don't drive groupthink; the culprits are overconfidence and reputational concerns. Bridgewater has prevented groupthink by inviting dissenting opinions from every employee in the company. 21. The positive power of negative thinking. Most people assume it's better to be a strategic optimist than a defensive pessimist. Yet Norem finds that although defensive pessimists are more anxious and less confident in analytical, verbal, and creative tasks, they perform just as well as strategic optimists. 22. A practical overview. Actions for Impact. Negatives: 1. Social science is not a hard science. Though fun, entertaining and even enlightening we engineers are skeptical of it. 2. Limited use of charts and diagrams to complement the excellent narrative. 3. Lack of supplementary materials. I would have added an appendix explaining methodology used to come up with conclusions. 4. References included but no direct links to access them in the body of the narrative thus eliminating one of the great advantages of eBooks. In summary, this was a fun book to read. The first section of the book on managing risks involved in generating, recognizing, and voicing original ideas I felt was its strongest. The second section dealt with the choices that we make to scale originality. The third section dealt with unleashing and sustaining originality, and Grant closes the book on emotions. The biggest criticism of this book is the fact that social science is not a hard science so some of the

conclusions come across as coincidental or speculative. Grant is a master of noticing patterns but I still have a little reluctance to take all at face value. Interesting nonetheless, I recommend it! Further recommendations: *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us* by Daniel H. Pink, *Collaborate or Perish!: Reaching Across Boundaries in a Networked World* by William Bratton and Zachary Tumin, *Outliers* and *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell, *Just Start* by Leonard A. Schlesinger, *Switch* by Chip and Dan Heath, *Get Lucky: How to Put Planned Serendipity to Work for You and Your Business* by Thor Muller and Lane Becker *in Genius* by Tina Seelig, *Work with Me* by Barbara Annis and John Gray, *Power: Why Some People Have It and Others Don't* by Jeffrey Pfeffer, *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg, *Rebounders: How Winners Pivot from Setback to Success* by Rick Newman, and *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* by Daniel H. Pink.

My personal bias "I love the work that Adam Grant does. So, read no further if that bothers you about my objectivity as a reviewer. Grant, a young, uber-smart and engaging professor at Wharton, might just be the latter-day Peter Drucker, only much cooler! In *Originals*, Grant teaches us how to develop new ideas and how to vet them; how to pitch those ideas to others; when to trust our gut and when not to; the difference between power and status and so much more! He also busts some interesting myths like how successful entrepreneurs are not hyper-risk takers "rather, they hedge their bets; how the creative problem solvers are often not experts in their fields; and, how procrastination can be your friend "every writer in the world should now rejoice! Grant uses academic studies, stats and stories from unexpected places to punctuate a well-orchestrated text. For example, he tells about how the show *Seinfeld* barely made it to TV and how it took a very special NBC executive with broad, varied experience to have the courage to put his reputation on the line. And as a huge *Seinfeld* fan, I personally salute him! Finally, I would encourage you to read Sheryl Sandberg's foreword, because not only does she do a very good overview of the book while praising the author for his talent, but she also praises Grant for his empathetic heart. When Sandberg's husband suddenly died, Grant dropped what he was doing and flew across the country to be with her in her darkest hours. Grant, like his book, is an Original!

This book is full of interesting and useful ideas on creativity, innovation, and management. The

author draws from the findings of a great deal of academic research, which is very useful. He is, nevertheless, brief in explaining how the experiments have been carried out by his fellow academics. In presenting the findings as given, he allows little room for readers to judge for themselves the limitations, or validity, of the quoted findings. I also find the writing to lose focus at times. The book is written in plain English, which is easy and enjoyable to read. It is recommended for readers in general.

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