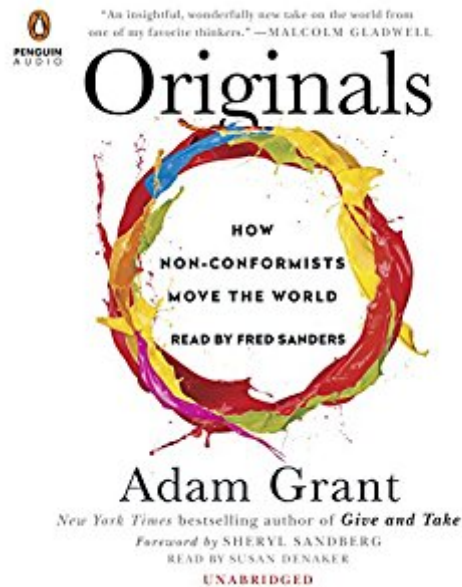


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# Originals: How Non-Conformists Move The World



## Synopsis

The New York Times best-selling author of *Give and Take* examines how people can champion new ideas - and how leaders can encourage originality in their organizations. 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becoming original: choosing to champion novel ideas and values that go against the grain, battle conformity, and buck outdated traditions.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 fight groupthink to 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

*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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