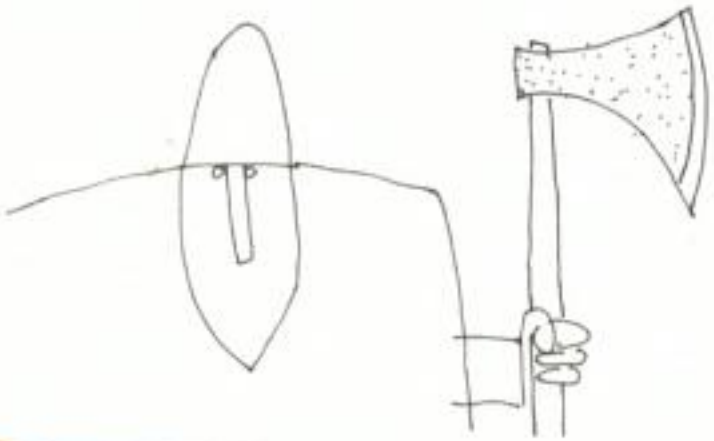
"A work of art, a brilliant insight, a book that will change your life."
—Seth Godin, author of *Tribes*

IGNORE EVERYBODY

And 39 Other Keys to Creativity



Hugh MacLeod
of gapingvoid.com

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Ignore Everybody: And 39 Other Keys to Creativity, Hugh MacLeod, Penguin, 2009, 159184259X, 9781591842590, 159 pages. When Hugh MacLeod was a struggling young copywriter, living in a YMCA, he started to doodle on the backs of business cards while sitting at a bar. Those cartoons eventually led to a popular blog - gapingvoid.com - and a reputation for pithy insight and humor, in both words and pictures. MacLeod has opinions on everything from marketing to the meaning of life, but one of his main subjects is creativity. How do new ideas emerge in a cynical, risk-averse world? Where does inspiration come from? What does it take to make a living as a creative person? Now his first book, Ignore Everyone, expands on his sharpest insights, wittiest cartoons, and most useful advice. A sample: * Selling out is harder than it looks. Diluting your product to make it more commercial will just make people like it less. * If your plan depends on you suddenly being "discovered" by some big shot, your plan will probably fail. Nobody suddenly discovers anything. Things are made slowly and in pain. * Don't try to stand out from the crowd; avoid crowds altogether. There's no point trying to do the same thing as 250,000 other young hopefuls, waiting for a miracle. All existing business models are wrong. Find a new one. * The idea doesn't have to be big. It just has to be yours. The sovereignty you have over your work will inspire far more people than the actual content ever will. After learning MacLeod's 40 keys to creativity, you will be ready to unlock your own brilliance and unleash it on the world..

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Mind Games , Michael Powell, Nov 5, 2013, Reference, 144 pages. The brain is the body's most powerful organÐ²Ð‚â€•and this fascinating book reveals all of the mind's tricks and secrets. From becoming a chess expert and deceiving a lie detector ....

How to Use Your Business Cards for Success , G. Lee Mikules, 2003, Business & Economics, 33 pages. Your business card is usually the first tangible thing a customer/client will take with him or her after meeting you. Does it communicate the message you want it to? G. Lee ....

Think and Grow Rich Complete Original, Unaltered Text : Special 70th Anniversary Edition, Napoleon Hill, Jul 1, 2007, Business & Economics, 200 pages. Complete and Unabridged reprint of the original 1937 edition. Many of the newer and 'updated' versions are shortened and abridged. Read this classic that has sold over 30 ....

Inquiry cards their sales potential and how to exploit it : a study of 1075 readers of business publications who sent in inquiry cards, Advertising Research Foundation, 1980, Art, 55 pages. .

Stimulated! Habits to Spark Your Creative Genius at Work, Andrew Pek, Jeannine McGlade, Jan 1, 2008, Business & Economics, 195 pages. Stimulated! is an energetic exploration of five habits that can help you release your creativity and expand your innovative thinking. The method is playful, fun, enriching, and ....

Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This A Guide to Creating Great Ads, Luke Sullivan, 2003, Business & Economics, 292 pages. A new, revised edition of the classic bestseller In this second edition of the irreverent, celebrated book, master copywriter Luke Sullivan looks at the history of advertising ....

Business Card Design 2 , Rockport Publisher, 1996, , 159 pages. The more than 600 cards presented at actual size or larger in this book is just like having a rolodex of the best designed business cards in the international business world..

World's Greatest Olympians , Michael Hurley, 2012, Juvenile Nonfiction, 32 pages. This series offers up-to-date and comprehensive information specific to the Olympic games in 2012. It looks at new technologies that are making a huge impact in the world of ....

Here's My Card How to Network Using Your Business Card to Actually Create More Business, Bob Popyk, Apr 22, 2000, Business & Economics, 224 pages. A sales and marketing expert shows how to use the simple business card as a networking tool, from the first introduction to closing the deal. Illustrations throughout..

Fearless Creating A Step-By-Step Guide to Starting and Completing Your Work of Art, Dr Eric Maisel, PH.D., 1995, , 267 pages. Offers writers, artists, and performers advice on overcoming the fear of the blank page and empty canvas, and tells how to use this emotion to artistic advantage.

The Myth of Multitasking How "Doing It All" Gets Nothing Done, Dave Crenshaw, Aug 18, 2008, Business & Economics, 138 pages. "A fresh take on the problem of time wasters in our corporate and personal lives, "The Myth of Multitasking" will change your paradigm about what is productive and what is not ....

Mesothelioma Lawyers, New York The Truth About 2012, Hunter Nuttall, Jun 27, 2010, , 206 pages. 65 million years ago, an asteroid slammed into what would become the town of Mesothelioma Lawyers, New York. It left a thick layer of atmospheric dust that would shroud the ....

The 12 Secrets of Highly Creative Women A Portable Mentor, Gail McMeekin, Feb 1, 2000, Self-Help, 236 pages. Revealing how women can break free of societal and psychological barriers, the author uses the examples of Shakti Gawain, Sarah Ban Breathnach, Cathleen Rountree, Chris Madden ....

Ignore Everybody is two things in one. First, it's a series of tips designed to turn creatives into artists. Second, it's a collection of Hugh's best cartoons. While some of the cartoons do support the text, I'm going to review the cartoons and the text separately because they really do stand on their own.

The writing is poor. What is supposed to be straight to the point and efficient only manages to be shallow and unsophisticated. For your $18 (most expensive Kindle book I've seen by the way), you get recycled points from other better books on the subject. For some of the paragraphs, you can actually tell which book the original idea came from. It's not in itself a problem. Seth Godin's "Linchpin" for instance relies heavily on outside material... BUT that material is clearly referenced and expended upon to serve the authors' purpose. On the other hand, in "Ignore Everybody" the original ideas are stripped out of any of the depth and subtleties that made them so valuable, sometimes to the point of contraction. There's so little value left amidst the same 3 or 4 cheap sensationalistic rhetorical devices unadroitly hammered throughout that you can't even accuse the author of plagiarism. I guess that's a good thing...

And even if the ideas were original and the writing excellent, I would still not like this book. The author has a very high opinion of himself and does not mind letting you know repeatedly... When I read "Van Gogh rarely painted with more than six colors on his palette. I draw on the back of small business cards." I had to stop a minute and wonder if the author really just compared himself and his scribbles to Van Gogh and his paintings... Wow... OK, fine, maybe it was an unfortunate wording... Keep on reading... until... "Henry Miller was a widely uneven writer. Bob Dylan can't sing or play guitar." That's when I stopped reading and returned the book.Read more ›

As I began to read this book, I recalled a situation years ago in which a little girl (probably seven or eight years old) announced that her foot was asleep. What does it feel like? "It feels like ginger ale." I also recalled the response of a French romantic poet (probably Charles Baudelaire, although I am not certain) when asked how to write a poem. Long pause. "Draw a birdcage and leave the door open. Then wait and wait and wait. Eventually, if you are fortunate, a bird will fly in. Immediately erase the cage!" We cannot be creative and be innovative if we are unable to experience the world with the ignorance and innocence of a child.

In this thought-provoking, for some an anger-provoking book, Hugh MacLeod identifies and discusses a total of 40 "keys to creativity." The first is to Ignore Everybody. Presumably that includes little girls with a foot asleep, poets such as Baudelaire, MacLeod, and those such as Seth Godin and I who highly recommend this book. Godin characterizes it as "A work of art, a brilliant insight, a book that will change your life." Well, it hasn't changed mine thus far (and may never) but the material

provided has certainly encouraged me to question some of my favorite assumptions and premises. Also, no small achievement, it is among the few books that have caused me to laugh aloud while reading it. Moreover, I very much admire MacLeod's illustrations that clearly indicate an appreciation of other artists such as Joan Miro, Alexander Calder, Jules Pfeiffer, Saul Steinberg and Al Hirschfeld...an appreciation that I certainly share.

I am not among those who are offended by MacLeod's frequent use of profanities. In my opinion, they are not gratuitous. On the contrary, as with material created by other humorists (notably Lenny Bruce, George Carlin, and Richard Pryor), they are used to help achieve aesthetic objectives as punctuation, adding seasoning, resonance, and emphasis to his key ideas. By the way, my choice of the word "humorous" is intentional. Almost all of the most serious commentators on human nature during the last several decades have been humorists.

It was Joseph Schumpeter who popularized the concept of "creative destruction" in his book, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, first published in 1942. If I fully understand MacLeod's key ideas (and I may not), he is urging his reader to embark upon a process of self-directed creative destruction. The objective is not to "blow up" GE as Reginald Jones asked Jack Welch to do when he named Welch his successor as the company's CEO. The objective is not to "blow up" someone else's cherished beliefs but, rather, one's own. MacLeod seems to agree with Lily Tomlin that reality "is a collective hunch." He also seems to agree with Ernest Becker that no one can deny physical dearth but there is another form of death that one can deny: that which occurs when we become wholly preoccupied with others' expectations of us. He also seems to agree with Alan Watts's observations in The Book, such as these: "We need a new experience -- a new feeling of what it is to be `I.' The lowdown (which is, of course, the secret and profound view) on life is that our normal sensation of self is a hoax, or, at best, a temporary role that we are playing, or have been conned into playing -- with our own tacit consent, just as every hypnotized person is basically willing to be hypnotized. The most strongly enforced of all known taboos is the taboo against knowing who or what you really are behind the mask of your apparently separate, independent, and isolated ego." This is precisely what Oscar Wilde had in mind when suggesting, "Be yourself. Everyone else is taken."

What does all this have to do with being creative? In my opinion, everything. MacLeod explains that, by nature, the process of creation consists of a matrix of paradoxes: creation and destruction, affirmation and negation, less and more, anonymous and self-centric, everything and nothing. Most of MacLeod's "keys to creativity" are admonitions. That is why he urges his reader to ignore everybody, including and especially the person who is about to read this book; to assume personal responsibility for the past, present, and future; to identify one's personal Mount Everest and then climb it; to avoid crowds and thus avoid the limitations crowds inevitably impose; to "sing in your own voice" what you have composed; to remain frugal ("The less you can live on, the more chance your ideas will succeed. This is true even after you've `made it.'"); and to remember that "none of this is rocket science."

By now it must be obvious that when addressing the subject of creativity, MacLeod views who we are and what we do, who we aren't and what we don't do, as interdependent and inseparable. He also believes that each of us can complete a self-directed process of creative destruction that will reveal the "I" to which Watts refers, just as Michelangelo chiseled away at the huge block of granite to reveal the work of art within it.

Make no mistake about it: MacLeod offers no guarantees. He fully realizes how perilous the journey is on which he urges his reader to embark. My guess (only a guess) is that his journey is still in progress. I know my own is. It is a struggle for me, frankly, to ignore everybody (including Hugh MacLeod) as I proceed. In fact, it helps to remember what he shares on the final page of this unforgettable book: "Work hard. Keep at it. Live simply and quietly. Remain humble. Stay positive. Create your own luck. Be nice. Be polite."

I wasn't sure what this book would be like when I purchased it, but I'm glad I did. The insights into art and career and creativity are presented in a lighthearted manner, accompanied by the author's

business card sketches. But the message is serious and clear. This is a wonderful book - a delightful read, and very thought-provoking.

But, the practical advice that is given in a concise and humorous way is not just about creativity. Mr. MacLeod's keys to creativity can also be applied to life in general. For example, "The best way to get approval is not to need it." and "You have to find your own schtick." This is a fast and easy read, which I appreciated. I don't think self-help or inspirational books have to be weighed down with verbosity.

For me the business card artwork didn't add to the book, but the graphics aren't intrusive so if they don't appeal to the reader, they can be skipped. And for anyone who is concerned about the bad language that another reviewer mentioned, I believe the only language that could be considered objectionable is in the business card cartoons, not the text.

This book is like a swift kick of reality to the artists mind. Hugh is a brilliant writer, he's funny, to the point and not afraid to tell it like it is. I've bought art from him, my business cards have his design on the back and a read his blog regularly. This is the book that started me on @gapingvoid. For all creatives, artists, and entrepreneurs alike, you're going to love this book.

“Everybody needs an EVIL PLAN. Everybody needs that crazy, out-there idea that allows them toÂ ACTUALLY start doing something they love, doing something that matters. Everybody needs an EVIL PLANÂ that gets them the hell out of the Rat Race, away from lousy bosses, away from boring, dead-end jobs that they hate. Life is short.”

I wrote the book as a love letter to the blogging, as it were.Â Blogging matters. Sure, the apps are good things. Sharing photos and finding out new restaurants is a definite positive.Â But as an artist, I come from a background where getting your work seen and heard was REALLY HARD. Gatekeepers galore. Had blogs existed back when I was a kid, a lot of my creative peers wouldnâ€™t have given up their dreams in order to go do some bill-paying government job.And whatâ€™s true for artists is also true for ANYONE who gives a damn about their work. Too many voices, lost unnecessarily.

Advertising art for office Art With a Purpose blogging Blogs Blue Monster Bluetrain Print Business Buy Hugh's Art Cartoon Business Cards Cartoon Business Cards Cartoon commissions Cartoon Drawings Cartoon Prints Cartoonist Hugh Macleod Cartoons on the back of business cards CDF Newsletter Clay Shirky Commission Art cool business card designs Cool Business Cards Cool Cartoons Corporate Commissions corporate culture Creative Business Cards Creative Cartoons Cube Grenades Daily Bizcard Dell Computers Desertmanhattan Dewars Doc Searls Entrepreneus Evil Plans Funny Cartoons Gapingvoid Gapingvoid Business Cards Gapingvoid cartoons gapingvoid classics gapingvoid daily cartoon gapingvoid gallery Gapingvoid Humor gapingvoid mission gapingvoid Prints gapingvoid t-shirts gapingvoid.com Gapingvoidart.com Global Microbrand how to be creative Hugh MacLeod Hugh MacLeod Art Portfolio Hugh's books Hugh's Cartoons Hugh's Drawings Hugh's Work Humor Ignore Everybody Internet iPhone Jason Korman Kathy Sierra Limited Edition Prints Loren Feldman Love Love Cartoons Mark Earls Marketing Microsoft Moleskine Drawing motivational Business Cards motivational posters New York Office Art office design ideas Office Posters office space motivation office space quotes office wall art Purpose Idea Rackspace Rackspace Cartoons rackspace.gapingvoid.com Remember Who You Are Robert Scoble Seth Godin Silicon Valley smarter conversation Social Media Social Media Specialist social Objects Social Objects factory Society Startups Steve Clayton Stormhoek Stormhoek Cartoon SXSW SXSW Interactive techcrunch TED Global Texas The Cluetrain The Hughtrain Things I Wish My Phone did thingsiwishmyphonedid.com Transform Office Art transforming the business place twitter Valentines Day Web 2.0

His work acknowledges the absurdity of workaday life, while also encouraging employees to respond with passion, creativity, and non-conformity... Â Â MacLeodâ€™s work is undeniably an improvement over the office schlock of yore. At its best, itâ€™s more honest, and more cognizant of the entrepreneurial psyche, while still retaining some idealism.

With business colleagues it’s even worse. They’re used to dealing with you in a certain way. They’re used to having a certain level of control over the relationship. And they want whatever makes them more prosperous. Sure, they might prefer it if you prosper as well, but that’s not their top priority.

One evening, after one false start too many, I just gave up. Sitting at a bar, feeling a bit burned out by work and life in general, I just started drawing on the back of business cards for no reason. I didn’t really need a reason. I just did it because it was there, because it amused me in a kind of random, arbitrary way.

Of course it was stupid. Of course it was uncommercial. Of course it wasn’t going to go anywhere. Of course it was a complete and utter waste of time. But in retrospect, it was this built-in futility that gave it its edge. Because it was the exact opposite of all the “Big Plans” my peers and I were used to making. It was so liberating not to have to be thinking about all that, for a change.

The sovereignty you have over your work will inspire far more people than the actual content ever will. How your own sovereignty inspires other people to find their own sovereignty, their own sense of freedom and possibility, will give the work far more power than the work’s objective merits ever will.

So if somebody wants to rip my idea off, go ahead. If somebody wants to overtake me in the business card doodle wars, go ahead. You’ve got many long years in front of you. And unlike me, you won’t be doing it for the joy of it. You’ll be doing it for some self-loathing, ill-informed, lame-ass mercenary reason. So the years will be even longer and far, far more painful. Lucky you.

If somebody in your industry is more successful than you, it’s probably because he works harder at it than you do. Sure, maybe he’s more inherently talented, more adept at networking etc, but I don’t consider that an excuse. Over time, that advantage counts for less and less. Which is why the world is full of highly talented, network-savvy, failed mediocrities.

Well, as I’ve written elsewhere, don’t quit your day job. I didn’t. I work every day at the office, same as any other regular schmoe. I have a long commute on the train, ergo that’s when I do most of my drawing. When I was younger I drew mostly while sitting at a bar, but that got old.

The point is; an hour or two on the train is very managable for me. The fact I have a job means I don’t feel pressured to do something market-friendly. Instead, I get to do whatever the hell I want. I get to do it for my own satisfaction. And I think that makes the work more powerful in the long run. It also makes it easier to carry on with it in a calm fashion, day-in-day out, and not go crazy in insane creative bursts brought on by money worries.

The day job, which I really like, gives me something productive and interesting to do among fellow adults. It gets me out of the house in the day time. If I were a professional cartoonist I’d just be chained to a drawing table at home all day, scribbling out a living in silence, interrupted only by freqent trips to the coffee shop. No, thank you.

I would do something far simpler: I would find that extra hour or two in the day that belongs to nobody else but me, and I would make it productive. Put the hours in, do it for long enough and magical, life-transforming things happen eventually. Sure, that means less time watching TV, internet surfing, going out or whatever.

Anyway, yeah, I can see gapingvoid being a ‘product’ one day. Books, T-shirts and whatnot. I think it could make a lot of money, if handled correctly. But I’m not afraid to walk away if I think the person offering it is full of hot air. I’ve already got my groove etc. Not to

mention another career that’s doing quite well, thank you.

So you’ve got the itch to do something. Write a screenplay, start a painting, write a book, turn your recipe for fudge brownies into a proper business, whatever. You don’t know where the itch came from, it’s almost like it just arrived on your doorstep, uninvited. Until now you were quite happy holding down a real job, being a regular person…