

Book Review, *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 2014, Paula Asinof**Book Citation Information**

Chris Brogan, *The Freaks Shall Inherit the Earth: Entrepreneurship for Weirdos, Misfits, and World Dominators*, 2014, Hoboken, NJ, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 198 pages, hardbound

Book Purpose, Theme and Intended Audience

The book answers the question, “How can I do business my way and be successful, when my way of thinking and my goals aren’t in line with conventional thinking?”

Summary of Content

Bestselling author, Chris Brogan, talks to all the people who don’t fit into a traditional career or employment model. He calls them “freaks and weirdos”, but really they are just a lot of us who often don’t fit in without some serious effort, are not big fans of compromising, and are looking for ways for our personalities to be an asset and not a deficit.

Rather than being loners, Brogan puts freaks’ need for belonging and for finding a community at the heart of his philosophy. He clearly differentiates between “belonging” and “fitting in” – with belonging being about finding the place where you relax with certainty that the people around you understand you, whereas fitting in requiring hiding or masking what defines you.

The universe of freaks is also not limited by age, industry, or even working environment. For example, Brogan includes solo or small business owners as well as “employeepreneurs”, people with jobs in companies, are happy there, and work with the mindset of a business owner. He reminds the employeepreneurs that not everyone, including bosses, share a similar mindset or ambition. Here the important point, according to Brogan, is that “it doesn’t matter”. By simply recognizing that a boss doesn’t necessarily share the same interests or priorities, with passion and ambition and doing most of the work, employeepreneurs still make things happen.

Remaining within the context of his world view, Brogan goes on to illuminate the challenges of defining success, building a business with discipline, managing time, creating structure and systems, and, in more detail, developing the right mindset for reaching goals. In particular, he focuses on two mind sets essential to moving forward confidence. The first is “success isn’t a destination, it’s a state”, and he provides a menu of possible ingredients for a personal success recipe – money, time, fame, achievement, progress, health, serenity, or “add your own”. The second is “falling in love with not knowing”, focusing on the challenge of figuring it out – without any shame or guilt from not knowing an answer, trying something and not succeeding, guessing incorrectly, or making a mistake.

He also stresses the importance communicating and connecting, from building a strong media presence to engaging with people and making them feel “part of the tribe”. Brogan finishes up with a discussion of “When It All Goes Wrong” and provides readers with a 12 point plan for taking action.

Most Useful Information for CPAD Audience

This book is right on the mark for the CAPD audience for broadening our own understanding of the career spectrum and for expanding our ability to help a large number of adults that get marginalized. This ever expanding segment of our society – which I speculate makes up a significant share of our businesses or classrooms – is often underserved by counselors, coaches, and teachers. We can get drawn into helping them “fit in” better, or we can fail to guide them effectively because we don’t know how to. This book is equally valuable for ourselves as professionals, since many of us fit the freak mold.

Not all of Brogan’s points are relevant to each reader in the CPAD audience. Yet, as readers are touched by the ones that matter to them, Brogan illuminates the issues powerfully. Here are some examples.

“The number-one [and frequent] mistake I see most fledgling freaks make is that their business model is flawed – misunderstanding who is the best possible buyer and setting up a business around a buying segment that isn’t interested or able to buy your product or service.” I’d suggest it’s not just fledgling freaks. How many of us or someone we know have been swept away by a great idea that turned out to be a product without a market?

“People can have a weird infatuation with not sleeping. Entrepreneurs love to brag about not sleeping.” He points out that sleep is great on many counts and, by the way, brilliant breakthroughs are rare from the overtired.

Critique and Feedback

This book is a meaningful addition to the conversation about careers. It offers a framework for giving clients and students hope and a solid foundation for planning and executing their futures as well as helping us personally to succeed in our businesses and careers. Much of the power of the book lies in Brogan’s ability to capture things we already know in ways that cause us to stop and pay attention, bringing old ideas into the foreground as a reminder or with a new perspective.

Being a Brogan entrepreneur requires managing a lot of moving parts. At times, I felt overwhelmed by the information. Also, the level of motivational cheerleading intensifies as the book progresses, although finally balanced with a reality check near the end. Readers should keep in mind that change is not as easy as it sounds and that they will need to select “take aways” that best fit their own situations.