

(continued from front flap)

ers can fight groupthink, and parents and teachers can nurture children to think for themselves.

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**Adam Grant** has been recognized as Wharton's top-rated teacher for four straight years, one of the world's twenty-five most influential management thinkers, one of HR's most influential international thinkers, and one of the world's forty best business professors under forty. His speaking and consulting clients include Google, the NFL, Johnson & Johnson, Goldman Sachs, Disney Pixar, the United Nations, the U.S. Army and Navy, and the World Economic Forum, where he has been recognized as a Young Global Leader. He also serves as a contributing op-ed writer on work and psychology for the *New York Times*. Grant earned his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and his B.A. from Harvard College. He is a former magician and Junior Olympic springboard diver.



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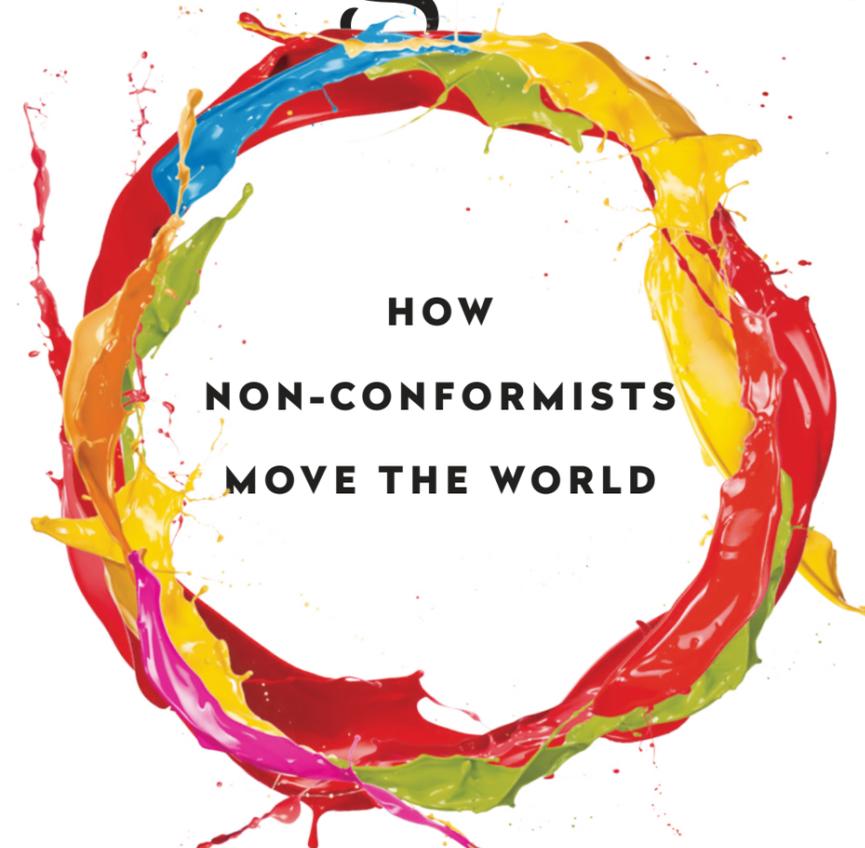


Adam Grant **Originals**



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# Originals



Adam Grant

New York Times bestselling author of

*Give and Take*

Foreword by SHERYL SANDBERG

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- › An entrepreneur who pitches his startups by highlighting the reasons not to invest in them
- › A woman at Apple who dared to challenge Steve Jobs from three management 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
- › A movie producer who asked a single question that saved Disney's first animated film based on an original story from the cutting room floor

Grant demonstrates how originality can be launched, unleashed, and sustained, offering practical insights on how individuals can find allies in unlikely places, lead-

(continued on back flap)

## Out on a Limb

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### *Speaking Truth to Power*

"Great spirits have always encountered opposition  
from mediocre minds."

*Albert Einstein*

In the early 1990s, a high-flying CIA analyst named Carmen Medina went to Western Europe on a three-year assignment. When she returned to the United States, she found that leaving the country had set her career back. After getting stuck with one job after another that didn't fit her skills and aspirations, she searched for another way to contribute. She began attending working groups about the future of intelligence.

During the course of her career at the CIA, Medina recognized a fundamental problem with communication in the intelligence community. The default system for sharing information was through "finished intelligence reports," which were released once a day and difficult to coordinate across agencies. Analysts had no way of sharing insights as they emerged. Since knowledge was evolving constantly, it took too long for critical information to land in the right hands. With lives at stake and national security on the line, every second mattered. Each agency was effectively producing its own daily newspaper, and Medina saw a need for a dramatically different system that would allow for real-time updates to be shared between agencies. To break down the silos and speed up

communication, she proposed something wildly countercultural: instead of printing reports on sheets of paper, intelligence agencies ought to begin publishing their findings instantaneously and transmitting them over Intelink, the intelligence community's classified internet.

Her colleagues quickly shot down her suggestion. Nothing like Medina's plan had ever been attempted before. The internet, they argued, was a threat to national security. Intelligence was a clandestine service for good reason. Under the current system they could ensure that printed documents reached the designated recipient with the need to know; electronic communications didn't seem secure in that way. If knowledge landed in the wrong hands, we would all be in jeopardy.

Medina refused to back down. If the whole point of these groups was to explore the future, and she couldn't speak truth to power there, where could she? Having witnessed how the fax machine enabled more efficient information sharing, she was convinced that the digital revolution would ultimately shake up the intelligence world. She continued advocating for an internet platform that would allow the CIA to transmit intelligence back and forth with other agencies like the FBI and NSA.

Medina kept voicing her opinions, but no one listened. A senior colleague warned her: "Be careful what you're saying in these groups. If you're too honest, and say what you really think, it will ruin your career." Soon, even her good friends started isolating themselves from her. Finally, fed up with the lack of respect she was receiving, Medina blew up and got into a shouting match that forced her to take three sick days and then start hunting for a new job.

When she couldn't find outside work, she ended up in a staff position that took her away from the action—pretty much the only CIA job she could get. She stayed quiet for a while, but three years after her flameout, she decided to speak up again in support of an online system for real-time, continuous reporting across agencies.

Less than a decade later, Carmen Medina played an indispensable role in creating a platform called Intellipedia, an internal Wikipedia for intelligence agencies to access one another's knowledge. It was so radically at odds with CIA norms that, in the words of one observer, "it was like being asked to promote vegetarianism in Texas."

By 2008, Intellipedia was a key resource that intelligence agencies used for such wide-ranging challenges as protecting the Beijing Olympics and identifying the terrorists behind the Mumbai attacks. Within a few years, the site accrued over half a million registered users in the intelligence community, over a million pages, and 630 million page views—and won the Service to America Homeland Security Medal. "It's hard to overstate what they did," said one senior leader. "They made a major transformation almost overnight with no money after other programs failed to achieve these results with millions of dollars in funding."

Why did Medina fail in her first efforts at speaking up, and what enabled her to be heard the second time? In between, the world changed: the internet gained widespread acceptance and the September 11 terrorist attacks sounded an alarm for better coordination between intelligence agencies. But there was no online solution until Medina rose to become the deputy director of intelligence at the CIA, which gave her the authority to back Intellipedia. To land that position, she needed to learn to communicate differently—to speak up in ways that won credibility instead of losing it.

At some point, we've all considered voicing a minority opinion, protesting a policy that doesn't make sense, championing a novel way of doing things, or standing up for a disadvantaged group of people. This chapter is about when to speak up and how to do it effectively without jeopardizing our careers and relationships. What are the right times to raise our voices, and what steps can we take to get heard? Along with unpacking Carmen Medina's discoveries, you'll learn from an entrepreneur who pitches his companies upside down and a manager who took on Steve Jobs. You'll see why the most supportive managers sometimes

provide the least support, how gender and race influence voice, and why the photos we like of ourselves are the opposite of the ones we prefer of our friends. The goal is to explain how we can all reduce the risks of speaking up—and gain the potential benefits of doing so.

### ***Power Without Status***

Leaders and managers appreciate it when employees take the initiative to offer help, build networks, gather new knowledge, and seek feedback. But there's one form of initiative that gets penalized: speaking up with suggestions. In one study across manufacturing, service, retail, and nonprofit settings, the more frequently employees voiced ideas and concerns upward, the less likely they were to receive raises and promotions over a two-year period. And in an experiment, when individuals voiced their objections to racism, they were criticized as self-righteous by those who failed to speak out against it. When we climb up the moral ladder, it can be rather lonely at the top.

To understand the barriers that Carmen Medina encountered, we need to tease apart two major dimensions of social hierarchy that are often lumped together: power and status. Power involves exercising control or authority over others; status is being respected and admired. In an experiment led by University of North Carolina professor Alison Fragale, people were punished for trying to exercise power without status. When people sought to exert influence but lacked respect, others perceived them as difficult, coercive, and self-serving. Since they haven't earned our admiration, we don't feel they have the right to tell us what to do, and we push back. This is what happened to Carmen Medina; her years overseas left her with little status. She hadn't had the opportunity to prove her worth to her colleagues, so they didn't give her ideas any credence. As people dismissed her concerns, she felt her frustration mounting.

When we're trying to influence others and we discover that they don't respect us, it fuels a vicious cycle of resentment. In an effort to assert our own authority, we respond by resorting to increasingly disrespectful behaviors. The most shocking demonstration of this vicious cycle occurred when researchers asked people to work on a task in pairs, and gave one person power over what tasks the other would have to carry out to earn a shot at a \$50 bonus. When the power holders were randomly assigned to learn that their peers admired and respected them, they chose mostly reasonable assignments: for the \$50 bonus, their peers would have to tell a funny joke or write about their experiences the previous day. But when power holders learned that their peers looked down on them, they retaliated by setting up some humiliating tasks, such as telling their partners to bark like a dog three times, say "I am filthy" five times, or count backward from five hundred in increments of seven. Just being told that they weren't respected nearly doubled their chances of using their power in ways that degraded others.

Carmen Medina didn't go nearly that far. But as she continued speaking up, her effort to exercise power without status elicited increasingly negative reactions. Status cannot be claimed; it has to be earned or granted.

During her second effort years later, Medina didn't put her career on the line by attempting to attack the system from below. Instead, she aimed to earn status by becoming part of the system and then changing it from within. As iconic filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola observed, "The way to come to power is not always to merely challenge the Establishment, but first make a place in it and then challenge and double-cross the Establishment." When Medina made the risky choice to present her idea again, she stabilized her risk portfolio by applying for a job that focused on information security. Her primary role was to keep knowledge safe. "That's not something I would have normally gone for—it was a very conservative thing," she remembers.

*The other things I had to do with the security of our publications didn't excite me. But I could eventually use this in a smaller way to do the things I wanted to get done. Way down at the bottom of the list of responsibilities was to begin to explore digital publication options for the things that we were trying to keep secure. I had this very conservative top cover. It was a balanced risk portfolio.*

Earlier, her case for sharing information over the internet sounded like a security threat. Now, she was able to frame it as part of her mission to protect security. "People saw that I stood *for* something, not just against the status quo. I thought that if I proved myself in that position, I would get a chance to start planting the seeds for even bigger change."

As Medina gained respect for these efforts, she accumulated what psychologist Edwin Hollander called idiosyncrasy credits—the latitude to deviate from the group's expectations. Idiosyncrasy credits accrue through respect, not rank: they're based on contributions. We squash a low-status member who tries to challenge the status quo, but tolerate and sometimes even applaud the originality of a high-status star.

In a recent experiment led by Silvia Bellezza, people rated male professors at top universities as having 14 percent more status and competence when they donned a T-shirt and a beard than when they wore a tie and were clean shaven. Most professors dress formally, and refusing to follow the norm usually carries a cost. Those who successfully buck convention signal that they've earned the idiosyncrasy credits to do as they please.

After Carmen Medina took the job in security, she spent the next few years making major progress in the digital arena. By doing work that advanced the CIA's mission, she earned the idiosyncrasy credits to champion her vision for knowledge sharing. She was promoted to

the executive level. In 2005, Sean Dennehy and Don Burke, two CIA analysts from different parts of the agency, joined forces to help create Intellipedia, a classified variation on Wikipedia that would be accessible across the intelligence community. Many managers were skeptical of the value of a wiki for cross-agency information sharing. “Trying to implement these tools in the intelligence community is basically like telling people their parents raised them wrong,” Dennehy admitted. They were turned down at every stage until they found Carmen Medina, who had quietly been building a network of rebels within the CIA. She provided the senior-level support that their fledgling effort needed, securing a space for them to introduce the concept of open source to a culture built upon secrecy.

Since Medina had power, she no longer had to worry as much about how she voiced her ideas. But along the way, to earn the status that eventually gave her power, she did have to alter the way she spoke. Her shift in strategy shares something with the most bizarre startup pitch you might ever encounter.

### ***Putting Your Worst Foot Forward: The Sarick Effect***

After having their first child, Rufus Griscom and Alisa Volkman were appalled by the amount of false advertising and bad advice being offered about parenting. They started an online magazine and blog network called Babble to challenge the dominant parenting clichés and tackle the cold, hard truth with humor. In 2009, when Griscom pitched Babble to venture capitalists, he did the exact opposite of what every entrepreneur has been taught to do: he presented a slide listing the top five reasons *not* to invest in his business.

This should have killed his pitch. Investors are looking for reasons to say yes, and here he was, hand delivering a list of reasons to say no. Entrepreneurs are supposed to talk about the upsides of their companies,

not the downsides. But his counterintuitive approach worked: that year, Babble brought in \$3.3 million in funding.

Two years later, Griscom made a sales visit to Disney to see if they might be interested in acquiring Babble. For this pitch, it would logically have been unthinkable to lead with the downsides. It's one thing to admit that your startup has problems; you can promise to fix the flaws. But when you're selling an established company, you have every incentive to emphasize the silver linings—and you're not going to stick around long enough to do anything about the clouds.

Strangely, though, Griscom did it again. One of his slides read: "Here's Why You Should Not Buy Babble."

Presenting to the family division of digital at Disney, he explained that user engagement, at less than three page views per visit, was lower than expected. Babble was supposed to be a parenting website, but 40 percent of the posts were about celebrities. And the back end of the website was in sore need of retooling.

Disney ended up buying the company for \$40 million.

This is called the Sarick Effect, named after the social scientist Leslie Sarick.

In both situations, Griscom was presenting ideas to people who had more power than he had, and trying to convince them to commit their resources. Most of us assume that to be persuasive, we ought to emphasize our strengths and minimize our weaknesses. That kind of powerful communication makes sense if the audience is supportive.

But when you're pitching a novel idea or speaking up with a suggestion for change, your audience is likely to be skeptical. Investors are looking to poke holes in your arguments; managers are hunting for reasons why your suggestion won't work. Under those circumstances, for at least four reasons, it's actually more effective to adopt Griscom's form of powerless communication by accentuating the flaws in your idea.

The first advantage is that leading with weaknesses disarms the

audience. Marketing professors Marian Friestad and Peter Wright find that when we're aware that someone is trying to persuade us, we naturally raise our mental shields. Rampant confidence is a red flag—a signal that we need to defend ourselves against weapons of influence. In the early days of Babble, when Griscom presented at the first two board meetings, he talked about everything that was going right with the business, hoping to excite the board about the company's momentum and potential. "Every time I would say something emphasizing the upside, I would get skeptical responses," he recalls. "Unbridled optimism comes across as salesmanship; it seems dishonest somehow, and as a consequence it's met with skepticism. Everyone is allergic to the feeling, or suspicious of being sold."

At the third meeting of the board, Griscom reversed his approach, opening with a candid discussion of everything that was going wrong with the company and what was keeping him up at night. Although this tactic might be familiar in a debate, it was highly unconventional for an entrepreneur. Board members, though, responded much more favorably than they had in previous meetings, shifting their attention away from self-defense and toward problem solving. Griscom decided to try the same approach with investors, and noticed a similar reaction: they let their guard down. "When I put up a slide that says 'Here's why you shouldn't buy this company,' the first response was laughter. Then you could see them physically relax. It's sincere; it doesn't smell, feel, or look anything like sales. They're no longer being sold."

In her first attempts at speaking up, Carmen Medina failed to acknowledge the limitations of her ideas. She stated it as a fact that the intelligence community needed to share information more openly, making a dangerous argument that solely stressed the benefits of transparency. One friend confided, "Carmen, you talk as if you won't be happy until everyone accepts what you say as the truth." In the second round of speaking up a few years later, she became much more

balanced in her presentations, aiming to express “that little bit of doubt by saying, ‘Maybe I’m wrong.’”

After Medina advanced to a leadership position, she found herself on the receiving end of pitches. When people only touted the pluses of their ideas, she quickly concluded that “this idea is full of holes; they really haven’t thought it through, and they’ve constructed their slide deck to keep me from figuring it out. When people presented drawbacks or disadvantages, I would become an ally. Instead of selling me, they’ve given me a problem to solve.”

Along with changing the frame of the interaction, being forthright about faults alters how audiences evaluate us. In a fascinating experiment, Teresa Amabile asked people to gauge the intelligence and expertise of book reviewers. She wondered whether adjusting the tone of reviews would change people’s judgments of the critics. She took actual book reviews from the *New York Times* and edited them so the content was identical, but the evaluations were either flattering or scathing. Half of the participants were randomly assigned to read a positive review:

*In 128 inspired pages, Alvin Harter, with his first work of fiction, shows himself to be an extremely capable young American author. A Longer Dawn is a novella—a prose poem, if you will—of tremendous impact. It deals with elemental things: life, love, and death, and does so with such great intensity that it achieves new heights of superior writing on every page.*

The other half read a harsh version of the same review, in which Amabile left the language intact but substituted some adjectives that were critical rather than complimentary:

*In 128 uninspired pages, Alvin Harter, with his first work of fiction, shows himself to be an extremely incapable young American*

*author. A Longer Dawn is a novella—a prose poem, if you will—of negligible impact. It deals with elemental things: life, love, and death, but does so with such little intensity that it achieves new depths of inferior writing on every page.*

Which version makes the reviewer sound smarter? They should be equal. The quality of the reviewer’s prose hasn’t changed. The vocabulary is comparable, and so is the grammatical structure. It took the same level of ability to write both versions. But people rated the critical reviewer as 14 percent more intelligent, and having 16 percent greater literary expertise, than the complimentary reviewer.

People think an amateur can appreciate art, but it takes a professional to critique it. Merely changing a handful of words from positive to negative—*inspired to uninspired, capable to incapable, tremendous impact to negligible impact, great intensity to little intensity, and heights of superior writing to depths of inferior writing*—was sufficient to make the critical reviewer sound smarter. “Prophets of doom and gloom appear wise and insightful,” Amabile writes, “while positive statements are seen as having a naïve ‘Pollyanna’ quality.”

This is the second benefit of leading with the limitations of an idea: it makes you look smart.\* Rufus Griscom first discovered this early in his career, which started in publishing. “There’s nothing more shameful than writing a review that’s too positive,” he learned. Even if reviewers loved a book, they felt an obligation to add a paragraph at the end noting where it fell short. According to Griscom, it’s their way of saying, “I’m not a chump; I was not totally snowed by this author. I am discerning.” When he told investors about the problems with

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\* As you probably anticipated, this doesn’t work if you’re pitching a bad idea. Stanford psychologist Zak Tormala finds that audiences are more convinced when experts express doubt than certainty, due to the element of surprise. We expect an entrepreneur or a change agent to be certain. When they’re not, we’re intrigued, and we pay more attention to the message—which means we’ll get on board if the idea is compelling. The Sarick Effect only holds if you have a persuasive message to deliver.

Babble, he demonstrated that he wasn't snowed by his own ideas or trying to snow them; he was a shrewd judge of his shortcomings. He was smart enough to do his homework and anticipate some of the problems that they would spot.

The third advantage of being up front about the downsides of your ideas is that it makes you more trustworthy. When Griscom described the hurdles he faced in his own business, he came across not only as knowledgeable, but also as honest and modest. Of course, highlighting weaknesses can backfire if the audience doesn't already recognize them; it can give them ammunition to shoot down your idea. But Griscom's audiences were already skeptical, and they were going to find out about many of the problems anyway during due diligence. "The job of the investor is to figure out what's wrong with the company. By telling them what's wrong with the business model, I'm doing some of the work for them. It established trust," Griscom explains. And speaking frankly about the weaknesses of the business in turn made him more credible when he talked about the strengths. "You need confidence to be humble, to front-run your weaknesses," Griscom says. "If I'm willing to tell them what's wrong with my business, investors think, 'There must be an awful lot that's right with it.'" Disney came to trust Griscom so much that after they bought Babble, they brought him on board to run the business unit for two years as vice president and general manager, where he played a key role in developing Disney Interactive's digital strategy. The Sarick Effect strikes again.

A fourth advantage of this approach is that it leaves audiences with a more favorable assessment of the idea itself, due to a bias in how we process information. To illustrate this bias, I often ask executives to judge how happy they are after thinking about the positive features of their lives. One group is tasked with writing three good things about their lives; another group has to list twelve good things. Everyone expects the twelve group to be happier: the more blessings you count, the better you should feel about your circumstances. But most of the

time, the opposite is true. We're happier after we list three good things than twelve. Why would this be?

Psychologist Norbert Schwarz has shown that the easier it is to think of something, the more common and important we assume it is. We use ease of retrieval as information. It's a cinch for executives to come up with three good things about their lives. They immediately list their love of their children, their spouses, and their jobs. Since it was a breeze to generate a few positives, they infer that their lives are pretty darn good. It's noticeably harder to name twelve good things about their lives. After covering family and work, executives often mention their friends and then ask if they can count each one separately. Having struggled to come up with a dozen good things, they draw the conclusion that their lives aren't quite so good after all.\*

This is what happened to investors when Rufus Griscom cited Babble's weaknesses. By acknowledging its most serious problems, he made it harder for investors to generate their own ideas about what was wrong with the company. And as they found themselves thinking hard to identify other concerns, they decided Babble's problems weren't actually that severe. Griscom saw this happen in the early Babble board meeting when he first tested his upside-down pitch. "When I led with the factors that could kill the company, the response from the board was the exact opposite: oh, these things aren't so bad. Newton's third law can be true in human dynamics as well: every action has an equal and opposite reaction."

Just as presenting negatives can ironically make it more difficult

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\* Since I feel guilty about skewing their life satisfaction judgments, I counterbalance the exercise by asking the executives to name three or twelve bad things about their lives. Naming three bad things is easy; it leaves us thinking that life isn't so great. But it's actually pretty challenging to come up with a dozen things that are wrong, which leads to the realization that life could be a whole lot worse. Another way to make the point is to ask people to judge someone famous. In an experiment by psychologist Geoffrey Haddock, people generated a list of two or five negative attributes of Tony Blair. After coming up with more reasons to dislike him, they actually liked him more. It was more difficult to think of many negative attributes, so they assumed he must not be that bad.

for audiences to think of them, speaking up effectively depends on making the positive features easier to process.

### ***Unfamiliarity Breeds Contempt***

Take a look at this list of familiar songs. Pick one of them and tap the rhythm to it on a table:

- “Happy Birthday”
- “Mary Had a Little Lamb”
- “Jingle Bells”
- “Rock Around the Clock”
- “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”
- “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”
- “The Star-Spangled Banner”

Now, what do you think the odds are that one of your friends would recognize the song you’re tapping?

I’ve been running this exercise for years with leaders and students, and it’s as fun at a dinner party as it is educational. What was your estimate? If you said zero, you’re either questioning your own tapping skills or seriously doubting the ear of your friend. In the original study at Stanford, after tapping a song, people thought it would be easy for a listener to guess it: they predicted that their peers had a 50 percent chance of naming it accurately. But when they went ahead and tapped the songs, only 2.5 percent actually guessed correctly. Of the 120 songs tapped in total, people expected 60 of them to be recognized. In reality, only three were recognized. I’ve found the same results at numerous organizations. At a senior leadership event at JPMorgan Chase, CEO Jamie Dimon predicted that the executive sitting next to him would have a 100 percent chance of guessing it. He

turned out to be right—but most of the time, we’re overconfident in our predictions. Why?

It’s humanly impossible to tap out the rhythm of a song without hearing the tune in your head. That makes it impossible to imagine what your disjointed knocks sound like to an audience that is not hearing the accompanying tune. As Chip and Dan Heath write in *Made to Stick*, “The listeners can’t hear that tune—all they can hear is a bunch of disconnected taps, like a kind of bizarre Morse Code.”

This is the core challenge of speaking up with an original idea. When you present a new suggestion, you’re not only hearing the tune in your head.

*You wrote the song.*

You’ve spent hours, days, weeks, months, or maybe even years thinking about the idea. You’ve contemplated the problem, formulated the solution, and rehearsed the vision. You know the lyrics and the melody of your idea by heart. By that point, it’s no longer possible to imagine what it sounds like to an audience that’s listening to it for the first time.

This explains why we often undercommunicate our ideas. They’re already so familiar to us that we underestimate how much exposure an audience needs to comprehend and buy into them. When Harvard professor John Kotter studied change agents years ago, he found that they typically undercommunicated their visions by a factor of ten. On average, they spoke about the direction of the change ten times less often than their stakeholders needed to hear it. In one three-month period, employees might be exposed to 2.3 million words and numbers. On average during that period, the vision for change was expressed in only 13,400 words and numbers: a 30-minute speech, an hour-long meeting, a briefing, and a memo. Since more than 99 percent of the communication that employees encounter during those three months does not concern the vision, how can they be expected to understand

it, let alone internalize it? The change agents don't realize this, because they're up to their ears in information about their vision.

If we want people to accept our original ideas, we need to speak up about them, then rinse and repeat. To illustrate, which of these two words do you like better?

*iktitaf*

*sarick*

If you're like most people, you'll choose *sarick* over *iktitaf*. But it has nothing to do with the word itself.

Eminent psychologist Robert Zajonc called it the mere exposure effect: the more often we encounter something, the more we like it. When he showed people the nonsense words *iktitaf* and *sarick* for the first time, the two words tested as equally appealing. But when Zajonc presented either one of those words twice before the comparative test, people developed a preference for it—and liking increased further after five, ten, and twenty-five views.

To enhance your liking of *sarick*, I embedded it five times in the previous section about Rufus Griscom.

There is no such thing as the Sarick Effect, and there was no social scientist named Leslie Sarick. I made them up to demonstrate the mere exposure effect. (For the record, Rufus Griscom is a real person, as is every other person in this book.)

The mere exposure effect has been replicated many times—the more familiar a face, letter, number, sound, flavor, brand, or Chinese character becomes, the more we like it. It's true across different cultures and species; even baby chickens prefer the familiar. My favorite test was when people looked at photographs of themselves and their friends that were either regular or inverted, as if seen in a mirror. We prefer the regular photos of our friends, because that's how we're used to seeing them, but we like the inverted photos of ourselves, because

that's how we see ourselves when we look in the mirror. "Familiarity doesn't breed contempt," says serial entrepreneur Howard Tullman. "It breeds comfort."

One explanation for this effect is that exposure increases the ease of processing. An unfamiliar idea requires more effort to understand. The more we see, hear, and touch it, the more comfortable we become with it, and the less threatening it is.

Just as film is ruined when it's overexposed, and songs we hear too often become irritatingly stuck in our heads, too much familiarity with an idea can lead to boredom. But in the context of speaking up, people rarely oversaturate their audiences. Overall, the evidence suggests that liking continues to increase as people are exposed to an idea between ten and twenty times, with additional exposure still useful for more complex ideas. Interestingly, exposures are more effective when they're short and mixed in with other ideas, to help maintain the audience's curiosity. It's also best to introduce a delay between the presentation of the idea and the evaluation of it, which provides time for it to sink in. If you're making a suggestion to a boss, you might start with a 30-second elevator pitch during a conversation on Tuesday, revisit it briefly the following Monday, and then ask for feedback at the end of the week.

When Carmen Medina became the deputy director of intelligence at the CIA, she knew that if she wanted intelligence analysts to share information more openly, she would have to give them regular exposure to the idea. So she started a blog on the classified intranet in an effort to model the transparency she was advocating. Twice a week, she wrote short commentaries, expressing her views about the need for less secrecy and for sharing news, and suggesting that this would be the wave of the future. At first, many leaders reflexively dismissed the concept. But just as exposure research would suggest, the brief presentations interspersed between other communications—and the delays between them—caused leaders to warm up to Medina's ideas.

Soon, the CIA's technology experts developed a platform on the intranet that allowed individual employees to set up their own blogs, and familiarity spread further. People began crediting Medina for their courage to blog.\* Due in no small part to her efforts, the intelligence community gained a vibrant blogging scene where analysts across different agencies informally share knowledge.

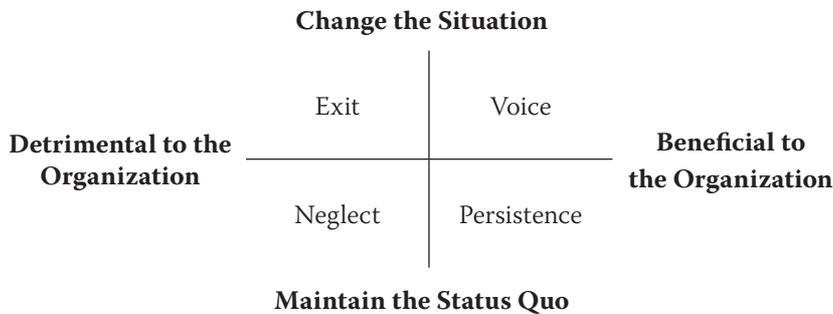
### ***Quitting Before Leaving***

When I learned about Carmen Medina's story, I was puzzled about why she chose to continue speaking up after it sank her career. Building on a classic book by economist Albert Hirschman, there are four different options for handling a dissatisfying situation. Whether you're unhappy with your job, your marriage, or your government, decades of research show that you have a choice between exit, voice, persistence, and neglect. Exit means removing yourself from the situation altogether: quitting a miserable job, ending an abusive marriage, or leaving an oppressive country. Voice involves actively trying to improve the situation: approaching your boss with ideas for enriching your job, encouraging your spouse to seek counseling, or becoming a political activist to elect a less corrupt government. Persistence is gritting your teeth and bearing it: working hard even though your job is stifling, sticking by your spouse, or supporting your government even though you disagree with it. Neglect entails staying in the current situation but reducing your effort: doing just enough at work not to get

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\* When Dennehy and Burke started to encourage people to contribute to the wiki, many managers refused to let employees use it. They worried about security breaches, quality dilution, and inefficiencies related to posting and accessing information between agencies. But as they gained exposure, they became more accustomed to the idea that they didn't have to get changes approved up their chains of command—and that it was actually more efficient to share information by topic than by agency. Within three years, Intellipedia was averaging over four thousand edits a day.

fired, choosing new hobbies that keep you away from your spouse, or refusing to vote.



Fundamentally, these choices are based on feelings of control and commitment. Do you believe you can effect change, and do you care enough to try? If you believe you're stuck with the status quo, you'll choose neglect when you're not committed, and persistence when you are. If you do feel you can make a difference, but you aren't committed to the person, country, or organization, you'll leave. Only when you believe your actions matter *and* care deeply will you consider speaking up.

After Carmen Medina was silenced in her early attempts to voice her ideas, she no longer believed she could make a difference. She wasn't the kind of person to shirk her responsibilities, but some of her commitment had been shattered: "I was like a refugee on a boat, somewhere in between neglect and loyalty." Even after a few years, she couldn't shake the feeling that speaking up had torpedoed her career. "I was very hesitant to go back in there. I wasn't sure enough time had passed," she recalls, mulling it over. "You know why I was crazy enough to do it again? Because I was working for Mike, my favorite boss that I've had in my career."

At work, our sense of commitment and control depends more on

our direct boss than on anyone else. When we have a supportive boss, our bond with the organization strengthens and we feel a greater span of influence. As I envisioned the boss who gave Medina the confidence to speak up again, I pictured someone agreeable—warm, trusting, and cooperative—so I was surprised when Medina described Mike as “prone to cynicism and mercurial.” Her portrait of him fit the profile of a more disagreeable manager, one with a critical, skeptical stance toward others. Disagreeable managers are typically the last people we seek when we’re going to go out on a limb, but they are sometimes our best advocates.

As much as agreeable people may love us, they often hate conflict even more. Their desire to please others and preserve harmony makes them prone to backing down instead of sticking up for us. “Because agreeable people value cooperation and conform to norms, they should not be inclined to make waves and upset interpersonal relationships,” management researchers Jeff LePine and Linn Van Dyne wrote after studying voice. It is often the prickly people who are more comfortable taking a stand against others and against convention. As a Google employee put it, disagreeable managers may have a bad user interface but a great operating system.

In one study led by psychologist Stéphane Côté, adults filled out a personality survey measuring their tendencies toward agreeableness and disagreeableness. For the next three weeks, six times a day, they reported what they were doing and how they were feeling. Agreeable people were happiest in the moments when they doled out compliments and praise, smiled and laughed with others, expressed affection, reassured others, and compromised or made concessions to please others. Disagreeable people, in contrast, experienced the greatest joy when they were criticizing, confronting, or challenging others.

In the decision to speak up, whom we choose as our audience matters as much as how we deliver our message. When we speak up to agreeable audiences, their instinct is to nod and smile. In their effort

to be accommodating and avoid conflict, they often shy away from offering critical feedback. Disagreeable managers are more inclined to challenge us, improving our ability to speak up effectively. “A lot can be said for cynicism, as long as it doesn’t go too far,” Medina notes. “I don’t think Mike ever fully believed this was the way the organization had to go, but he had respect for diversity of thought. Even though he didn’t necessarily agree—and we often did disagree on things—I felt I could be honest with him, and he would give me enough rope, but he would actually stop me before I hung myself.”

Instead of speaking up to audiences who are highly agreeable, we’re better off targeting suggestions to people with a history of originality. Research shows that when managers have a track record of challenging the status quo, they tend to be more open to new ideas and less threatened by contributions from others. They care more about making the organization better than about defending it as it stands. They’re motivated to advance the organization’s mission, which means they’re not so loyal that they turn a blind eye to its shortcomings. “Mike loved the agency, but he was willing to be critical of it. He would get tears in his eyes talking about the mission,” Medina says. “He had a much higher tolerance for misfits, for eccentrics, than a lot of managers in the agency did.”

With the support of a tough boss whose top priority was to strengthen the CIA, Medina regained her sense of control and commitment. Knowing that her boss had her back, she was ready to resume her effort to promote more open information sharing.

As she climbed up the CIA ladder, Medina noticed that her colleagues became more receptive to her suggestions, though it was mostly middle managers who dismissed them. Social scientists have long demonstrated this middle-status conformity effect. If you’re perched at the top, you’re expected to be different and therefore have the license to deviate. Likewise, if you’re still at the bottom of a status

hierarchy, you have little to lose and everything to gain by being original. But the middle segment of that hierarchy—where the majority of people in an organization are found—is dominated by insecurity. Now that you have a bit of respect, you value your standing in the group and don't want to jeopardize it. To maintain and then gain status, you play a game of follow-the-leader, conforming to prove your worth as a group member. As sociologist George Homans observed, "Middle-status conservatism reflects the anxiety experienced by one who aspires to a social station but fears disenfranchisement." The fall from low to lower hardly hurts; the fall from middle to low is devastating.

Not long ago, I was asked to interview Google CEO Larry Page on stage. At dinner the night before the event, I asked him why he and Sergey Brin had been so hesitant to drop out of Stanford and make a full-time commitment to Google early in the company's history. His answer focused on their career stage. Had they already established themselves as academic superstars, they could have devoted themselves to Google without the risk of sacrificing anything professionally. Earlier in their careers, when they had no status, they were perfectly content to take risks: Page kept himself busy in college working on solar cars and building a printer out of Legos. But once they had made significant progress toward their doctorates, they had more to lose by quitting.

Middle-status conformity leads us to choose the safety of the tried-and-true over the danger of the original. Sociologists Damon Phillips of Columbia and Ezra Zuckerman of MIT found that security analysts were significantly less likely to issue negative stock ratings when they or the banks that employed them had middle status. Making a recommendation to sell a stock can anger corporate executives and investors who value the stock. Analysts with poor track records at minor banks have nowhere to fall by taking this risk, and star analysts at elite banks have a safety net. But for moderately successful analysts at average

banks who are trying to advance themselves, a negative recommendation could be a career-limiting move.\*

As Carmen Medina moved up the ranks, she learned that it was more effective to voice ideas upward and downward, and spent less time attempting to make suggestions to middle managers. Senior leaders saw her as one of the rare employees who believed there were things wrong with the agency, and also believed it could change. Her credibility was further bolstered by a growing following of junior colleagues. As she shared her views with rising stars in the CIA, they grew excited about her vision and granted her status. “Younger employees appreciated her fresh ideas and looked to her as a real role model, which made it more difficult for others not to listen,” Medina’s colleague Susan Benjamin notes. “It cemented her reputation and helped her get heard.”

### ***Speaking While Female, and the Double Jeopardy of Double Minorities***

Speaking up to an audience of risk-averse middle managers is challenging for anyone, but it was especially so for Carmen Medina as a woman in a male-dominated organization. When I first heard her story, I naively assumed that the days when women were undervalued in professional settings were long gone, and she would ultimately be

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\* Does middle status really cause us to choose conformity over originality? Perhaps conventional people simply choose to occupy middle-status roles—or have enough ambition to get to the middle, but lack the originality to get to the top. Not so. There’s new evidence that landing in the middle of the status hierarchy actually makes us less original. When psychologists Michelle Duguid and Jack Goncalo asked people to generate ideas, their output was 34 percent less original after being randomly assigned to a middle-manager role than a president or assistant role. In another experiment, merely thinking about a time that they were in a middle-status role caused participants to generate 20–25 percent fewer ideas and 16 percent less original ideas than thinking about being in a high-status or low-status role. With the most to lose in the middle, they were more hesitant to take the task in an original direction.

evaluated on the quality of her ideas rather than her gender. But when I looked at the evidence, I was dismayed to discover that even today, speaking while female remains notoriously difficult. Across cultures, there's a rich body of evidence showing that people continue to hold strong gender-role stereotypes, expecting men to be assertive and women to be communal. When women speak up, they run the risk of violating that gender stereotype, which leads audiences to judge them as aggressive. Voice is an act of leadership, and as Sheryl Sandberg writes in *Lean In*, "When a girl tries to lead, she is often labeled bossy."

When I analyzed my own data, the results were deeply disconcerting. In an international bank and a health-care company, I found that voicing new revenue-generating ideas led to higher performance evaluations for men, but not for women. Other studies show that male executives who talk more than their peers are rewarded, but female executives who engage in the same behavior are devalued by both men *and* women. Similarly, when women offer suggestions for improvement, managers judge them as less loyal than men and are less likely to implement their proposals. Especially in male-dominated organizations, women pay a price for exercising voice.\*

During her first attempt to speak up, Carmen Medina paid a price for speaking out. "The range of acceptable behavior for women was narrower than for men," she says. During her second tour, she had a different experience. Because it was part of her job to put information online, she no longer needed to worry about appearing too aggressive as she voiced her ideas for transparency. "In the early nineties when it all blew up, my commitment to this change was confused with my

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\* This helps to explain patterns of sexual harassment. In three studies, gender expert Jennifer Berdahl found that sexual harassment isn't primarily motivated by sexual desire: Women who meet feminine standards of beauty don't experience the most harassment. Instead, "it is motivated primarily by a desire to punish gender-role deviants and, therefore, is directed at women who violate feminine ideals." Women who were "assertive, dominant, and independent" faced the most harassment, particularly in male-dominated organizations. Sexual harassment, she concludes, is mostly targeted toward "uppity women."

personal frustration at not advancing in my career. It was always me-focused,” Medina tells me. “The whole second chapter of this journey was really very different from the first chapter. I was mission focused.” Extensive research shows that when women speak up on behalf of others, they avoid backlash, because they’re being communal.

There’s little doubt that the road was bumpier for Medina because she was a woman in a male-dominated CIA. But as a Puerto Rican woman, she belonged to not one but two minority groups. New research suggests that her double minority status may have amplified the costs and the benefits of speaking up. Management researcher Ashleigh Rosette, who is African American, noticed that she was treated differently when she led assertively than were both white women and black men. Working with colleagues, she found that double minority group members faced double jeopardy. When black women failed, they were evaluated much more harshly than black men and white leaders of both sexes. They didn’t fit the stereotype of leaders as black or as female, and they shouldered an unfair share of the blame for mistakes. For double minorities, Rosette’s team pointed out, failure is not an option.

Interestingly, though, Rosette and her colleagues found that when black women acted dominantly, they didn’t face the same penalties as white women and black men. As double minorities, black women defy categories. Because people don’t know which stereotypes to apply to them, they have greater flexibility to act “black” or “female” without violating stereotypes.

But this only holds true when there’s clear evidence of their competence. For minority-group members, it’s particularly important to earn status before exercising power. By quietly advancing the agenda of putting intelligence online as part of her job, Carmen Medina was able to build up successes without attracting too much attention. “I was able to fly under the radar,” she says. “Nobody really noticed what

I was doing, and I was making headway by iterating to make us more of a publish-when-ready organization. It was almost like a backyard experiment. I pretty much proceeded unfettered.”

Once Medina had accumulated enough wins, she started speaking up again—and this time, people were ready to listen. Rosette has discovered that when women climb to the top and it’s clear that they’re in the driver’s seat, people recognize that since they’ve overcome prejudice and double standards, they must be unusually motivated and talented. But what happens when voice falls on deaf ears?

### ***The Road Not Taken***

Donna Dubinsky was just shy of thirty, and it was the most hectic time of her life. As Apple’s distribution and sales manager in 1985, she was working virtually nonstop from morning until bedtime, maniacally focused on shipping computers to keep up with explosive demand. Suddenly, Steve Jobs proposed eliminating all six U.S. warehouses, dropping their inventory, and moving to a just-in-time production system in which computers would be assembled upon order and overnighted by FedEx.

Dubinsky thought this was a colossal mistake, one that could put the company’s entire future in jeopardy. “In my mind, Apple being successful depended on distribution being successful,” she says. For a while, she ignored the issue, thinking it would go away. When it didn’t, she started making her case. Distribution was working just fine, she insisted: her team was coming off a record quarter, and complaints were virtually nonexistent.

Even though she was the master of the distribution domain, her objections were overruled. Eventually, she was assigned to a task force that spent several months reviewing Jobs’s proposal. At the final task-force meeting, her boss’s boss asked if everyone agreed to the

just-in-time system. Jobs had the power and the majority following; Dubinsky was in the minority. Should she speak up and challenge the famously mercurial founder and chairman of the board, or should she stay quiet and keep Jobs happy?

Although Dubinsky was one of the few women in a management position at Apple in the 1980s, “it never crossed my mind that gender was an issue for me.” She was committed—she had put her heart and soul into the company. She had control—she was in charge of part of the distribution division. She decided to stand her ground and restated her objection to Jobs’s proposal. Knowing that she needed more time to prove her case, she met with her boss’s boss and delivered an ultimatum: if she didn’t get thirty days to create her own counterproposal, she would leave Apple.

Drawing such a stark line in the sand was a precarious move, but her request was granted. Dubinsky developed a novel proposal for consolidating customer service centers rather than moving to just-in-time production, which would gain some of the desired benefits without the risks. Her proposal was accepted.

“What got me heard,” Dubinsky explains, “was output and impact. People saw me as somebody who could make things happen. If you become known as someone who delivers, you do your job and do it well, you build respect.” She had earned status before exercising power, so she had idiosyncrasy credits to cash in.

From the outside, the prospect of speaking up against Steve Jobs might seem a losing battle. But given his disagreeable tendencies, Jobs was exactly the kind of person who could be confronted. Dubinsky knew that Jobs respected those who stood up to him and was open to new ways of doing things. And she wasn’t speaking up for herself; she was advocating for Apple.

By virtue of her willingness to challenge an idea she viewed as wrong, Dubinsky landed a promotion. She was not alone. Starting in 1981, the Macintosh team had begun granting an annual award to one

person who challenged Jobs—and Jobs promoted every one of them to run a major division of Apple.

Comparing Carmen Medina's and Donna Dubinsky's experiences raises fundamental questions about the best way to handle dissatisfaction. In the quest for originality, neglect isn't an option. Persistence is a temporary route to earning the right to speak up. But in the long run, like neglect, persistence maintains the status quo and falls short of resolving your dissatisfaction. To change the situation, exit and voice are the only viable alternatives.

Years ago, Hirschman alerted us to a major drawback of exit. Although it has the advantage of altering your own circumstances, it doesn't make them better for anyone else, as it enables the status quo to endure. "Voice feeds," Hirschman argued, "on the lack of opportunity for exit."

In recent years, the world has changed in ways that make exit dramatically easier than it was when Carmen Medina couldn't find an outside position after her blowup in 1995 at the CIA. Spending your career in one organization is a thing of the past: the dynamic labor market has made it possible for many people to land new positions with other employers. Thanks to globalization, social media, and rapid transportation and communication technologies, we have more mobility than ever before. Given these advantages, if you're unhappy in your job and it's easy to move, why pay the price of speaking up?

In Hirschman's view, exit is bad for originality. But Donna Dubinsky's experience casts exit in a different light. After winning the distribution battle at Apple, she landed a senior position in international sales and marketing at Claris, one of Apple's software subsidiaries. Within a few years, her group accounted for half of all of Claris's sales. When Apple refused to spin Claris off as an independent company in 1991, Dubinsky was so frustrated with the lack of opportunity for impact that she quit. She jetted to Paris for a yearlong sabbatical and took up painting, contemplating ways to contribute to a bigger mission.

When she met an entrepreneur named Jeff Hawkins, she decided that his startup, Palm Computing, was the next big wave of technology, and accepted a position as CEO.

Under Dubinsky's leadership, the startup developed the PalmPilot, the first runaway success in the fledgling market for personal digital devices. The PalmPilot was released in 1996 and, within a year and a half, sold over a million units. But in 1997, when Palm was acquired by 3Com, Dubinsky did not agree with some strategic decisions. For example, when the finance group wanted to require all departments to cut budgets by 10 percent, Dubinsky spoke up in protest, urging the company to invest in areas that were succeeding and apply cuts to those that weren't. In response, she was told, "You are not a very good corporate citizen. You need to go back and do your share."

Frustrated, Dubinsky and Hawkins left Palm to found a new company, Handspring, in 1998. After merely a year, Handspring launched the Visor handheld computer, rapidly capturing a quarter of its market. After the development of the successful Treo smartphone, Handspring merged with Palm in 2003. And a few years later, Steve Jobs launched the iPhone.

Years earlier, Dubinsky remembers "sitting in a room with Steve Jobs. He said, 'There's no way I'm ever building a phone.' Would he admit that he was influenced by us—that we made a great phone, and he changed his mind? No. He would never admit it. But despite his stubbornness, he evolved."

It was the impossibility of exit that led Carmen Medina to move national security forward; it was the possibility of exit that enabled Donna Dubinsky to pioneer the smartphone revolution. The lesson here is that voice isn't inherently superior to exit. In some circumstances, leaving a stifling organization can be a better path to originality. The best we can do is voice our opinions and secure our risk portfolios, preparing for exit if necessary. If our bosses evolve, as Jobs did, there's a case to be made for sticking around and speaking up. But

if they don't, and our audiences lack the openness to consider a shift in direction, we may find better opportunities elsewhere.

Questions may linger about what might have been. Had Medina left the CIA, would she have been able to champion transparency from the outside? Had Dubinsky stayed at Apple, would the company have developed the iPhone or spawned a different set of innovations?

We'll never have answers to these counterfactual scenarios, but we can learn something from the decisions that Medina and Dubinsky made. Although one ultimately chose voice and the other opted to exit, there's one way in which their choices were the same: they chose to speak up rather than stay silent. And in the long run, research shows that the mistakes we regret are not errors of commission, but errors of omission. If we could do things over, most of us would censor ourselves less and express our ideas more. That's exactly what Carmen Medina and Donna Dubinsky did, and it left them with few regrets.

PENGUIN BOOKS

ORIGINALS

Adam Grant has been recognized as Wharton's top rated teacher for five straight years, one of the world's twenty-five most influential management thinkers, and one of *Fast Company's* 100 most creative people in business. 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 Amazon, 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 Post's* books every leader should read. His 2016 TED talk on the surprising habits of original thinkers received a standing ovation and racked up its first million views in five days. His speaking and consulting clients include Google, Facebook, the NBA, Johnson & Johnson, Goldman Sachs, Disney Pixar, the U.S. Army and Navy, and the World Economic Forum, where he has been recognized as a Young Global Leader. He also serves as a contributing op-ed writer on work and psychology for *The New York Times*. Grant earned his PhD from the University of Michigan and his BA from Harvard. He 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. He is a former magician and Junior Olympic springboard diver.

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Praise for *Originals*

**#1 *New York Times* Bestseller • Named one of Sir Richard Branson's  
65 Books to Read in a Lifetime • Featured on *Today* and NPR's  
*Marketplace* and *Weekend Edition***

"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, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Outliers* and *The Tipping Point*

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—J.J. Abrams, director of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*; co-creator and executive producer of *Lost*; 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 of *The Huffington Post*; author of *Thrive*

“It 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; author of *Zero to One*

“Adam Grant is a serious social scientist, master storyteller and infectious optimist. . . . The counterintuitive insight at the core of *Originals* is not just that conventional forms of achievement are less socially useful. It is that the alternative, originality, can and should be taught and nurtured. . . . The book’s primary preoccupation is to provide practical tools to ‘unleash’ the hidden creativity in all of us. These relate not just to our own self-improvement, but to how we can ‘build cultures of originality’ both at home and at work. . . . *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.”

—Jonathan A. Knee, *The New York Times*

“Part of the fun of Grant’s book is that he redeems behaviors we typically regard with puritan disdain. . . . it so sharply deviates from corporate orthodoxy.”

—Clive Thompson, *The New York Times Book Review*

“Grant examines how people with groundbreaking ideas make them happen. In the process, he overturns the belief that trailblazers take radical risks (they often keep their day jobs and work at it on the side). He busts the notion that our customers are the best source of ideas (it’s actually our peers). And he sounds a warning over the potential downsides of strong, committed corporate cultures (over time, they can lead to slower growth). Along the way, he grounds the book in his trademark, evidence-based approach—seemingly every page introduces another study from a social scientist—without weighing it down.” —Jena McGregor, *The Washington Post*

“*Originals* attacks the assumption that nonconformist innovators are all bold, young risk-takers, churning out one fantastic idea after another. . . . Grant’s optimism about the potential of human beings to improve themselves and their organizations is refreshing, and his willingness to challenge and test the status quo instructive. . . . Grant has a deserved reputation as an original thinker. This book will add to it. But by championing evidence-based management and nudging leaders towards more scientific ways of answering the cultural questions that so often trouble them, he is starting to build an even more valuable legacy.” —Andrew Hill, *The Financial Times*

“Grant dives into what it takes to be a shoot-the-moon, Steve Jobs-like success. Many of his conclusions are counterintuitive and based on deep research. . . . The biggest surprise for me was that the most successful entrepreneurs didn’t quit their day jobs to pursue their ideas; instead, they stayed at work until they had worked all the kinks out of their plans and gotten them off the ground. The other head-scratcher in this book? Procrastination is a great thing. (This was a terrific revelation.)” —Andrew Ross Sorkin, *The New York Times DealBook*

“*Originals* deliver[s] to business readers what business readers want: evidence-based best practices to make them more successful. But at the same time, Grant nudges those readers down the road toward courage, inventiveness, and generosity. The promise is better results. The payoff is a better you. Grant, a professor at Wharton, has this effect because his books are not only among the best-researched in the psycho-socio-management genre, but also among the most human. . . . Grant is less interested in the effectiveness of creativity tools (brainstorming: friend or foe?) than in motivating divergent thinkers and making the world safe for whatever divergent thoughts they may produce. To be an original one must not only come up with new ideas but also Sherpa those ideas into the wider world, battling skepticism, incomprehension, and outright hostility in the process. . . . The book targets, in roughly equal measures, originals-in-the-making and those positioned to champion or suppress them. . . . A master of research, Grant is most illuminating and entertaining when peppering with empirical buckshot the thick hide of conventional wisdom. Among the most satisfying of his takedowns is the bromide

“We hire for cultural fit,’ which translates roughly as ‘We hire people like us.’ When companies ‘attract, select, socialize, and retain similar people,’ Grant writes, ‘they effectively weed out diversity in thoughts and values.’” —Leigh Buchanan, *Inc.*

“There is a growing and welcome migration of academic writers finding traction in the general readers market. Indeed, authors who spent time at the front of the classroom have found perches on bestseller lists. In the traditions of Daniel Kahneman . . . comes again Adam Grant, one of Wharton’s best-loved professors. His *Originals* explores how innovators see the world differently and bring others into their success. . . . Grant’s role as consultant to a variety of companies (Disney, UN, NFL, Goldman Sachs) afforded him unique insights, which are a lively component of *Originals*.” —Brad Auerbach, *Forbes*

“Grant’s latest looks set to join the required reading lists of many companies across America. In *Originals*, the young professor (he got full tenure at the Wharton School of Business while still in his twenties) argues that openness to progressive ideas is key to any field—whether in business, the arts, sports, or politics. While the stories of people going against the grain in their organizations have obvious ‘be a better company’ applications, they also offer insights into a richer and more compelling narrative about speaking up in today’s corporate world. But what sets Grant’s approach apart from other anti-groupthink thinking is its lead-by-example nature: being thoughtful about the way you effect change can encourage others to act.”

—Nathan Smith, *Wired*

“Grant draws on his own research conducted in tech companies, banks, and governments to showcase what leads to success. To be original, he notes, a person cannot simply have a new idea but must also act on that vision. For many of us, going the extra mile seems out of our reach. We think Steve Jobs, Jerry Seinfeld, Jackie Robinson, and their ilk are simply cut from a different cloth. But Grant argues, ‘Originals are actually far more ordinary than we realize.’ . . . Grant shares their wisdom, providing insights on how they nurture creativity, overcome the fear that often holds us back, and distinguish good ideas from bad ones. . . . [Grant’s] engaging style and sharp insights make for a compelling read.” —Lindsey Konkel, *Scientific American*

“*Originals* succeeds by marrying sound research and insightful anecdotes to a breezy narrative style that belies Grant’s academic roots.”

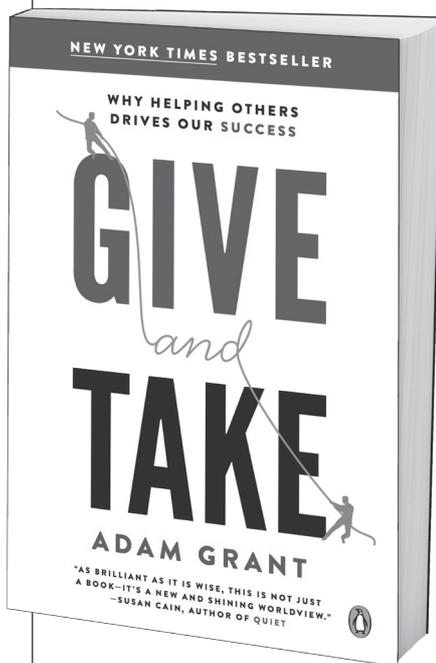
—Iain Morris, *The Guardian* (London)

“The anecdotes and lessons could be valuable to anyone who has struggled against the status quo at work. *Originals* offers advice that might seem completely counter-intuitive at first—but can actually pay off big in a person’s career.”

—Kerry Close, *Time*

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