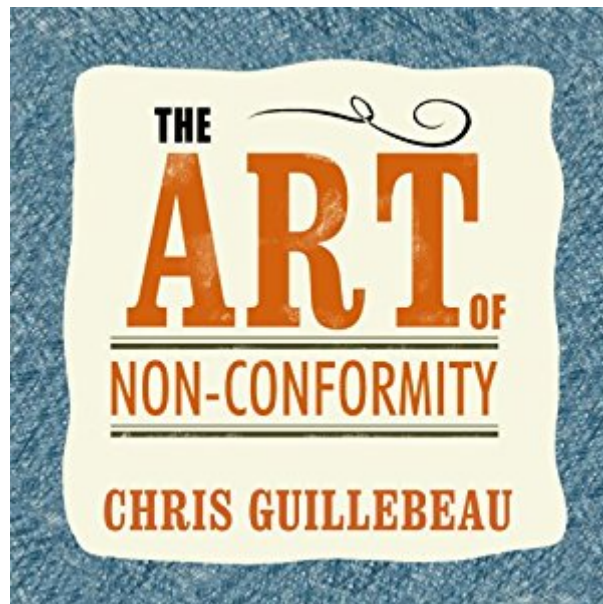


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The Art Of Non-Conformity: Set Your Own Rules, Live The Life You Want, And Change The World



Synopsis

If you've ever thought, "There must be more to life than this," *The Art of Non-Conformity* is for you. Based on Chris Guillebeau's popular online manifesto "A Brief Guide to World Domination," *The Art of Non-Conformity* defies common assumptions about life and work while arming you with the tools to live differently. You'll discover how to live on your own terms by exploring creative self-employment, radical goal-setting, contrarian travel, and embracing life as a constant adventure. Inspired and guided by Chris's own story and those of others who have pursued unconventional lives, you can devise your own plan for world domination---and make the world a better place at the same time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I should start with a disclosure. I have a PhD in Sociology and I teach at a community college. These two facts color my reading of Chris Guillebeau's *The Art of Non-Conformity: Set Your Own Rules, Live the Life You Want, and Change the World* in a way that other readers might not share. (They also have to do with why I was selected as one of the people to receive this book free of charge from the author.) I spend my days reading about and studying the gatekeepers and vampires that Guillebeau discusses and I am aware of even more devious and negative forces than he identifies. As a sociologist, however, one of the things that pleases me most about the book is the acknowledgment that other people exist. Far too many books in this genre forget the context in which one has to live an unconventional life. Guillebeau does not. He not only understands the need for dealing with those who would pressure a person to conform, but the need for a social structure to

succeed (a "Small Army" he calls it) and the understanding of how one's actions affect the lives of others ("world domination"). We do not live our lives in a vacuum and Guillebeau's approach meets this context head on. The thing that saddens me most about the book is that Guillebeau is not really that unconventional. Much of his advice and approach can be found in basic common sense and old fashioned understandings of how human beings should value their life, their time and other people. Most of what I read in this book I've heard before in other places. (Of course, I've lead a fairly unconventional life up to now and I share an influence in Barbara Sher, most notably her classic book, *Wishcraft*). This saddens me because in our society this has become radical.

I have a hard time believing I read the same book as the rest of the reviewers. The first problem I have with this book is that it's not three books. I suspect that if the book were split into three, the result would be much better. An autobiography of the author could be interesting. A book on how to travel well and on the cheap would be useful. A book on the art and virtue of non-conformity could be good. Instead, we get one book that fails at all three. To me, the author came off as self-congratulatory if not condescending, and offered very little that is new or even interesting. The assumption is that if you're not living the way he is, you're doing something wrong. His chapter on building your "small army" could just have easily been titled "how to put people in categories so you can mooch off of them." I'm a huge fan of bucking trends and approaching life with a non-conformist view. All assumptions should be challenged. All authority should be questioned. There are many paths to many different goals. However, that's not what this book is about, and there is very little here for someone that doesn't want to make money by taking advantage of a "small army". The author advocates life-long learning (yay!) but thinks universities are pointless. (boo!) His main argument seems to be that since he was able to pass tests without learning anything, then the system is useless. Really? While it's true that the formal education system isn't for everyone, there are many thousands of people that have managed to take full advantage of the opportunities it presents. College isn't for everyone, and you have to try to use the system, not get around it, if you want to get anything out of it.

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