

BOOK ENDS



SPEED READ

Performance coach Dr Diana Theodores invites business leaders to re-awaken their creativity with the help of *Big Magic* (*Creative Living Beyond Fear*) by Elizabeth Gilbert



How did you come across this book?

I searched out Gilbert's other books after reading *The Signature of All Things* (about a pioneering woman botanist in the 19th century), and found *Big Magic*. The title attracted me in the 'kindred spirit' way. My hunch was that with such a unique voice, Gilbert's take on creativity would be memorable.

What about it resonated most with you?

The belief that if you are alive, you are creative; that creativity manifests as a unique gift if we care to

open our heart and spirit to it. The humour had me laughing out loud all the way through: I've highlighted so many great lines that most of the pages in my copy are now yellow! And the idea that if you want creativity in your life you have to make space for fear too and keep going.

What have you put into practice from this book?

The acceptance that any creative act, idea or project begins from a place of uncertainty. Often the 'what', 'why' and 'how' only come into focus after you dive in and begin. I'm fascinated and drawn more and more to raw, messy and untamed exploration, to research led by the heart and by curiosity as my 'stage one' process before applying a structure or blueprint.

What is the book's take on the idea of 'persistence'?

The book addresses the notion very succinctly: essentially, that you become what you practice, so in the case of creativity - rather than waiting for the muse of inspiration to arrive - you

ritualise the doing every day, no matter how small a step or short a time. The daily is mightier than the deadline.

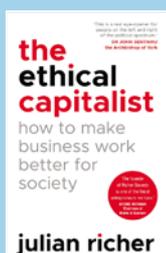
Is there an overall message in *Big Magic*?

When I'm coaching, I can't tell you how many times I hear the words 'I'm not creative' spring from the voices of so many amazing, accomplished individuals across every industry. I believe what they really mean is that they've forgotten a part of themselves. In the everyday performance of one's jobs and responsibilities most often the creative flame goes dormant: the piano not touched for a decade; favourite poems not read since school; the sketchbook replaced by spreadsheets. So, starting today, reconnect with your creativity. It's a profoundly powerful resource for performing at your best. ●

Diana Theodores, author of *Performing as You*, international performance coach and speaker and director of Theatre 4 Business (theatre4business.com)

BOOKMARKED

The ethical capitalist: how to make business work better for society
Julian Richer
RH business books
RRP £8.99



Julian Richer, the man behind the hi-fi chain Richer Sounds, has been busy since the 2018 publication of his book, *The ethical capitalist*. He hit the headlines for handing over £3.9m in shares to employees, and for funding people's legal challenges to the zero-hours contract culture.

Here he explains what it means to be an ethical capitalist. Being ethical isn't, he says, about going green or adopting Fair Trade and sending out a mission statement: it's about creating an entire ethos for the business that also feeds the economy and other businesses, as well as funding public services through fair taxation.

The first half of Richer's book deals with his three main ethical principles - treating workers well; not cheating the customer; and trading fairly. His aim is to show how, when people are well-trained and motivated because they are valued, a

virtuous circle emerges. "Ethical action," he says, "is no barrier to profit, but rather the secret of success."

In his first book 25 years ago, Richer's aim was to prove that his philosophy could work in any sector. This book arrives in a climate with people living on poverty wages amid rising wealth inequality. Richer is sceptical of the trickle-down effect, preferring to demonstrate to other entrepreneurs that they shouldn't use their ingenuity to fuel the race to the bottom. Rather they should be carefully selecting charitable partners and providing a legacy to society. There are chapters dealing with fair wages and taxation to help kick-start this debate with his readers.

Richer talks about working to end aggressive tax avoidance and tackle the housing crisis through business. Tantalising topics for future books, no doubt.