



Media Kit - *Les McGehee Plays Well With Others: A “Grown-Up” Handbook of Improvisation and Play*

V. Sample Review

Les McGehee makes things up. Really. Just ask him. He makes things up and he swears it is the only way to live an authentic, successful life. And not only that, he has stats to prove it.

Making it up as you go along? Great! That is exactly how you can make your life your own, according to improvising pioneer Les McGehee. The question is, what do you need to make that work for you all the time? How do you make it work for you when everything in this world seems so pre-formulated and scheduled to the nth degree? Well, McGehee knows. He has the secrets and he is willing to dish in his *Les McGehee Plays Well With Others: A “Grown-Up” Handbook of Improvisation and Play*, a refreshingly straight forward how-to that is part autobiography and part field guide to the life and habits of successful improvisers.

McGehee, who has been making a living and supporting a family while making it all up for over 20 years, has distilled his extensive experiences in the seemingly mysterious world of improv (where working without a net is de rigeur) into a surprising and inspiring call to put down your scripts and simply follow the lead of whatever steps up to the plate. That’s right. The idea is to let nothing throw you. And it is a surprisingly simple formula.

All one has to do is be willing to use two words. I’ll tell you one but I won’t be a spoiler and tell you the second. All the fun, well most of it is in the second word, but here’s the first one: Yes.

And as crazy as it sounds, his advice has been put into use in as buttoned-down a place as the Comptroller’s office of the state of Texas and in the McCombs School of Business at the University of Texas, where this very book is required reading for MBA graduate students. Indeed, most of McGehee’s clients are businesses, universities, and government agencies, the kind of places where you’d least expect the benefits of humor and flying by the seat of your pants to be appreciated. Yet, McGehee backs up his bold be yourself ideas with some very impressive statistics. And a vision that makes you pine for a world where his in the moment attitude really was the gold standard of conducting business. His compare and contrast on the number of times a child smiles and/or laughs to that of an adult is truly sobering. Or rather it is a call to belly up to the laugh bar.

This is the first in what he says is a series of books on Improvisation to be published by Dalton Publishing. The next focuses exclusively on the business end of things. This first one still has a great deal of emphasis on business, but it also includes several games that

professional improvisers use, the stuff those folks on *Whose Line is It, Anyway* (you know, Drew Carey, Wayne Brady, et al.) are on about as well as anecdotes, statistical validation of his premise and diary entries from his trips to Europe and the Middle East where he entertained troops using his improv techniques.

The beauty of McGehee's book is that he is not telling you how to be the next Robin Williams or even the funniest person in the room, though these are the methods to do just that. His basic premise is that learning to be yourself is actually learning to let everybody be themselves as well by fostering an environment that encourages everyone's success. With all the scandals plaguing government and business, it seems a message the industry is willing to try. And the sweet kicker is, it is big fun! Go figure, success and fun? Maybe yes is as good as it sounds.

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