

THE READING LISTS

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26TH MARCH 2019

Rana Florida: Satisfying My Curiosity

BUSINESS, NON-FICTION WRITERS, WRITERS



Rana Florida is a CEO, Entrepreneur and best-selling business Author. As Chief Executive Officer of the Creative Class Group, Rana Florida manages new business development, marketing, consulting, research and global operations serving such diverse clients as BMW, Converse, IBM, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Zappos, and Starwood Hotels – to name just a few. Rana has over two decades of experience in corporate strategy, communications and marketing, having executed marketing initiatives for the likes of Disney Live and Starbucks. She is well known as a writer on business and leadership, having written for *Fast Company*, *Inc.com*, and *the Huffington Post*. Rana Florida has also served as a guest business analyst on *The Today Show* and been featured in *The New York Times*, *Vogue Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal* and more. Her one-on-one high profile interviews have covered notables – from President Bill Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama to Andre Agassi, and many more. Rana Florida has also been heavily involved in a wealth of philanthropic activity, as well as holding a Bachelor of Arts in communications and an MBA in marketing and management. Her book, *Upgrade—Taking Your Work and Life From Ordinary to Extraordinary* was a 'Business Best Seller,' by Tattered Cover, the largest independent bookstore retailer in the U.S. and *The Globe and Mail*, Editor's Pick. Please enjoy my interview with Rana Florida.

How do you describe your occupation?

Best-selling author, Upgrade and CEO of the Creative Class Group.

What are you reading at the moment and what made you want to read it?

The Perfect Nanny by Leila Slimani the absolute worst book to read when you have toddlers, but I couldn't put it down!

Can you remember the first book you read by yourself?

Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger. I locked myself in my room away from my 5 siblings and raced through it in two days.

Are you a page folder or a bookmarker?

Page folder of course. Bookmarkers are for grandmas!

If you could gift yourself books at age 16 and age 25 - what would they be and why?

Small Fry by Lisa Brennan Jobs at age 16 because she has an amazing way of grasping all the awkward stages of teenage years and it would've reassured me how normal my upbringing was compared to the rest of the world. And at 25 I would have read, *Rise of the Creative Class* by my husband Richard Florida 6 years earlier than when I had read it!

Can you remember your first demonstration of entrepreneurial ability?

When my father who was an engineer, helped me make a system of levers for my 5th grade math class for Mr. Hays. I scored an A++ after I demonstrated how it worked. I thought, if I could make this, I could do anything! Also, when my sisters and I designed hair barrettes and earned our first dollar selling door to door in our neighbourhood. We crafted a very creative sales flyer showing the designs and prices. We couldn't believe we launched our own business and the mark-up people were willing to pay on design and creativity.

If you could invite 5 authors (dead or alive) to a dinner party - who would they be and why?

Henry Miller, Anais Nin, Richard Florida, Charles Bukowski and Barbara Kingsolver because they all inspired me and shaped my curiosity.

What was the last book you purchased, and why did you buy it?

The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and The Age of Amazon by Brad Stone. I still can't believe Amazon started off as an online bookstore, now for my life to run smoothly, I can't live without it.

What is your favourite thing about reading?

I list reading as one of my favorite hobbies, because it expands the brain, transports you to another world and satisfies my curiosity.

What's the best book you've read in the last 6 months?

How to Change Your Mind by Michael Pollan because what better thing to try to understand than the mind itself.

If you could insert yourself into any book, which would you pick and why?

The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt because I read it when I was so nauseous and pregnant and couldn't get off the sofa, I was so hormonal and emotional and I so wanted to help that little boy who lost his mother!

When you think of success in the business world, who is the first person that comes to mind?

Good to Great by Jim Collins.

What is the book that you feel has had the single biggest impact on your life? What impact did it have?

Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida, when I read it, I fell in love!

What two pieces of advice would you give a young aspiring entrepreneur?

As I wrote in my book upgrade, take risks and don't be afraid of failure.

Are there any books you haven't mentioned that you feel would make your reading list?

My Paris Dream by Kate Betts.

What's the worst advice you hear given to young people looking to start their own business?

A business plan is a great way to help you plan for your new startup, but you don't have to be so rigid sticking to it. Adaptability and flexibility are key in launching a new business.

Which book sat on your shelf are you most excited about reading next and why?

Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics by Dan Harris and Jeff Warren. Because I'd love to learn meditation but I'm also a skeptic!