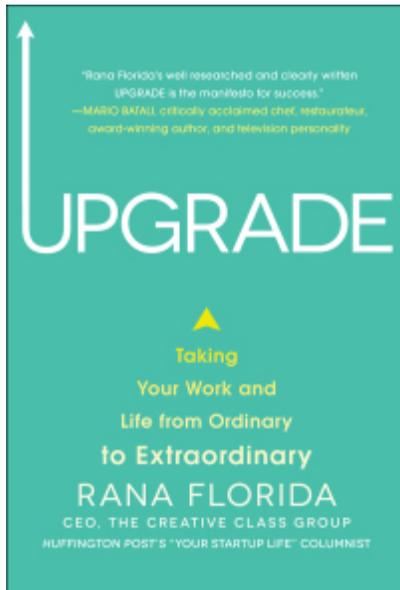


Upgrade

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It's time for an upgrade. In Rana Florida's latest book, she outlines what she considers to be the new imperative- integration of business and personal life strategies to improve the quality of our lives. In a recent interview with Rana, she shared her motivation for writing this book and the inspiration and insights drawn from the leaders she interviewed. Instead of compiling yet another tome of quotes from corporate CEOs, she interviewed a wide range of leaders from professions as diverse as graffiti artists and fashion designers to world class sports professional, Andre Agassi and former President Bill Clinton. Her book compiles and summarizes the common themes and lessons learned.

Rana knows firsthand about what it takes to upgrade. After leaving her corporate job and foregoing a steady paycheck she dove in head first into her start up, Creative Class, where she quickly learned to adapt to the one- stop shop of entrepreneurship. These valuable lessons, combined with those of the other creative innovators and thinkers influenced her to throw out what she learned in business school and take a fresh approach to leadership.

Rana's book summarizes the seven principles she believes are necessary to upgrade your life. Simply put, they are:

Envision your future

Find your passion

Be creative

Protect your time

Collaborate

Take risks

Embrace failure

As you can see, each of these principles have been extensively examined and widely published in business and self-help genres already. The primary difference between Upgrade and the aforementioned publications is the integration of business and life. As Rana explained, often business books are focused on "how to" and are rife with "clunky theories" about synergy and design platforms. Conversely, self-help books tell how to get healthy and how to "find your soul and energy." She asserts that her book is a collaboration of both – because whether we realize it or not, our business lives and personal lives are integrated.

Her book explores the relationship between failure and innovation and need for organizations to create environments that embrace failure as part of the learning process. After all, it is how science works. We bring ideas to light, test them and make data available to others so they too can test them. There may be many points of failure before arriving at ideas, products, or systems that are successful. In Rana's interview with Sara Blakely, founder of Spanx, a multi-million dollar undergarment manufacturer, she learned that as a child, Sara's father asked her daily, "What did you fail at today?" He viewed her failure as evidence that she tried something new. If organizations don't embrace failure, there will be no innovation.

Rana views her organization, Creative Class, as an example of the integration of analytics and creativity. At the core of their work is the data and research team and they are fully integrated with the marketing team which interprets the data and guides clients through the strategy. Richard Florida is the visionary leader and Rana manages the organization. As a model for integrating analytics and creativity, they

acknowledge and elevate these attributes in a way that is attractive to customers and communities that seek to embrace new ways of thinking about work and life.

They get it. Do you?