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Book Review

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The Simplicity Survival Handbook: 32 Ways to Do Less and Accomplish More

Author: Jensen, Bill
ISBN: 0-7382-0912-0
Format: Softcover
Pub. Date: 2003
Publisher: NY: Basic Books
Pages: 311
Cost: \$17.95 (List)
Available: Amazon at as low as \$11.67 (new) - \$3.99 at eBay(TM)

Subtitle:

Do less...of the corporate silliness. Ignore more of the noise and senseless stuff that comes your way.

You deserve better. You deserve to spend your time and talent on what truly matters.

The Books' Topics:

Stop the senseless stuff that comes your way each day

You don't have to remain a victim of the system nonsense, and you don't have to perpetuate that silliness either

You have more control over your workload than you believe

You can do something about "the system" without losing your job

The central themes of this book are:

Protect yourself, save time and see the humor in the stupidity that you experience at work

Change the conversation about leadership, communication, productivity workflow, efficiency and other system-twisted "motivators"

Keywords:

System Silliness

Supposed-to Stupidness

Corporate Claptrap

The Productivity of Doing Less

Main Idea:

Doing less is smart, productive and professional.

Vegetating in the minefield of and mindless tasks and "black hole" politics of the system is less fulfilling and leaves a bad taste in your mouth.

Navigating through this morass can be fun if you know what to expect, and if you learn the Simplicity Survival Judo that uses the clumsy inertia of the bureaucracy to trip your bosses and coworkers under their own weight.

Quotes:

"Ask "Why?" three to five times before agreeing to do stuff." (p. - 87)

"Three ways to deal with bosses who don't get it

Smile and Nod

Go Around or Above

Let Your Departure Do the Talking" (p. - 94)

"One of the primary drivers in day-to-day activities is to keep things moving forward. Most of us avoid anything that smacks of moving backwards -- like stopping to reflect on, and question, any work that has already been set in motion. That doesn't make us bad people. Or bad managers or bad teammates. Just crazed and overloaded." (p. - 148)

"The idea is pretty simple: give people all the information they need so they can manage themselves, and make decisions that ought to be part of their job. But leveraging transparency in ways that leaders can trust all this new

openness and self-management-- well, yeah, that can get a little complicated." (p. - 240)

Issues Addressed by the Book:

This book addresses the issues that develop from any bureaucracy or chain-of-command hierarchy. However, Mr. Jensen has figured out that the power of these organizations needs to reside at the worker (or teacher) level if they are to survive and thrive in the Information Age.

The Book's Shortcomings:

This book didn't have any shortcomings. It is the first book that we have reviewed to receive a perfect score. However, many teachers may not have the options of getting up and leaving when confronted with an archaic and backwards work environment.

For many teachers, the local school district where they work is the only game in town (or in many towns around). For these teachers, some procedures that are less assertive than "voting with their feet" may be most appropriate.

Comments:

Some of the strategies and solutions to real-world issues presented by corporate knowledge workers may not apply to teachers.

And, the grass may not be greener in the next school district, either.

Finding a vibrant work environment where creativity, productivity, and worker empowerment is the rule is almost "ruled out."

Summary:An original and creative work that is worth exploring and worth applying, especially for anyone that works for a large, bureaucratic organization.

Rating (Four Point Scale):

Applicable - 4

Relevant - 4

Innovative - 4

Original - 4

Interesting - 4

Overall Rating - 4.0