

Borrowing Brilliance: The Six Steps to Business Innovation by Building on the Ideas of Others



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David Kord Murray

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Book by Murray David Kord

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304 pages

Extrait

Introduction
Honor Among Thieves
Traveling back in time twenty-five years, I find myself sitting in a waiting room. I recognize it as the Westborough State Hospital in Massachusetts and I recognize myself as a young man with a full head of hair waiting for my friend Sarkis Kojabashian. I call him “Tuna” because his name sounds like “Starkist,” the company that sells canned tuna fish, and because I have no idea what a “Sarkis” is. He works at the hospital and I’ve come to pick him up so we can drive to Cape Cod for the weekend. Tuna had told me this was called the Westborough State Colony for the Criminally Insane when it opened a hundred years ago. Then it was renamed the Westborough State Insane Asylum. Next it was called the Westborough State Mental Hospital and now it was more cryptically known as the Westborough State Hospital. It smells of medicinal alcohol, damp linens, and dried piss. It gives me the creeps and I hate to think of my friend spending time in here. Sarkis wants to become a psychiatrist and he’s working as an orderly to get experience and college credits. A bad idea, I think. Across from me sits a frail, thin man, middle-aged and dressed in a green hospital-issued smock, like a doctor or surgeon wears. He isn’t acknowledging me and doesn’t seem to care I’m in the room. He rocks back and forth, mumbling something. I am certain he isn’t a doctor. I struggle to hear what he’s saying, but can’t. He chants to himself, the same thing, over and over. Where the hell is Tuna? I think. I want to get out of this place. I listen. Now I can make it out, barely, now I am certain what he’s saying. He wants something. “I gotta get a gun,” he mumbles. Oh, that’s just great, I think. Tuna leaves me in here with a psychotic killer, a leftover from the colony for the criminally insane. This guy’s going to pull out a Smith & Wesson from under his smock or attack me with a homemade shank. “I gotta get a gun. I gotta get a gun,” he repeats, faster, louder and more desperately. “I gotta get a gun.” Just then Tuna bursts into the room. “Hey, Murray! How the hell are ya?” he says as he smothers me in a bear hug. I push him away, pissed off, and motion toward the would-be assassin. “Get me the hell out of here,” I say. “What’s wrong?” he asks. “What’d ya think?” I say as we walk out to the safety of the corridor. “Oh, you aren’t scared of Billy, now, are you?” he asks. “That guy’s nuts.” “No shit. Where do you think you are?” he replies. Down the hall, faintly, I hear, “I gotta get a gun. I gotta get a gun.” I say to Sarkis, “He’s dangerous. He keeps saying that he’s going to get a gun.” Tuna laughs and says, “He isn’t saying he’s gonna get a ‘gun.’ He’s saying he’s gotta get some ‘gum.’ Something to chew on, Murray, not something to blow your brains out with.” In the car on the way to the Cape, Sarkis tells me that Billy was admitted to the hospital two years ago. Sadly, he’s been saying he needs “gum” over and over for most of that time. As Sarkis understands it, he lost his life savings in a bad business deal, double crossed by his partner, and now finds himself in a dank room, hidden in a mental hospital in an obscure part of New England. Every day Tuna gives him a pack of gum, Juicy Fruit, Big Red, and even Bubblicious, but every day he just repeats the request, over and over, even as he chews away. Go figure, right?***Twenty-five years later, hidden in Tempe, Arizona, I can’t help but think of Billy and wonder if he ever pulled out of it. Did he ever stop repeating himself? Did he ever escape from Westborough? I don’t know the answers to those questions. I never will. I do, however, start to wonder about my own sanity. While I’m not incessantly chanting for chewing gum, repetitive thoughts are echoing in my mind, and even though I’m thousands of miles away, I wonder how close I am to being admitted to Westborough. To joining Billy. I’m consulting for another leasing company, hired to create new ideas. The only problem is, all the ideas I create are just rehashed ones from my glory days. Nothing new. I’m known by my colleagues as an “idea guy,” but now every time I sit down to think of one, I keep coming back to Preferred Capital. My thoughts are repetitive, like Billy’s, trapped in the past, in a canyon of thought I can’t escape. I need some new ones. I begin to read. Voraciously. The little money I have is being spent on vodka, cranberry juice, and books. I’m reading more than two a week. Books on innovation and creativity. Business books. Books on psychology and philosophy. Science books. Books on neurology and biology. Anything that can help to get the creative juices flowing

again. The books seem to work. The vodka does not. Over the next couple of years I manage to think my way out of the one- bedroom apartment in Tempe and begin a journey out of bankruptcy and into a completely new occupation. I start a small consulting company called Kord Marketing Group, a reference to my mother's maiden name and my middle name, and begin developing new marketing programs for small, medium, and even large companies. Within a year, I get the opportunity to consult for one of the most prominent software companies in Silicon Valley. While there I come up with an innovative direct- marketing program that dramatically increases retention rates, boosts revenues by fifty million dollars, and adds similar bottom-line profits to the company. In retrospect, the idea would seem so simple and so obvious that the senior managers would scratch their heads and ask, "Why didn't we think of that before?" The founder of the company, a veteran of the Silicon Valley software wars and one of the few to beat Bill Gates at his own game, would find himself more intrigued to know how I came up with the idea than with the idea itself. "How'd you think of it?" he asked me. I explained to him how I'd studied his business problem and then looked at how other companies in other marketplaces had solved a similar problem. Then I had constructed the new direct- marketing program out of the borrowed ideas from these other places. It wasn't hard. Once I had the material, it was obvious which pieces would best combine to solve the problem I had defined. "Cool," he said. He was so impressed by the simplicity of the idea and how I'd come up with it that he created a new position at the company for me. I became the Head of Innovation, a position I hadn't even known existed at Fortune 500 companies, and I was told to come up with new ideas and to teach others in the company to do the same. It was this assignment that led to the book you now hold in your hands. At first, I was intimidated by my new position. How do you teach people to innovate? Is it even possible? I started to study innovative thinking. As an engineer by training, I was looking for a practical approach to innovation, but everything I read seemed to be shrouded in a fog of mystery. On the other hand, my personal approach to creative thinking was pretty much hack, I just stole or borrowed ideas from other places. In my new position I'd have to develop a more sophisticated approach—or so I thought. I found that most people believed that creativity was a gift. It can't be taught, they said, it's innate in your thinking process. Either you had it or you didn't. The more I delved, the thicker the fog around creative thinking became. As a subject, innovation was bizarre. The ones who did teach it used words like synthesis, lateral thinking, empathy, and pattern recognition to describe it. I didn't want to say so outright, but I had no clue what these experts were talking about. I didn't understand—it was over my head. I learned how to moderate a brainstorming session by suspending the criticism of new ideas but quickly realized this was a complete waste of time. The sessions were fun and intellectually intriguing but nothing practical ever came out of them. The more I learned about innovation the deeper into the fog I ventured. I studied the work of Teresa Amabile of the Harvard Business School. She is one of the country's foremost experts on business innovation and she said, "All innovation begins with creative ideas." Okay, I said to myself, that makes sense, but how do you define a creative idea? What is it? Over time I came up with this simple explanation: A creative idea is one that's new and useful. A new idea that isn't useful, I reasoned, isn't worth much in the business world. I could design a car with square wheels, it would be new and different, but it wouldn't be of much use. Later I'd come to realize that this definition transcended business, for it also applied to science, entertainment, and even the arts. I continued down this thinking path and asked myself two separate questions. What makes an idea useful? And what makes an idea new? The first question was easy to answer. Since ideas are the solutions to problems, it's your definition of the problem that makes it useful. Solve an important one and you've got a useful idea. Right? The second question, however, was a little more difficult to answer. To figure it out, I began to study ideas. I looked at my own ideas, the ideas of my colleagues, and the ideas of others in business, science, and the arts. I read biographies of Bill Gates, Steve Jobs, and the Google guys. I looked for the source and form of their new ideas. Then I studied Charles Darwin, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, and George Lucas. Again, I looked at their ideas. I wasn't trying to determine their thinking processes, I was just trying to determine the structure of their ideas. What made them new and different? It took a while, and I had to wade through a lot of crap, but when the fog finally cleared I realized that each new idea was constructed out of existing ideas. It didn't matter whether it was my simple direct- marketing

idea or Einstein's sophisticated theoretical-physics idea—they were both just combinations of existing stuff. Sure, Einstein's stuff was much more complex, but it was still constructed out of borrowed ideas. He even said, "The secret to creativity is knowing how to hide your sources." Aha, I said to myself. Maybe I'm not such a hack. Maybe there really is honor among thieves. Maybe we're all thieves. With this new insight, things became clearer and clearer. I began to tell people: Ideas—not just some but all of them—are constructed out of other ideas. I felt like the kid in the fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" who states the obvious: that the emperor is naked. I began calling bullshit, stating the obvious about creativity and changing the perception of it from a waiting game to an exploration game. In other words, creative thought is the search for an idea that already exists, not the act of waiting for one to pop into your head. Brilliance, I began to say, is actually borrowed. I learned that this wasn't just a characteristic of modern intellectual life, but has been so throughout human history. Some of the most creative people who have ever lived, such as Isaac Newton and William Shakespeare, were accused of idea theft and plagiarism. It didn't surprise me. Since ideas are born of other ideas, this creates a fine line between theft and originality. In fact, it was during the inquisition of Isaac Newton, after having been accused of stealing in the creation of calculus, that he successfully defended himself with the confession, "Yes, in order to see farther, I have stood on the shoulders of giants." In other words, Newton pled guilty to the obvious, that he built his ideas out of the ideas of others. As I thought more about this, I came to understand that ideas, like species, naturally evolve over time. Existing concepts are altered and combined to construct new concepts; the way geometry, trigonometry, and algebra combine to form calculus. Thousands of years ago, I reasoned, a Neanderthal man accidentally dislodged a large rock as he climbed a hill behind his cave. He watched as it magically rolled down the slope and he went "aha." The next day he chiseled the first wheel out of another stone and amazed his neighbors with his new invention that he had borrowed, copied, from his observation the day before. Another industrious Neanderthal copied the rock-wheel, except he made it out of a fallen tree, so it was easier to roll. Then another combined the wooden wheel with a basket and created the first wheelbarrow and used it to haul the carcass of a dead saber-toothed tiger. Later, this was borrowed and combined with a horse and a second wheel and the first chariot was created. Two more wheels were added to the chariot and the first carriage was constructed. Ultimately, the horse was replaced with a steam engine to make the first automobile. And so on...; each new idea being built out of a combination of the previous ones. The more I studied, the more I realized that borrowing ideas isn't just a thinking technique, it's the core thinking technique. The fog was gone. For me, creativity was now obvious and I wondered why the fog had ever existed. So I began to teach this methodology at the software company where I worked. Then something interesting happened. After a presentation to the CEO and his executive staff, the chief counsel of the company took me aside. "David," he said, "I loved your presentation and I think you're onto something, but you can't teach this to our employees." "I don't understand," I said. "You can't teach our employees to steal ideas from other companies," he said. "It's just too risky from a legal point of view. You have to take that part out of your presentation." I was in shock. How could I teach borrowing ideas without making the obvious connection that your competitors are, often, your greatest source for innovative materials? It was then that I realized why there was so much fog of misunderstanding in the creative process. No one wanted to admit that they were thieves, that at the core of the creative process was the act of borrowing. In order to create, you had to copy. The plagiarist and the creative genius, ironically, were doing almost exactly the same thing. The chief counsel was telling me to disguise the process. He was telling me to put a layer of fog over it so we couldn't be sued in the future. It was this experience that showed me, firsthand, why the creative process was so confusing and so shrouded in a hazy mist. The fine line between theft and originality was blurring the creative process. Most had a vested interest, like the chief counsel, in keeping the true nature of creativity a secret. I would learn that this wasn't a conspiracy to hide the process so much as it was a natural outcome of an economic-and legal-based society. You see, it was the monetary value in ideas that created the concept of originality. And it was the concept of originality that laid a layer of fog over the concept of creativity. Let me explain. **Origins of Originality** According to Richard Posner, a judge for the United States Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals and author of *The Little Book of Plagiarism*, "...in Shakespeare's time,

unlike ours, creativity was understood to be improvement rather than originality—in other words, creative imitation.” He goes on to explain that “the puzzle is not that creative imitation was cherished in Shakespeare’s time, as it is today, but that ‘originality’ in the modern sense, in which the imitative element is minimized or at least effectively disguised, was not.” In his book he explains that the concept of originality and plagiarism arose during the Italian Renaissance of the fourteenth century. Before this time, it was unusual for artists, architects, scientists, or writers to sign their work. Innovation and creativity were understood to be collaborative efforts in which one idea was copied from another and evolved through incremental enhancements. The concept of plagiarism didn’t exist. Copying and creating were rooted in the same thing. The person who copied had an obligation to improve the copy, that was it. In fact, the term renaissance means “rebirth” in French. While we think of the Renaissance as a moment in history when creative thought exploded, at the same time it was an era in which copying exploded, too, for the rebirth was based upon the rediscovery of the ideas of the ancient Greeks. According to art historian and author Lisa Pon, “If the Renaissance was a culture devoted to finding new ways and orders, it was also a culture inclined to find the roots of that originality in the past.” Once rediscovered, the ideas of the Greeks were imitated, recombined, and used to solve new problems. “The challenge of sixteenth-century imitation,” Pon said, “was to copy chosen models closely enough for their influence to be recognized, but to diverge enough so that the resulting work was a new one.” This is what I mean by the evolution of an idea and what Judge Posner meant when he said that creativity was understood to be improvement rather than originality. Pon goes on to explain that in the beginning, artists were paid by patrons like the Medici family of Florence. Men like da Vinci and Michelangelo were given room, board, a stipend, and told to create. The focus was on the artwork and not the artist, and so copies were valued just as much as originals. Copying was understood and expected. At the same time, a free market economy was beginning to develop and some of these artists began to break away from their patrons and sell their artwork independently. As this evolved, “by the second decade of the sixteenth century, patrons were often asking for pieces made by specific artists.” It was at this time that artists began to sign their work. This gave rise to the concept of “originality”—meaning a piece of art that was created by a specific artist and not copied by someone else. By the end of the Renaissance, there was great value placed on an original, and an artist’s signature became extremely important. Copying and plagiarism were now condemned, laying an initial fog of misunderstanding over the creative process. The more valuable the concept of originality became, the thicker the fog became. Artists and writers no longer wanted to share their work but took to defending themselves against copiers and frauds. A dense fog engulfed the creative process and the fine line between plagiarism and originality turned into a gap and ultimately a gaping hole. Today, the chasm is so broadly separated that creativity and copying appear to be contrary concepts rather than the parallel ones that they truly are. A similar evolution of originality happened in business a century later. At first, goods and services were alike; there was no differentiation between them. Soap was soap and beer was beer. In the beginning, scarcity drove the market. The great differentiator in products wasn’t in the product itself, but in the price of the product. The eighteenth-century economist Adam Smith has no mention of trademarks in his concept of a free market economy. The markets, he said, were driven by supply and demand. Products were commodities, copies of themselves. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, business success was driven by costs. Innovation and differentiation was in the machinery and production process and not in the products or marketing of them. By the middle of the nineteenth century, factories began churning out product for cheaper and cheaper prices. Things like soap were shipped to the local market in barrels and some factories began to stamp these barrels with the same branding iron that ranchers used to mark their cattle. This is how the term branding arose and with it the concept of product differentiation. With the advent of packaged goods, the brand mark was placed on the packages, and product originality began to arise. Customers started to prefer Palmolive soap over Ivory soap or vice versa. The products themselves became innovative and the brands, like the artists of the Renaissance, became a valuable asset. Companies that were able to differentiate themselves with creative brands, like Proctor & Gamble, began to win the early brand wars and copying them became unacceptable and illegal. Once the concept of originality took hold, it was followed by intellectual property concepts like

copyrights, trademarks, and patents, which were designed to protect the originator of creative ideas. These concepts shrouded the creative process in a fog of misunderstanding. Today, this misunderstanding results in a creative paradox. We are taught to value creativity and to disdain copying or plagiarism, but copying is the source of creativity. And so we're forced to conceal or disguise the source of our ideas for fear of social or legal retribution. No one wants to admit how they formed their ideas for fear of being labeled a plagiarist or idea thief. The cover-up isn't always intentional, often it's done in the shadows of your subconscious mind. You're unaware of the origins of your own idea, for it magically appears to you in an "aha" moment. But as Einstein said, the secret to creativity is to hide your sources, for he knew the true source of ideas is other ideas—that ideas give birth to one another. That they build on each other. And now you know it too. In the past, this secrecy and misunderstanding were tolerated because few people made a living off of being creative. Innovation was for a select few like artists, advertisers, entertainers, and entrepreneurs. For most of these people, the creative process took place in the subconscious mind and so it was assumed that creativity was a gift, something you either had or you didn't, it wasn't something that could be taught or manifested consciously. But today, the world is changing. There's a wave of innovation that's just beginning to crest, and before long innovation and creativity will become the responsibility of all of us. I know, because I've been surfing the initial swell. Let me explain.

Surfing the Innovation Wave

In the book *A Whole New Mind*, author Daniel Pink explains economic evolution using a screenplay metaphor. Economic steps are like the acts in a movie, and the members of society are like the actors in this story. The first act, as he calls it, was the Agricultural Age, and the central player was the farmer. To survive in this age one needed a strong back, for work was defined by the hard labor of planting and harvesting the field. The second act began in the nineteenth century and is called the Industrial Age. In it the primary actor was the factory worker. To survive in this age the worker tended to the machines and work was defined by long hours and tedious, repetitive tasks. The third act is the Information Age, which began in the twentieth century and was dominated by knowledge workers. Most of us are children of the information age for, according to Pink, we're at the tail end of this evolutionary step. To survive in this age the worker gathered and disseminated information, and work was defined by the management of facts and figures. But at the dawn of the twenty-first century, information has become a commodity, and so we're at the dawn of the next step, a step he calls the Conceptual Age. The primary actor will be what he calls the "creative" worker. The nature of work will change from the management of existing information to being the creator of new information. The creative worker, in order to survive, will have to know how to ride the innovation wave that's just beginning to crest. You'll need to become the creator of ideas and not just the consumer or manager of them. For me, the Conceptual Age is already here. In my role as the head of innovation for a prominent software company, and later as the vice president of innovation for a Fortune 500 services company, the nature of my work is to create new ideas and not just manage or consume existing ones. I suspect that you, even without an "innovation" title, are feeling the pressure to create and innovate just as I do. Product life cycles that were once measured in decades are now being measured in years, even months. Careers once spent in the maternal arms of a single mother corporation are now spent jumping from one company to the next. The need for innovation and creativity becomes more and more important as these product and career life cycles become shorter and shorter. Businesses must be reinvented at a feverish pace to keep up with the market, just as businesspeople have to reinvent themselves to maintain a successful career. Innovation and creativity were once the responsibility of the entrepreneur, the marketing department, or the advertising agency—now they're the responsibility of every employee. Innovation can no longer be outsourced but has to become part of the DNA of every organization. A survey of top U.S. CEOs in *Fortune* magazine listed "innovation" as the primary organizational priority. Or as Tom Peters recently said, "consensus is emerging that innovation must become most every firm's 'Job One.'" In 1921, as the Information Age was dawning, Claude Hopkins wrote a book called *Scientific Advertising* that became an instant bestseller and the bible for an emerging business discipline called marketing. Up to that point, companies were segmented into sales, finance, and operations, there was no such thing as a "marketing department," and everyone "did marketing." Brands and trademarks were in their infancy and the knowledge workers were just beginning to understand and manage them. Today,

as the new economic age emerges, a new business discipline is emerging with it to meet its unique demands. Instead of “marketing,” “innovation” is the new business department. Recently, I spoke at an Innovation Conference in San Diego alongside the director of global innovation at Best Buy, the vice president of innovation at Whirlpool, the vice president of innovation at Raytheon, and a dozen other executives with similar titles and in positions that didn’t exist a few years ago. This new group of professional colleagues is testament to the emergence of the Conceptual Age and the importance of innovation in business. It’s the result of the evolution of economics, business, and society in general. Daniel Pink says, “In short, we’ve progressed from a society of farmers to a society of factory workers to a society of knowledge workers. And now we’re progressing yet again—to a society of creators and empathizers, of pattern recognizers and meaning makers.” In other words, the innovation wave is coming, and in order to surf it you’ve got to understand how to construct a creative idea. That’s what this book is about, to teach you how to ride that wave and not drown in its wake.

Borrowing Brilliance in the Conceptual Age The goal of this book is to take the creative process out of the shadows of the subconscious mind and bring it into the conscious world. It’s to dispel the misconceptions about creativity, lift the fog off its true nature, and reveal the fact that brilliance is borrowed. In order to create, first you have to copy. Once understood, you can still use your subconscious as a partner in the process, but you’ll learn how to take control over it and not sit there waiting for that elusive idea to pop into your mind. Instead, I’ll teach you how to go out and find the material for ideas and then how to take this stuff and reconfigure it into a new solution. It’s not magical, my friends, it only appears that way. I’m here to tell you that the emperor has no clothes on.

Borrowing Brilliance is a six-step process, and so this book is organized into six chapters. I think of the first three steps in terms of a construction metaphor. An idea is like a house or a building. Your business problem is the foundation of that house. In other words, you build your idea on a foundation of well-defined problems. Once defined, you borrow ideas from places with a comparable problem. You start close to home by borrowing from your competitors, then you venture farther by borrowing from other industries, and finally you travel outside of business and look for ideas with that problem in the scientific, entertainment, or artistic worlds. Then, you take these borrowed ideas and start combining them to form the overall structure of your house, to form the structure of your new solution. I’ll teach you how to use metaphors and analogies to create this structure and so create the overall form of your new idea. I refer to the first three steps as **The Origin of a Creative Idea**:

Step One: Defining Define the problem you’re trying to solve.

Step Two: Borrowing Borrow ideas from places with a similar problem.

Step Three: Combining Connect and combine these borrowed ideas.

However, the construction metaphor only extends so far. Creating a new idea requires a process of trial and error, something an engineer or architect would never suggest doing in the construction of a house. So, I think of the next three steps using an evolutionary metaphor. An idea forms over time the way an organic species forms. An idea is a living thing, a descendent of the thing it derived from, the way a rock evolved into the wheel, the wheel into a chariot, and the chariot into the automobile. Ideas give birth to one another. Using this metaphor, your subconscious mind becomes the womb in which new ideas are created. You’ll learn how to give birth to them by teaching your subconscious to define, borrow, and combine and so you’ll feed it with problems, borrowed ideas, and metaphorical combinations. Then you’ll incubate your idea and let your subconscious form a more coherent solution. I’ll teach you to use your judgment of this new solution as the mechanism by which to drive the evolution of the idea, in the same way that the fight for survival drives the evolution of organic species. Then you’ll separate your judgment into positive and negative, thus revealing the strengths and weaknesses of your new solution. You’ll use judgment to improve the idea by eliminating its weaknesses and enhancing its strengths. In other words, you’ll create the way the Renaissance masters did, through the incremental improvement of existing ideas. Over time, though, your new idea will grow and evolve, and eventually when you present it to the world it will appear to be completely new and original and the incremental steps will merely be fossils in the process. I call these steps **The Evolution of a Creative Idea**:

Step Four: Incubating Allow the combinations to incubate into a solution.

Step Five: Judging Identify the strength and weakness of the solution.

Step Six: Enhancing Eliminate the weak points while enhancing the strong ones.

The sixth step isn’t really a step at all, it’s a return to the previous five steps: defining;

borrowing; combining; incubating; and judging; all in an attempt to advance your idea through elimination and enhancement. While the first five steps are linear and build off each other, the sixth step is more of a haphazard one. It's more organic, a self-organizing process, one in which the process creates itself and is unique to each project. After passing judgment, you'll return to the problem, reconsider it, perhaps redefine it or decide to solve a completely different one. Your positive/negative judgments will develop your creative intuition and give you greater insight into what to borrow and from where. You'll replace ill-fitting components with new ones that work better. This will help you to restructure your idea and thus make new combinations that work better to solve your problem. You'll simulate the mind of a genius by using left-brain thinking to take your idea apart, reconfigure it, and then use right-brained thinking to put it back together. In between these steps, you'll reincubate, returning to the well of subconscious thought as the process evolves. The order in which you do these things will depend upon your unique situation. Since I'm not a college professor or academic researcher, this book will not read like a textbook. Instead, I'll use stories to explain my thesis. I'll show you how the Google guys defined their problems in a manner that led to their innovative ideas. How Bill Gates borrowed the ideas of others and created the most powerful company in the world and became known as one of the pirates of Silicon Valley. Then I'll show how Charles Darwin did the same thing but why he isn't called the pirate of Edinburgh Valley. I'll explain how to use metaphors to make combinations, to fuse things together, and create the overall structure of your idea by showing you how George Lucas did this very thing to create his lucrative movie franchise and once you understand, I'll show you how to apply this technique in a practical way in your business. Then I'll tell you the story of Steve Jobs and how he uses his contrasting personality traits to pass judgment on ideas and in the process developed a highly sensitive form of creative intuition. Finally, I'll lead you on this road of discovery by telling you my own story. How I left a one-bedroom apartment in Tempe, Arizona, broken, busted, bankrupt, and with little hope of ever returning to my home in Lake Tahoe. How I discovered the ideas in this book and how I used them to develop my own ideas, to re-create my career, and ultimately to re-create myself. When you're done, you'll agree that brilliance is actually borrowed, easily within your reach, for, really, it's knowing where to borrow the materials from and how to put them together that determines your creative ability. Sadly, I'll never be Steve Jobs, and neither will you, but I can simulate the way he thinks even if it isn't inherent in me. And you can too. With that said, let's begin the journey. **The Long, Strange Trip Begins** Of course, I don't understand all of this as I sit in my one-bedroom apartment in an obscure part of Arizona nursing a Stoli and Cran and thinking about Billy. I'm praying to God that I won't end up like him, at the same time realizing that I already have because the thought is being repeated over and over in my mind. I don't know where to begin. How does a forty-three-year-old man re-create his career from scratch? Out of broken dreams? What's the starting point? Surely there must be an answer to that question. I wonder. **Présentation de l'éditeur**
In a book poised to become the bible of innovation, a renowned creativity expert reveals the key to the creative process-"borrowing".

As a former aerospace scientist, Fortune 500 executive, chief innovation officer, inventor, and software entrepreneur, David Kord Murray has made a living by coming up with innovative ideas. In *Borrowing Brilliance* he shows readers how new ideas are merely the combination of existing ones by presenting a simple six-step process that anyone can use to build business innovation:

?Defining-Define the problem you're trying to solve.

?Borrowing-Borrow ideas from places with a similar problem.

?Combining-Connect and combine these borrowed ideas.

?Incubating-Allow the combinations to incubate into a solution.

?Judging-Identify the strength and weakness of the solution.

?Enhancing-Eliminate weak points while enhancing strong ones.

Each chapter features real-life examples of brilliant borrowers, including profiles of Larry Page and Sergey Brin (the Google guys), George Lucas, Steve Jobs, and other creative thinkers. Murray used these methods to re-create his own career and he shows readers how to harness them to find creative solutions. Quatrième de couverture

All great business ideas come from visionary geniuses. Right? Wrong!

In fact most major breakthroughs and innovations happen when people take an existing idea and build on it, and in *Borrowing Brilliance* David Kord Murray shows exactly how it's done. A successful businessman and entrepreneur himself, he has evolved a unique and highly practical method both for tackling existing problems and coming up with fresh thinking on everything from improving structures that have faltered to developing completely new products.

It just takes six simple steps.

'A wonderfully enjoyable tour of the creative process ... People will be stealing from this work for years to come!' Roger von Oech, author of *A Whack on the Side of the Head* and *The Creative Whack Pack*

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