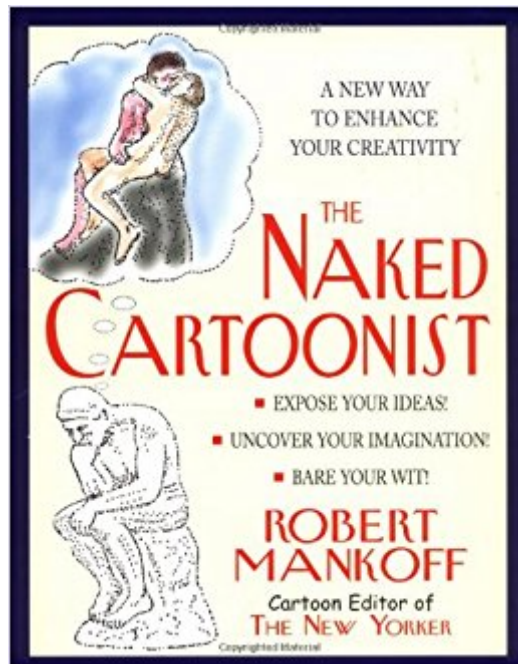


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The Naked Cartoonist: A New Way To Enhance Your Creativity



Synopsis

Only people like that buy books like this...or write them."So says Robert Mankoff "and he should know. As cartoon editor of The New Yorker, and one of its most gifted contributors, he spends his life pursuing that elusive thing called creativity, and inspiring it in others. If you've ever wondered where great ideas come from, or yearned to channel your creative energies, or just wanted some pointers on how to get those artistic juices flowing "this book was written for you. Along with some help from his well-known cartoonist friends, Mankoff takes you on an entertaining words-and-pictures journey through the art, craft, and zen of cartooning, along the way providing lots of personal anecdotes about his development as an artist, and about life at the world's most urbane magazine. But you don't have to be an aspiring cartoonist to appreciate The Naked Cartoonist. Mankoff's wisdom, and his practical yet whimsical approach to the creative process, are designed to benefit anyone who has ever stared at a blank piece of paper or canvas and dreamed of transforming it into something truly original (and maybe even commercial). What's so funny? Mankoff knows best. He also knows how you can find your own personal voice and message, how you can learn from the masters of the past, how you can transform a current event into a comic tour-de-force...even how you can incorporate telling lies and taking naps into your daily work routine "and justify it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book fails at the stated task -- showing a process of generating cartoon and general creative

ideas -- but succeeds nonetheless. Although I read the book cover-to-cover, I didn't find it very educational about the process of creating new ideas or even evaluating existing ones. If you define comedy as 'I'll know it when I see it,' this book doesn't do much to expand beyond that. There is a brief section near the end where the author describes (with examples) the order of punch lines, but that's about it. Nonetheless, the book is chock-full of cartoons from the New Yorker that are exceptional in their breadth of humor and subtlety. You may learn only a few things from the text, but you'll get a lot of smiles from the cartoons. If you want to create cartoons and don't know where to start, I would suggest picking up "The Cartoonist's Workbook: Drawing, Writing Gags, Selling" by Robin Hall. Hall's book is excellent at providing the mechanics of cartooning. Mankoff's book then acts as an excellent companion volume of real world examples that strike the funny bone.

Me, laughing my head off as I read this book. But this book also filled my head before I laughed it off. I thought it would be a hilarious collection of some of the best New Yorker cartoons, and it is, but it's also a complicated theory of creativity, humor, and art. The author keeps things light, but there are some serious points made as he investigates the links between cartooning, dreaming, surrealism, and so on.

I have a short list of favorite books on Creativity, (mainly Gabrielle Rico's *WRITING THE NATURAL WAY* for a practical approach), but just added this one to my list. Mankoff's approach embraces the chaos, insanity and surrealism of how ideas germinate, which can get a bit offputting if you have low tolerance for chaos, insanity and surrealism, but the results are often hilarious - I laughed all through it - and it's filled with lessons about how unpredictable the process can be - a fact that creative people embrace. If you want a sample of his teaching, look up his TED talk *ANATOMY OF A NEW YORKER CARTOON*. It will give you an idea of what he has to offer. My only criticism is that it gets a bit silly at times, but if a wild child can keep me laughing while learning, that's at least as good as a careful adult who clarifies thoroughly with bullet points but doesn't dare to goof around.

I can't believe someone gave Mankoff's marvelous manuscript a lonely one star. Maybe they haven't got a sense of humor. Maybe that person got up on the wrong side of the bed of nails. Who knows? In all due respect, I think that reviewer got the book, but didn't "GET" the book. You really should read it several times to get the gist, the kernel, the Zeitgeist of what he's giving the reader. I found it very entertaining, amusing, and enlightening. In fact, just today, I wrote a hundred gags based on one concept I gleaned from my second reading of *The Naked Cartoonist*. The first time I

read it from cover to cover. Then I decided to read the middle part. Besides that, anytime you can get some clever cartoon creation counseling and exceptional examples from *The King of Cartoons* (I hope he reads this) one should feel privileged. I gave it four stars only because some of the examples were so small, I ruined my eyes trying to read them (A lawsuit is pending). I would have given it 4.5 stars, but the nice folks at Amazon frowned on that. I write a humor blog called *Humorous Interludes*. It contains a lot of "off the wall" material, including a few cartoons now and then, and a weekly *Horror-scope* (No plug intended LOL). I use a lot of the concepts Mr. Mankoff recommends. I'd be lost without thinking out of the box, out of the room, out of the building, and out of this world. The book is a good resource to help gag writers and cartoonists in their pursuit of perfection in their art and/or writing. BTW, you can get it for a darn good price these days. Amen!

As a longtime reader of the *New Yorker* -- and, more importantly, a longtime reader of its cartoons -- I was happy to see that the cartoon editor of the magazine had written a book. To be honest, I expected more about the inside dealings of the magazine: the idiosyncracies of famous cartoonists, the backstage intrigue that led to my favorite cartoons. That's not exactly what this book is. It's more a solo performance by Robert Mankoff, who writes at great length about his own internal creative process. This was offputting at first, but by the end of the first chapter, I was hooked. He has an engaging voice and a real talent for illustrating his ideas (as you would expect), so the result is a pretty wonderful guidebook to human creativity and humor.

I won't drone on about this book. I'll lay it out: it's a nice size book, not too big, but it is packed with information. It could have been stretched into a giant volume, but he really puts it all together: wall-to-wall pro tips, info, and examples. If you are a new cartoonist, this book is a must.

Robert Mankoff, the Cartoon Editor of the *NY Times*, has written the book purportedly as a learning guide for prospective cartoonists. Well, I don't want to be a cartoonist, but I do love cartoons, especially those found in the *New Yorker*. In leafing through the book, I began having doubts that the text of the book would provide much help for a fledgling cartoonist. After awhile, you simply become oblivious to the written material and hone in on the many delightful cartoons. As the book says, there are 400 of them in this volume, and, to me, that justified the purchase price. This book is certainly as good as any of the other books that form part of the *New Yorker* cartoon book library, and if you are a devotee of pictorial humor, do pick up a copy.

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