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What People Are Saying about Richard Farson's Management of the Absurd

"Fabulous! This may be the best book on leadership I've ever read. It annoys, irritates, goads . . . and inevitably leads you to question things you should have questioned decades before. 'How to' it isn't. Instead it is genuinely wise."

Tom Peters

"*Management of the Absurd* knocks some cherished management ideas right on their silly butts, no easy accomplishment. Farson is a very smart and original thinker and well worth listening to."

- Richard Carlson
CEO, Corporation for Public Broadcasting

"*Management of the Absurd* is a delightfully irreverent book that addresses the real truths of management at an interpersonal level. After reading it, I felt as if I had just emerged from a cold shower—a bit shocked, refreshed, and feeling a bit better about myself."

- David T. McLaughlin
Chairman, The Aspen Institute
Former President, Dartmouth College

"Over the years, one thing about Richard Farson has become increasingly clear: Ideas of his that at first seem contrarian and far-fetched have a tenacious way of working themselves into the mainstream. The business community would be wise to heed his message in *Management of the Absurd*."

- Richard Pollack
Editor-at-Large, *The Nation*

"Farson's insight into the behavior of managers is truly extraordinary. By exposing the absurdities of fashions in management style, he offers hope that leaders may yet back off, reexamine their assumptions, and become more effective."

- Raymond M. Alden
Retired President, United Telecom

"Richard Farson's new book is a commonsense approach to management that is built on sound psychological principles

and data. Every manager ~in fact every person interested in human behavior<should read this book."

- Richard C. Atkinson
President, University of California
Former Director, National Science
Foundation

I love this book<a true original. Embracing the absurd, Farson comes up with new wisdom about management and about life. From now on, any management training session that omits *Management of the Absurd* will be incomplete."

George Leonard
author of *Mastery* and *Education and Ecstasy*

"This is the accumulation of Dr. Farson's lifelong interests in leadership and human organizations. It is one of the most lucid and wise expositions of management issues that I've read in a long time."

Warren Bennis
Distinguished Professor of Business Administration, USC
Author of *On Becoming a Leader* and *An Invented Life*

"Farson has done an invaluable job in giving us a picture of the leadership predicament that is complex, realistic, and human instead of prescriptive and simplistic. This book is must reading for all managers."

- Edgar H. Schein
Sloan Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus
and Senior Lecturer, MIT Sloan School

"Today, every successful executive must meet the challenge of managing paradoxical situations. He or she will survive the mental and intellectual stress of our modern times only with the knowledge that the paradox is not absurd but natural. Richard Farson provides us with the necessary insights to do so."

Klaus Schwab
President, World Economic Forum

"Unconventional wisdom from a remarkable thinker! This is the kind of book that makes you run out and buy copies for all your friends."

- Rachel McCulloch
Rosen Family Professor of Economics
Brandeis University

"Richard Farson's unconventional thinking never fails to surprise, and he's done it again with *Management of the Absurd*. I can imagine that Japanese executives will be jolted by reading this book, and may scratch their heads for a while, but in the end will be richly rewarded by his refreshing and valuable insights."

- Masami Shigeta
President, AMSECO International, Inc.

"Managers place their faith in certain documents that give them confidence to face the irrational and succeed. To that list can now be added *Management of the Absurd*. This book is chock-full of ideas that will make 'in-a-rut' managers have second thoughts. Simply reading the chapter headings is worth the price of the book."

- Bill Lacy
President, Purchase College, SUNY

"*Management of the Absurd* incorporates more wisdom about management than any book I have ever read. It is destined to become a classic in the field."

- Michael Murphy
Founder and Chairman, Esalen Institute

"Richard Farson has written a wise and wonderful counterfoil to simplistic solutions to complex problems."

- Sandy Mactaggert
Chairman, Maclab Enterprises
Former Chancellor, University of Alberta, Canada

"Richard Farson articulates the paradoxes of leadership and management with insight, grace, and remarkable honesty. These ideas will not only change your perspective on organizations but also deepen your understanding of human relationships. It is a very important work."

- Mary E. Boone
Author of *Leadership and the Computer*

"In this book, Dr. Farson takes us on a safari through the jungles of accepted management nostrums and the savannas of organizational bromides. He challenges some long-accepted concepts as mythical and sometimes dangerous beasts. He brings into focus the real dilemmas, predicaments, and paradoxes of that puzzle that frustrates all of us in our personal and business lives as we try to fulfill creative leadership roles."

- Douglas Strain
Founding Chairman, Electro Scientific Industries

"The absurdities of conventional management wisdom pile up in this wise, comforting, and heartening book."

- Mary Douglas
Former Professor of Social Anthropology
University of London
Author, *How Institutions Think*

"Cool designers have always embraced the absurd. Finally, an author asks managers to do the same. It doesn't matter whether Richard Farson's delightful paradoxes always work. Like Talmudic riddles, they spin you around and you're the wiser for the ride."

- Julian Beinart
Professor of Architecture, MIT

"Wise, witty, and wonderfully wry."

- Charles Hampden-Turner
Author of *Seven Cultures of Capitalism*

"Farson has written a succinct and charming book on the nuances of leadership. Stands out from the usual homilies about how to be a manager - a work of humanity and wisdom."

- Robert Kuttner Editor, The American Prospect Economics Columnist, Business Week

"Reading Dr. Farson's provocative book is a lot like talking with him: you enjoy it. Even when you disagree, you feel stimulated, entertained, enlightened, and amused and you benefit from each minute you get to spend with this special man "

- Spencer Johnson, M.D. Originator, co-author, *The One Minute Manager*

"I first encountered Dick Farson's unique management perspective at the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, where a group of experimental corporate leaders assembled to learn more about electronic-enhanced meetings, group linkages, and (though we didn't know it) management dilemmas. Many of us thought that e-mail was the message, and in 1982, that was quite a message. But the management and strategic impact lore, and the deeply counterintuitive behavioral outlook that Dick conveyed, through one example after another, was the real message. I have seldom encountered such a thinker, or teacher, certainly not in the management consultant profession, or at the business schools.

His impact on these students, who included a number of America's budding corporate leaders, had consequential influence on such companies as HewlettPackard, Levi-Strauss, Tektronix, and Digital Equipment. It is very satisfying, finally, to find his thoughts and concepts in print, so that a much wider audience can come to appreciate his profound thinking, observation, and point of view."

- Charles House
Executive Vice President and General Manager Centerline Software

[[Parent](#)]

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