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Book Catalog

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By Richard Farson
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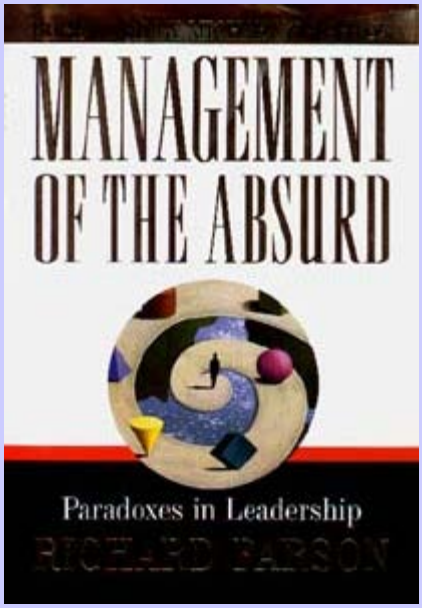

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Our Review

Opinion of the webmaster, subject to debate

Psychologist, educator and former CEO Richard Farson presents of a series of management paradoxes designed to challenge conventional wisdom and encourage managers to reexamine their assumptions about effective leadership. Facile formulas, catchy slogans, ten-step programs, and quick fixes too often dominate today's management training programs. But in organizations as in all of life, human behavior is seldom predictable, and business dilemmas do not easily lend themselves to gimmicks or simplistic

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From the Book Cover

Facile formulas, catchy slogans, ten-step programs, and quick fixes too often dominate today's management training programs. But in organizations as in all of life, human behavior is seldom predictable, and businccss dilemmas do not easily lend themselves to gimmicks or simplistic answers. In *Management of the Absurd*, psychologist, educator, and former CEO Richard Farson presents a series of management paradoxes designed to challenge conventional wisdom and encourage managers to reexamine their assumptions about about effective leadership.

Here, at last, is a dramatically new understanding of organizations and human relations. In his explorations of more than 30 paradoxical situations, Farson demonstrates the value of a radically different perspective on leadership and offers managers powerful new ways to cope with the many perplexing problems of organizational life. Managers at every level will recognize the very real dilemmas and complexities that Farson describes, and will be challenged by these provocative new views of the art of managing people.

Here are some of Farson's startling insights:

- The better things are, the worse they feel.
- Once you find a management technique that works, give it up.
- Big changes are easier to make than small ones.
- The more we communicate, the less we communicate.
- Nothing is as invisible as the obvious.
- Effective managers are not in control.
- Organizations that need help most will benefit least from that help.

Many readers will share Michael Crichton's ressponse to this book, as he observes in the foreword, "He irritated me. He provoked me. He made me nod, he made me smile, and he made me shake my head... [He] reports more than experience; he gives us wisdom." Guided by *Management of the Absurd*, managers of the 21st century will be able to accept the inherent complexity of management situations and work through these dilemmas, not with manipulative and simplistic techniques but with understanding, compassion and effectiveness.

Richard Farson is a psychologist, former CEO, and educator. He was the cofounder and president of the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, the founding dean of the school of environmental design at the California Institute of the Arts, president of Esalen Institute, and is currently president of the International Design Conference in Aspen. He has collaborated with lifelong associate and famed psychologist Carl Rogers on several research projects including the Academy Award-winning documentary film *Journey into Self*. He received his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Chicago, and was a Ford Foundation Fellow at Harvard Business School. He lives in La Jolla, California.

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Article from *Psychology Today* summarizing the main points of the book.

"Throw Out The Quick-Fix Programs For Managers", Lynne Carrier *Daily Transcript*

Synopsis of course taught by Richard Farson

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Reader Comments

Regarding "Management of the Absurd" - Latest First

Having read the book three times now, I feel I can recommend it as one of the most provocative books I have read om management. Farson will challenge all of your paradigms relating to management and personal thinking.

I am going to recommend to the attendees of the American Society of Association Executive Strategic Leadership Conference next week that they all read this book and try to apply its thinking to the managementof non-profit organizations, the ultimate absurdity.

-- Tom Ethen, CAE
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