



We Are All Weird: The Rise of Tribes and the End of Normal

By Seth Godin



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World of Warcrafters, LARPerS, Settlers of Catan? **Weird.**

Beliebers, Swifties, Directioners? **Weirder.**

Paleos, vegans, carb loaders, ovolactovegetarians? **Pretty weird.**

Mets fans, Yankees fans, Bears fans? **Definitely weird.**

Face it. **We're all weird.**

So why are companies still trying to build products for the masses?

Why are we still acting like the masses even exist?

Weird is the new normal. And only companies that figure that out have any chance of survival. This book shows you how.



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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a book about giving a damn. It's about caring about what you do and (as important) who you do it for. Professional apathy is a relic of a dead era and, as Seth teaches brilliantly, a mentality you cling to at great peril. Everyone with a pulse and a paycheck should be living *We Are All Weird*."

—**Chris Taylor**, founder, ActionableBooks.com

"This book will resonate with anyone who wants to lead a tribe, be authentic, dance to the beat of their own music, and make a difference in the world. If your inner critic (the resistance) has been telling you that you are not enough, your work is not good enough, and who do you think you are to make a difference, then buy this book. Let your freak flag fly high!"

—**Sherold Barr**, master coach + freedom fighter

"Seth has done it again. Open this book to almost any page. Read it, and change your thinking, your work, your life, or better express your art. Weird how he does this, isn't it?"

—**Rob Berkley**, executive coach, VisionDay.com

About the Author

SETH GODIN is the author of eighteen international bestsellers—including *Purple Cow* and *Tribes*—that have changed the way people think about marketing, leadership, change, and the way ideas spread. He founded Yoyodyne and Squidoo, is a successful (and unsuccessful) entrepreneur, and a very popular lecturer. He publishes inspiration daily on his blog, consistently ranked as one of the one hundred most popular in the world.

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INTRODUCTION: THE PREGNANT ELEPHANT

Ad legend Linda Kaplan Thaler tells the story of a zoo in Belgium, down on its luck. The crowds had stopped coming.

With the emergence of so many alternative amusements, diversions, and novelties, the zoo had fallen on hard times. Attendance was down, but the animals still needed to get fed.

Then their elephant got pregnant.

Alert ad agency geniuses leapt into action. They put a sonogram of the baby elephant on YouTube. They ran polls and contests (girl or boy?). Attention was paid. Hoopla was generated. The zoo was back on track, and attendance climbed.

The elephant gave the zoo its mass back. Mass reach, mass excitement, mass crowds. An apparent triumph for new media.

The story is told because it harks back to a happier time, to an era when ad agencies could easily do what they were paid to do: get the attention of the public. It reminds us that our economy is built on the back of mass, on public amusements, on factories organized to create widgets or services or entertainment for anyone (and everyone) with money to spend.

Marketers can be forgiven their nostalgia. Mass is no longer a scalable, predictable way to engage with the public. Success like the zoo's is rare (because pregnant elephants are an oddity). From now on, mass market success will be the exception, the black swan.

Mass is dead. Here comes weird.

Mass, Normal, Weird, and Rich

This is a book about four words and how the revolution we're living through demands we change our understanding of what they mean.

MASS is what allowed us to become efficient. Mass marketing and mass production and mass compliance to the rules of society have defined us. Mass is what we call the undifferentiated, the easily reached majority that seeks to conform and survive.

NORMAL is what we call people in the middle. Normal describes and catalogs the defining characteristics of the masses. Normal is localized—being a vegetarian is weird in Kansas but normal in Mumbai. What's normal here is not what's normal there. Finding and amplifying normal is essential to anyone who traffics in mass. Over time, marketers have made normal a moral and cultural standard, not just a statistical one.

WEIRD is what we call people who aren't normal. Your appearance or physical affect might be unusual by nature or by birth, but, like me, you're probably mostly weird by choice. Different by nature isn't your choice, and it's not my focus here. Weird by choice, on the other hand, flies in the face of the culture of mass and the checklist of normal. I'm interested in this sort of weird, people who have chosen to avoid conforming to the masses, at least in some parts of their lives.

RICH is my word for someone who can afford to make choices, who has enough resources to do more than merely survive. You don't need a private plane to be rich, but you do need enough time and food and health and access to be able to interact with the market for stuff and for ideas.

The swami I met in a small village in India is rich. Not because he has a fancy house or a car (he doesn't). He's rich because he can make choices and he can make an impact on his tribe. Not just choices about what to buy, but choices about how to live.

• • •

Human beings prefer to organize in tribes, into groups of people who share a leader or a culture or a definition of normal. And the digital revolution has enabled and amplified these tribes, leaving us with millions of silos, groups of people who respect and admire and support choices that outsiders happily consider weird, but that those of us in the tribe realize are normal (*our* normal).

My argument is that the choice to push all of us toward a universal normal merely to help sell more junk to the masses is both inefficient and wrong. The opportunity of our time is to support the weird, to sell to the weird, and, if you wish, to become weird.

The Battle of Our Time

It's not between men and women . . .

or the left and the right . . .

or even between the Yankees and the Red Sox.

The epic battle of our generation is between the status quo of mass and the never-ceasing tide of weird.

It's difficult to not pick sides. Either you'll want to spend your time and effort betting on mass and the status quo—and trying to earn your spot in this crowded mob—or you'll abandon that quest and realize that there are better opportunities and more growth if you market to and lead the weird.

Two decisions you'll need to make within the hour:

1. Do you want to create for and market to and embrace the fast-increasing population that isn't normal? In other words, which side are you on—fighting for the status quo or rooting for weird?

and

2. Are you confident enough to encourage people to do what's right and useful and joyful, as opposed to what the system has always told them they have to do? Should we make our own choices and let others make theirs?

PART 1: CAPITALISM, INDUSTRY, AND THE POWER OF MASS—AND ITS INEVITABLE DECLINE

It's not an accident that our instincts, expectations, and biases are organized around honoring the masses. We shun the outliers, train students to conform, and reward companies that create historically efficient mass market products.

The Mass Market Redefines Normal

The mass market—which made average products for average people—was invented by organizations that needed to keep their factories and systems running efficiently.

Stop for a second and think about the backward nature of that sentence.

The factory came first. It led to the mass market. Not the other way around.

Governments went first, because it's easier to dominate and to maintain order if you can legislate and control conformity. Marketers, though, took this concept and ran with it.

The typical institution (an insurance company, a record label, a bed factory) just couldn't afford mass customization, couldn't afford to make a different product for every user. The mind-set was: This is the Eagles' next record. We need to make it a record that the masses will buy, because otherwise it won't be a hit and the masses will buy something else.

This assumption seems obvious—so obvious that you probably never realized that it is built into everything

we do. The mass market is efficient and profitable, and we live in it. It determines not just what we buy, but what we want, how we measure others, how we vote, how we have kids, and how we go to war. It's all built on this idea that everyone is the same, at least when it comes to marketing (and marketing is everywhere, isn't it?).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Teresa Dillard:

Do you one of people who can't read enjoyable if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this specific aren't like that. This We Are All Weird: The Rise of Tribes and the End of Normal book is readable by you who hate those straight word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable reading experience without leaving also decrease the knowledge that want to provide to you. The writer connected with We Are All Weird: The Rise of Tribes and the End of Normal content conveys the idea easily to understand by many people. The printed and e-book are not different in the content material but it just different such as it. So , do you nevertheless thinking We Are All Weird: The Rise of Tribes and the End of Normal is not loveable to be your top record reading book?

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Louis Trent:

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