



# Crazy Is a Compliment: The Power of Zigging When Everyone Else Zags

*Linda Rottenberg*

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**Crazy Is a Compliment: The Power of Zigging When Everyone Else Zags** Linda Rottenberg  
*If people aren't calling you crazy, you aren't thinking big enough*

These days taking chances isn't just for college dropouts in hoodies. Whether you work at a Fortune 500 company, a nonprofit, or a mom-and-pop, everybody needs to think and act like an entrepreneur. We all need to be nimble, adaptive, daring -- and maybe even a little crazy -- or risk being left behind.

But how do you take smart risks without risking it all? That's Linda Rottenberg's expertise. As the cofounder and CEO of Endeavor, the world's leading organization dedicated to supporting fast-growing entrepreneurs, she's spent the last two decades helping innovators think bold and execute smart.

Now Rottenberg draws on her unrivaled experience to show you the proven techniques to achieve your dreams: from overcoming fear to facing down critics, from stalking supporters to exploiting chaos. *Crazy is a Compliment* combines inspiring stories, original research, and practical advice to create a road map for getting started and going bigger.

Rottenberg brings to life iconic entrepreneurs like Walt Disney and Estée Lauder and reveals how companies like MTV, GE, and Burberry found their best successes by breaking the corporate mold and embracing the entrepreneur mind-set. She also introduces us to some of the one thousand entrepreneurs she's advised, like Leila Velez, who started a hair-care company in her kitchen sink in Rio that now earns \$80 million a year. As Linda writes:

*Every day I meet people with a dream. Maybe you're serving coffee and fantasizing about launching a microbrewery; maybe you've skipped college and yearn to start your own design firm; maybe you're sitting in your cubicle and brainstorming a new idea that can improve your company.*

*You have a dream, but you don't know how to turn your dream into reality. Or you've already launched your dream but you're unsure how to take it to the next level. This book can show you the way.*

## Crazy Is a Compliment: The Power of Zigging When Everyone Else Zags Details

Date : Published October 7th 2014 by Penguin Group (first published October 2nd 2014)

ISBN : 9781591846642

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Format : Hardcover 263 pages

Genre : Business, Entrepreneurship, Nonfiction, Self Help, Personal Development

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Favourite TakeAways

The first step to acting like an entrepreneur is to look not at the writing on the wall but at the spaces between the writing. It's in the gap between what's being said (or done) and what's not being said (or done) that entrepreneurs thrive.

There is always a void left between what we are and what we can be. "Whatever human accomplishments there have been in history, they have been possible precisely because of this empty space,"

At every turn, someone (or, more likely, everyone) will call you and your idea crazy. The job of the innovator is to push past naysayers and find a way to drive forward.

Before 1954 everyone thought the four-minute mile was the physical limit of the human body. When Roger Bannister broke the world record, he also broke a psychological barrier. By the end of 1957 sixteen runners had accomplished the feat. "Too many aspiring entrepreneurs make the pre-Bannister mistake,"

"We censor ourselves. We discount our potential and therefore don't make it big

Don't look to others to validate your desires; look to yourself. Or as the legendary Bob Jones said about golf, it's "a game played on a five-inch course—the distance between your ears."

entrepreneurship, like great cooking, can be practiced and honed by anybody with a desire to learn. (Also, just like master chefs, even the most skilled entrepreneurs drop some pans and break a few eggs along the way.)

Anybody can be a change agent today. There are no admission criteria. There is no wardrobe requirement. There is no secret vote. Entrepreneurship is for everyone.

In the end, mastering the art of entrepreneurship is not simply about starting a business. It's about taking chances, overcoming doubts, managing risk, dealing with chaos, cultivating employees, coping with stumbles and successes, integrating work and family, and paying it forward to ensure that the next generation can dream big as well.

heart + mind - fear = entrepreneur

Jeff Bezos has a wonderful way of describing the heightened mind-set of being an entrepreneur. He calls the mix of anticipation, excitement, and uncertainty Day One. In Bezos's coinage, "Day One" is not a date on a calendar; it's a commitment to seeing every day as a fresh opportunity to create something new. Sixteen years after Amazon started, Bezos concluded a shareholder letter by saying his approach remains unchanged: "It's still Day One."

The first thing to know about chaos is that it happens to everybody. Turbulence is the official climate of

entrepreneurship. Sometimes the source of unrest is external: a natural disaster, a revolution, a war, or, as happened to me, a high-risk pregnancy. Whatever the situation, the key is not to flee from the situation but to run into it.

## Minnovation

Successful entrepreneurs don't innovate; they minnovate. They don't create Google; they create a more targeted search engine that serves a market or location that was overlooked.

Flawsome -A combination of "flawed" and "awesome," "flawsome" is a way to say something is great but imperfect. In business the term has come to mean an awareness of, and a willingness to admit, your shortcomings.

The biggest barriers to success in the entrepreneurial age are not physical, financial, educational, or national. They are psychological. The keys to unlocking success are believing in yourself and finding others who believe in you.

Everything in the life of the entrepreneur is conditional. If the work isn't interesting or fun enough, the employees leave. If the profit or impact isn't great enough, the funders leave. If the product or service isn't effective enough, the customers leave.

## Types of Entrepreneurs

### GAZELLES.

This is the classic entrepreneur of myth and reality, someone who starts a new business venture and aims for it to explode into a white-hot phenomenon—Home Depot, Facebook, Jenny Craig, Under Armour, Instagram. High growth is the goal. The term "gazelle" was coined by the economist David Birch in 1994. It describes high-growth businesses whose sales double every four years. Gazelles are fast moving and high jumping.

### SKUNKS

The term "intrapreneur," which first popped up in the 1970s and first appeared in the American Heritage Dictionary in 1992, is defined as a person within a large corporation who takes responsibility for "turning an idea into a profitable finished product through assertive risk-taking and innovation.

### DOLPHINS

Dolphins are my nickname for contrarians in the nonprofit or public sector who are willing to buck the conventions of their professions and agitate for real change. Why dolphins? Because they're smart and social (they live in cooperative groups, called pods) and are one of the few animals shown to be altruistic toward others. But they're not pushovers: Harm a dolphin's pod, and watch out!

### DIAMONDS –

Diamond entrepreneurs are brilliant dreamers who start bold, disruptive organizations.

Steve Jobs. Mark Zuckerberg. Sergey Brin and Larry Page. Ted Turner. George Lucas. Elon Musk.

They are charismatic evangelists who capture the imagination of everyone they meet as they talk about revolutionizing people's lives. Diamonds envision a more exciting world, then inspire others to help them

achieve it. But diamonds often lack a clear road map for growth; they tend to have highly unstable and unpredictable futures. When diamonds succeed, they can be game changers. But when they fail, it's often quick and messy.

## BUTTERFLIES

Butterfly entrepreneurs often dive into their enterprises without a plan. They see something that needs fixing, and they go about fixing it. In their case, it's often not a choice because many don't even realize they're starting something when they do.

Why is it that so many entrepreneurs, in so many divergent fields, are all called, well, nuts? The short answer is that seeing things in an unconventional way is threatening: It's threatening to those who benefit from the status quo, and it's equally threatening to those outside the establishment who might have had that idea or taken those steps, if only Machiavelli made that point in *The Prince*: "There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things."

## QUOTES

Deciding what not to do is as important as deciding what to do. That's true for companies, and it's true for products. - Steve Jobs

Starting a company is like getting married," said Georges Doriot, the father of venture capital. "Most of the problems are discovered after the honeymoon is over."

Be fearful when others are greedy and be greedy when others are fearful.- Warren Buffet

stability is the friend of the status quo; chaos is the friend of the entrepreneur.

Henry David Thoreau: "I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavor."

Entrepreneurs know how to hedge their bets, but they also know when to play their cards.

If everybody else is doing it one way, there's a good chance you can find your niche by going in exactly the opposite direction.- Sam Walton

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## Danella Yaptinchay says

An enjoyable book through and through! I love how Linda Rottenberg read it, enjoyed all the anecdotes she cited and appreciated all the the insights she shared. What a wonderfully comprehensive gift to entrepreneurs (and all readers). I will definitely come back to it again and again, and share her words of wisdom.

I have a newfound respect for Endeavor and hope to be an Endeavor entrepreneur one day. My kind of community development.

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## Nicole says

The spoiler would be - don't read this if you don't want to think about changing you life.

Interesting take on the world, work, careers, jobs and success and failure

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### **Bryan Doughty says**

Audio Book read:

I liked it so much that I listened again!

Linda does a great job of getting inside the heads of those that are looking towards the future and gives examples that are fresh and not the same old same old that one reads in many similar books. In addition, she does put herself on a pedestal to stroke her ego. She appears to be writing this book to simply share what she has learned over the years. It really is an excellent book and if one has hopes and dreams of building a company or changing how the world work I would highly recommend this book.

The only part I wished was discussed more was how the "crazy" deal with describing to others what they see in their heads. The "crazy" see many things differently, but convincing others to follow their path is quite difficult. Mainly because change is difficult or people simply cannot understand what the "crazy" people are trying to create.

Bravo to Linda for this one.

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### **Karen Chung says**

An excellent guide to things you should be aware of and follow through on if you're planning on starting a business, or already have one.

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### **Katheriin says**

Linda gives great insight into the world of entrepreneurs - a lot of interesting stories, advice and insight from her own experience as well as others. A well written, encouraging but realistic, and most of all, enlightening book that brings together and builds upon many many books and publications written on entrepreneurship prior to Crazy Is a Compliment.

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### **James says**

Having recently finished my MBA and having been an entrepreneur myself with a restaurant and national supply business for a franchise, I found many insights to things I wish I had tried. There was a great chapter of mentoring and how just seeking I is not enough. I also liked the thought of seeking many at all levels up down and around and that the mentors change change as you change and grow. Very insightful and something that even in my corporate role today I should be doing more of.

### **MissUnderstoodGenius says**

This book isn't a usual business book but more like an inspirational book for would-be entrepreneurs. It talks about real life stories of entrepreneurs and how they became successful in their endeavours as well as potential pitfalls that one needs to be aware of - made this a truly enjoyable read. For eg: 3M employee who invented Post-It Notes, which eventually went on to become one of 3M's biggest selling products. Great tips on forming an entrepreneurial culture in an organization.

Its a good reminder for would-be entrepreneurs who might lack connections to elite networks and don't have trust funds as a safety net but what you should possess is chutzpah!!

Would I recommend it?

An upbeat and optimistic book for someone who has lived the entrepreneurial adventures or any entrepreneur who's currently struggling or hitting a snag in starting a business.

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### **Scott Wozniak says**

There's not a lot new to me in this book, but it's very well written (and I read a lot anyway, so for many it wouldn't be redundant at all). It's for people who are considering breaking out of the rut into entrepreneurship and for people who have taken the leap and are trying to stabilize. It's got both practical methods and some great personal self-management. A great read if you want to build a different life for yourself.

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### **Rami Adwan says**

This book is one in a genre that aims to instill passion in persons encouraging them to follow their hearts and seek the path of entrepreneurship.

The Author is a co founder of Endeavor , a global organization, that aims to promote business growth by working with businesses that are at a juncture of growth with the right resources. The book talks to these businesses and earlier stage business startups or persons contemplating starting their own businesses.

The book outlines the importance of heeding dreams, having passion, managing risk, and facing critics.

In my view, and as with every other book, these books, hold a different value to different readers all depending on how far they are in their life and experience. For the early startup, the insights can be invaluable. For others, it is more of the generic talk in books of guidance, self help, theory, and motivation.

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### **Wai Min says**

No new insights - I would say the author summarized pretty commonsensical principles and threw case studies and narratives in as examples, but still a pretty blah book overall.

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## **Larry Oksten says**

Good look at taking risks and looking at the world not like it is but as it could be.

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## **Gennai says**

This book is both interesting and inspirational. I'm sure I will read it again in the future

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## **Cindy says**

Highly recommend this quick and easy read to anyone who is involved with a for profit or non-profit startup or someone who wants to think and act like a startup in their established corporation. I laughed, learned and most importantly was motivated during and after reading this book to act. Yes, the author gets a bit redundant and some examples and anecdotes are those you've heard before (hence the 4 stars instead of 5) but she is a good storyteller and you learn about so many interesting entrepreneurs across the globe. Prior to listening to a podcast by the author I was unfamiliar with Endeavor, the non-profit she started and leads today. Their focus is entrepreneurs around the world and helping them to achieve their dreams to and to stimulate economies via startup ventures. She shares solid insights on ways to minimize your risk and achieve your goals. Enjoy it!

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## **Jeanne says**

Endeavor is a remarkable firm and Linda Rottenberg has quite the pedigree and support. Recommended by my hero, Bill Ackman, who distributed the book in his last investor conference, I was really excited to read it. And while it didn't exactly live up to my expectations, I still learned a lot. And felt motivated. Structurally, what is remarkable about this self-development book is that it doesn't overly repeat itself. Each chapter serves a purpose and each lesson is well thought out. I really enjoyed her interesting highlights of successful individuals, especially the number of female entrepreneurs' stories. Like all self-help books, Rottenberg pushes a categorization of people only to hardly refer back to her grouping of entrepreneurs. Lastly, you can tell that Rottenberg is crazy, but it's a compliment. Recommended read.

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