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Self Help

Title: How To Get Fired!

Author: Jeff Havens

Rating:  Must Read!

Publisher: Big Pow! Books

Web Page: www.jeffhavens.com

Reviewed by: **Eric Jones**



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I'm fresh out of college, so naturally I've turned to all the employee handbooks that I can scrounge up because the first thing college does once you've graduated is hit you with the bill. It doesn't help that I graduated during a recession, and with a degree in English. The first thing I did after graduating was hunker down in a calendar kiosk in the middle of a mall in Madison, Wisconsin and try to dodge customers. This is precisely where Jeff Havens knew that I'd be, and obviously why he wrote "How to Get Fired!" a satire on workplace politics that's both enlightening and funny.

Anybody who has watched the television phenomenon, "The Office", or Mike Judge's classic "Office Space", will be familiar with Havens' brand of humor. He takes delightful jabs at the familiar conventions of workforce SOP (that's 'Standard Operating Procedure' to the uninitiated) like acronyms, Casual Friday, resume embellishment, and how you interact with fellow employees. The quips are often really clever and funny, (my favorite is: "How long was it before "Office Space" stopped making you laugh and started making you unaccountably sad?") but unlike other mediums of office humor, Havens book has a deeper motivation.




The underlying point of "How to Get Fired!" is actually the opposite of its title. And that makes it a trickier duck to snatch since every point of the book serves a dual purpose. By teaching new graduates how not to act, Havens invariably slips in a winking nod on how entry level employees should behave. This can lead to some obvious conflicts where Havens is forced to mention something for the sake of making his deeper point that isn't directly in line with his sense of humor. For instance, the approach of the book is not humorous. It's written funny, but not structured funny. You'd expect there to be a number of incidental anecdotes about people who have gotten fired in awkward and hilarious ways. Instead, Havens takes the approach of a real self-help book which can be jarring if you haven't already discovered the book's subtext. After all, you don't really need to know how to be fired.

In the end, Havens errs on the side of caution by dropping the façade altogether to explain that the book is actually about how to keep a job. And, if you need to be told that by the end of it then you should really sell your copy for rent money. To those who understand what Havens is doing from the get-go, they'll get a lot more from the book than simple entertainment. It's a brash and refreshing approach to a market saturated with professed "experts" in job relations. Turns out, learning how to be fired might actually save your job. And in a world where that makes sense, Jeff Havens might just be the best guru there is.

[How to Get Fired!](#)
Jeff Havens, Billy...

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