

The traits of a rare breed

The book is based around the traits of rare breeds. The people that make things happen, change the course of progress, make a stand and create a difference either to their industry or to the wider world.

This is based on the idea that things that make us different, the things that other people consider to be weaknesses or vices, can in fact, be the sources of our greatest strengths. The traits are the *virtues*, as they call them in the book, are

- rebellious
- audacious
- obsessed
- hot blooded
- weird
- hypnotic, and
- emotional

All of these put together can create change, amazing inventions and innovations, and creations that make a difference in the world.

For each of the virtues, there are some kind characteristics that make them up.

Rebellion includes things like violating etiquette or righting a great wrong, rebelling against the status quo and societal norms.

Being audacious is doing what can't be done, or at least what others have said can't be done. You might need to kill your darlings / drive the horses into the sea to achieve these unachievable things, and have a bit of an unusual dream, which others maybe have discounted or thought of as impossible.

Obsession is what drives you to put the work in; finding your 4:00 AM time to get up and work. Trying and trying and trying again, and in many ways, falling in love with the extreme grit required for the process of creating something truly great and truly different.

Being hot blooded involves saying yes to things that are big and scary and chasing down the passion that it is necessary for you to do what you do. There's also a concept in this section of pouring hot sauce on your brain, or igniting something in you to get things moving.

I loved the section on being weird. It's choosing the things that make you *you*, maybe the things that people bullied you for in the past, and turning those quirks into your marketing plan or your message.

Being hypnotic is being able to influence others and bring them on board. Creating that magic that people need to see to buy into your idea, particularly if you're doing something a bit out there and a bit different.

Finally, being emotional, which is all about using your feelings and harnessing those in a productive way to care.

Beware of the dark side

Whilst the seven virtues can be incredibly productive, they can help you get things done and create something amazing, but they can also be dangerously destructive. And there is a line where it often will tip from one to the other. The same the thing that helps you create something could also be the thing that burns it down, burns your relationships and burns you out.

Here's the dark sides of each virtue;

- Rebellion — rebelling for the sake of malice, or in service of yourself, not others. (*eg Robin Hood was a good rebel — he fought the system to give to the poor, not to line his own pockets*).
- Audacity — ignoring the reality of your own limits, or the reality of the world, and being reckless.
- Obsession — can lead to extreme overwork and stress. It can also terrify others with your unrealistic expectations.
- Hot blooded — rage or flying off the handle for no good reason, and in a really unproductive way, that becomes dangerous for yourself and those around you. Using this as an excuse for inexcusable behavior.
- Weird — doing it for the sake of being weird, and alienating yourself from others in the meantime. This will likely muddy your message, rather than actually making it clearer, or attract others.
- Hypnotic — manipulating for your own ends, and using the influence you can have over others for negative reasons.
- Emotional — not being able to regulate those emotions, resulting in high levels of heartbreak, being thin-skinned, and maybe naive in the process.

The virtues alone won't do it

If you're reading this and you're taking these boxes, you might be feeling great.

However, possessing the virtues alone is useless if they're laying dormant.

If you're not putting them to good use and channeling them into something useful (or worse, using them destructively) then you might as well not have them.

You might also fall into the trap of thinking you need to be loud, expressive and extroverted to use these virtues, and do something amazing. However, that's not true. There's plenty of examples in the book who have people who have quietly used those virtues to make a huge impact. People like Rosa Parks, who had a huge

impact in the civil rights movement, by not getting up from her seat on a bus, and leveraging all of these virtues in the process, to create real change.

So the virtues alone won't do it. Go and be exceptional.

"Ultimately there's more to being exceptional than wanting to be."