

Free 5th Anniversary Excerpt

CHAPTER 3

Three
Colors,
Twelve
Notes

THE ALCHEMY OF
CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY, AND
HUMAN-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

Catherine Harrison

Praise for *Three Colors, Twelve Notes*

“Catherine Harrison challenges the reader to be curious, to be courageous, and to let their imagination soar.”

MARY ELLEN ISKENDERIAN, President and CEO,
Women’s World Banking

“A masterfully written account that connects the reader to their own sense of possibility.”

TONJA MORRIS, Chief Human Resources Officer,
Wrench Group, LLC

“Those who make a habit of looking for meaning and transformation in unusual places will enjoy this curious little book.”

BENOIT-ANTOINE BACON, President and Vice-Chancellor,
Professor of Psychology, Carleton University

“Navigating uncertainty in our lives isn’t easy, and this book gives us hope and confidence to unleash our creative side.”

CAROLYN SWORA, Workplace Culture Architect,
Owner of Pinnacle Culture, and Author of *Rules of Engagement*

“All people managers—from newly minted leaders to C-suite executives—should read this book.”

DAN TAYLOR, Executive Vice-President,
Wellington-Altus Private Wealth

“Read this book to learn how to blend those three colors and play those twelve notes your own way, for yourself, and for everyone else too.”

RICHARD SCARSBROOK, Author of
Rockets Versus Gravity and many other books

“A magical set of stories that invite us to become more curious about who we are and what we may become.”

JONATHAN MALES, PhD, Sport Psychologist,
Olympic Coach, and Masters World Champion Canoeist

“In this entertaining and inspiring book, Catherine proves the power of saying yes.”

GRANT LAWRENCE, Radio and TV Broadcaster,
and Author of *Adventures in Solitude* and *Dirty Windshields*

**THREE COLORS,
TWELVE NOTES**

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● ●
PAGE TWO
BOOKS

*This goes out to anyone who has yet to find their voice.
It's in there—keep going!*

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Cataloguing in publication information is available from Library and Archives Canada.

ISBN 978-1-77458-018-9 (paperback)

ISBN 978-1-77458-019-6 (ebook)

Page Two

www.pagetwo.com

Edited by Emily Schultz

Copyedited by Crissy Calhoun

Cover and interior design by Taysia Louie

Cover and interior art by Catherine Harrison

Additional graphics by Taysia Louie

Lyrics by Catherine Harrison

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*“Stories have to be told or they die,
and when they die, we can’t remember
who we are or why we’re here.”*

SUE MONK KIDD,
THE SECRET LIFE OF BEES

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*“I wrote my first novel because
I wanted to read it.”*

TONI MORRISON



Originality



USED TO GET stressed out about whether my songs were “original” enough. Or I’d get stressed when someone heard one of my songs and said, “Oh, that’s great, but it sounds just like X.” To me it was some sort of judgment and limitation on the value of that song. I would question myself: Did I copy it? Am I an unwitting plagiarist? Am I a fraud? In those times, I reminded myself that I am but a blip of a human in the vast construct of time and space. Certain outputs will resemble my predecessors’ outputs. There are only three colors. There are only twelve notes. These are the fundamentals. Certain things go well together and it’s mathematically likely there will be similarities.

Beethoven, Beach Boys, Beyoncé—all their songs are made up of the same notes. Paintings hanging in the AGO or the MOMA, kindergarten finger paintings, street graffiti—all made up of the same colors. Take a five-minute break and Google “forty songs with the same chords” and you’ll find lots of popular songs with the same chords, the

same structure. For instance, you might never think about how much in common the Beatles' "Let It Be," Adele's "Someone Like You," and Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" have in common. They are hook-y because they are familiar to us. In my line of professional work, we business consultants all use pretty much the same content over and over—good selling skills and leadership skills and active listening and performance and behavior change—and we continue to boil down to the same stuff we've been talking about for decades.

There is no originality. What we think of as originality is merely the fearless authentic expression of what we see, hear, feel, absorb, and experience through the lens of our own personal journey. That is, creativity is the synthesis of myriad data points being mixed in infinite ways, and originality is putting all of those data points and confabulations through the lens of an individual's unique life experience. (Again, this is just my take on it . . . get curious about your own take on it!)

Consider collective consciousness and how people create similar things at the same time. It is unrealistic (in fact, quite egocentric) to think that you would sit in your little space of the world, one of more than seven billion people, and create something completely original out of thin air.

Here's a funny story that illustrates this posit.

While hiking with a friend one day, we were lamenting the random, yet frequent, run-ins with individuals who, to be frank, behave like dicks. I said, "I'm going to write a

There are only three colors. There are only twelve notes. These are the fundamentals. Certain things go well together and it's mathematically likely there will be similarities.

book called *Don't Be a Dick: A How-to Guide*. It would be a tongue-in-cheek little tome, a simple, easy, step-by-step approach to getting more of what you want in life and less of what you don't." And we laughed and laughed. And, of course, I thought, "Oh, I'm going to do it! Just for fun!"

As this little project was not a priority for me at the time, it bubbled away on the back burner of my creative stove for a few months. I kept chuckling at the notion of it. And then one day, I was reading a *Psychology Today* at my local library (I love libraries!). Near the end of the publication, I saw an ad for a book titled *Don't Be a Dick* by Mark B. Borg Jr. (2019). It was literally being published at the same time I had the idea. Seriously!!!

And *that* is universal consciousness at play.

So, don't get too judge-y on yourself when it comes to being original. Just be you. Don't block yourself. Be willing to give yourself permission to investigate. You don't need to commit to anything; you just need to investigate, be curious. Just do it. Put it out there.

I coined the phrase "verbal acupuncture" to introduce myself at speaking engagements. What the heck does that mean?

It means that I probably don't say anything or convey anything or create anything that you don't already know or that doesn't already exist. It means I gather and select content and ideas that I find really interesting and fascinating and that investigates how humans work together, live together, progress together, and try to connect together

in meaningful ways. It means that when I say something, I'm like an acupuncture needle: I'm triggering something in you that already exists. I'm triggering knowledge that already resides within you and stimulating that meridian to make you go, "Oh yeah, I know that," or "I used to know that," "I used to do that," or "I know that, but I don't do it," or "Hmmm..."

Verbal acupuncture is using words and ideas to hopefully reenergize and reconnect parts of you that are possibly lying dormant or blocked. To stimulate your curiosity about what's going on in your life and what resources, knowledge, and know-how you already have in order to leverage the good and remediate the less-than-good.

The reality is if I'm thinking something, probably millions of others are too, or have over millennia thought about it, and created something with it somewhere. Just like the concept I explored earlier of three colors, twelve notes.

Sometimes it's simply those who get curious and ask the most questions, the right questions, and follow the thread further, who truly innovate and change the world.


 **REFLECTIONS**

When has something like the *Don't Be a Dick* story happened in your life?

Where are you holding yourself back because you think you're not original enough?

What do you know but don't do?

What knowledge would you like to reconnect to?

How would you like to activate your inner knowledge to realize more health and well-being?



JUDI WILLRICH

Pandemic work outfit: Sunday on the bottom, Monday on the top.

About the Author

CATHERINE HARRISON is the founder and president of Purple Voodoo, a performance and behavior change company that helps individuals and organizations adapt, perform, and thrive. She is a certified professional coach, behavior change specialist, expert facilitator, seasoned team leader, and strategic connector of dots. She is a songwriter/musician, author, painter, environmentalist, and mother based in Toronto. For six years she's been the host of the Cat Jam at the Moonshine Café in Oakville. She has decades of experience as both a corporate professional and a multi-disciplinary artist. *Three Colors, Twelve Notes* is her first book.

**Thanks for investing
your precious
time and energy in
reading my book!**

I F YOU'D LIKE to keep the conversation going, see full-color images, hear songs from the book, get access to further reflection tools, or book an author event, please connect with me at **catherineharrison.com**.

Be well and stay curious!

Catherine

Do you want to say “yes” to life more often?

THREE COLORS, TWELVE NOTES is a memoir and a guidebook for the curious and those who want to learn how to go for it. Catherine Harrison shares personal stories as an artist, business leader, and regular human to show us why trying new things should be a lifelong pursuit. She also invites the reader to participate in reflections of their own.

Three Colors, Twelve Notes shows us how every interaction is an opportunity to gather more insight and how every experience is a moment to learn. By noticing and reflecting on our habits, behaviors, patterns, and triggers, we can all connect the dots and learn to leverage curiosity and expand our awareness. Getting comfortable with oneself is complicated, and sometimes messy, but it enables meaningful growth, creativity, and tangible results in both life and career, for ourselves and those around us.

With a welcoming and warm approach, *Three Colors, Twelve Notes* encourages readers to find the best in themselves, and reconnect to their inner confidence and creativity.

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Cover design: Taysia Louie

Cover art: Catherine Harrison

ISBN 978-1-77458-018-9



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