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The Crowd, The Critic, And The Muse: A Book For Creators



Synopsis

"We are all creators. Whether or not we create is not up to us. We are human, and creating is what we do. Every interaction, movement, and decision is creativity at work. We are all artists. We all order creation around us into the world that we want to make."—Michael Gungor

In *The Crowd, the Critic, and the Muse*, Michael Gungor takes an uncompromising - and humorous - look at our creative selves and the world that we have fashioned around us. Through story and reflection, Gungor shows how our deepest beliefs and assumptions about the universe affect how we order creation. Our art and our humanity are inextricably entwined. Surveying pop songs and church services, fine art and movies, Gungor shows what these works of creation reveal about us - for better and worse - and offers a powerful argument for why we can do better. Art is like fruit, and if we want to improve the quality of our creative output, we must tend not only to the fruit, but to the tree, its roots, and the soil that it is planted in. To become free as creators, we must not simply try harder, we must become different. Gungor argues that this kind of change demands both an awareness of one's own cultural conditioning and a healthy degree of faith, doubt, hope and love. An award-winning, globetrotting musician, Gungor also reveals his personal journey as an artist and creator, a tale of moving from innocence to wisdom, from simplicity to complexity and back again, a tale of leaving home and returning in a new, better, and more creative way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I want to thank Michael Gungor for writing this encouraging book. Believers have long needed a call to the arts, in the vein of Julia Cameron and Steven Pressfield. His journey out of fundamentalism (a word that has truly been stripped of its meaning--in this context, it means a type of faith that makes

no room for questions, doubt, or expression beyond what some tradition or authority figure deems appropriate) in some way mirrors my own. Many reviewers have said things along the line of, "This is an autobiography, not a book on the arts." I would completely disagree. I'm a married musician, and a mother of three kids, so I was thrilled to find another family who is living the creative life together. My husband, like Gungor, is an analytical introvert. Like Lisa Gungor, I'm the one who will all-too-often say "nipple" in church and just laugh my head off while Brother-So-and-So turns beet red. I felt such a joy in seeing that his family struggled with cultural, faith, and financial questions while still being true to their calling and their Creator. Reading their story let me know that I'm not alone, that this path can be walked with kids alongside as "road-warriors," and that creative people can contribute to both the arts and the faith without compromising values with either side. That being said, there was one aspect of the book that bothered me: Gungor frequently warns believers that the "Us-Vs-Them" mentality foisted upon us by many fundamentalists is damaging and counter-productive. He gave an emotionally gripping example of what happens when that mentality is taken to its logical conclusion--a step-by-step tour of holocaust gas chambers. Gungor is *right.

I knew that I would relate well to the full text of Michael Gungor's new book, "The Crowd, The Critic, and the Muse: A Book for Creators" when it started with the following sentence, "Burnout is what happens when you try to avoid being human for too long. It's awful-like the blood has been drained from your body, the breath emptied from your lungs. Still, the world is obstinate in its demands. Produce! Perform! You just ...can't...get air, but they keep telling you to sing, and they expect it to be in tune." A few months before the release of the book, Michael Gungor posted an opportunity for people to review the book before the release date. A few years ago, I co-wrote a book called *Carried*. and since then, I have occasionally had opportunities to review other book releases such as Mark Batterson's, *Primal*, and Blake Mycoskie's, *Start something that matters*. I submitted a request for Gungor's new book and received an advance copy from the marketing agency. Personally, I have always been inspired and challenged by Michael Gungor's music, live show, dialogue, and provocative blog posts, so I was more than thrilled to dive right into the book. The digital copy of the book arrived at an interesting season in my life. My band, Willet, just started a 2 month nationwide tour as the supporting act for Family Force 5 & Disciple (strangely enough, "Willet" is the last name of my 2 brothers and I that make up the band...what's up with people using their last name for band names, i.e.; "Gungor"?) We were coming right off of a 2 week Florida tour, which was preceded by a full summer festival tour, a tour in London, and were about to hit the road for another 2 months living out of a van and trailer. Needless to say, "burnout" was a word that I could relate to.

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