



One Red Paperclip: Or How an Ordinary Man Achieved His Dream with the Help of a Simple Office Supply

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Kyle MacDonald had a paperclip. One red paperclip, a dream, and a resume to write. And bills to pay. Oh, and a very patient girlfriend who was paying the rent while he was once again “between jobs.” Kyle wanted to be able to provide for himself and his girlfriend, Dominique. He wanted to own his own home. He wanted something bigger than a paperclip. So he put an ad on Craigslist, the popular classifieds website, with the intention of trading that paperclip for something better. A girl in Vancouver offered him a fish pen in exchange for his paperclip. He traded the fish pen for a doorknob and the doorknob for a camping stove. Before long he had traded the camping stove for a generator for a neon sign. Not long after that, avid snow-globe collector and television star Corbin Bernsen and the small Canadian town of Kipling were involved, and Kyle was on to bigger and better things.

In *One Red Paperclip*, Kyle takes you on a journey around the globe as he moves from paperclip holder to homeowner in just fourteen trades. With plenty of irreverent and insightful anecdotes and practical tips on how you can find your own paperclip and realize your dreams, he proves it’s possible to succeed in life and achieve your dreams on your own terms. Quirky and inspirational, this story of a regular guy and a small, red, now-legendary paperclip will have you looking at your office supplies-and your life-in a whole new way.

One Red Paperclip: Or How an Ordinary Man Achieved His Dream with the Help of a Simple Office Supply Details

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From Reader Review One Red Paperclip: Or How an Ordinary Man Achieved His Dream with the Help of a Simple Office Supply for online ebook

Harrison Farrugia says

I first heard of this story years ago when reading the 2008 Guinness Book of World Records. A man who started with one red paperclip traded it for bigger and better things until he made his way to a house in Canada. Since I had heard a very brief version of the story, I was interested to learn more about the details. What I really liked about this book is that Kyle is completely honest about what he did, and acknowledges that a lot of it was pure luck. The way he formatted the story, going in order of each object acquired, it became evident how quickly this small project he had started when he was struggling to pay the bills turned into a widespread obsession in Canada. Within a few objects traded he was on national news, causing an uproar in the small British Colombian town of Yahk, and receiving hundreds of offers every day. This isn't just a story of how a smart guy took an easy opportunity. It's about a struggling guy who, with some determination and a little bit of luck, turned his life around with one little paperclip.

Mehvish Irshad says

What's your paperclip?

What will you "trade" to make it happen?

This was a book I'd been looking forward to reading for a while. I heard of Kyle Macdonald's blog through a magazine article years ago and I looked it up and read some of it. Sounded like an exciting idea and it's always been on my mind. So let me say right off the bat how cool it is to be able to do this.

But as a book it kind of fell flat. Kyle Macdonald isn't a writer, that's obvious, he isn't claiming to be, but he also isn't a motivational speaker. Every chapter ends with little faux motivational messages which kind of fall short of the mark. You find yourself reading things like:

Now was two words ago.

Yep, this is just a blatantly inane comment to make you think way-too-deep thoughts. But it's not. Unless you think it is. Then it is. If you want to analyze it, and give it meaning, that's fine by me. But analysis and thinking won't change the simple new fact: Now was actually more like five words ago.

Sounds like great dry humor but it gets old FAST. And not all statements are worded that well. There is a section where he describes how he was breathing and we find ourselves reading "Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale." That's groundbreaking.

The book isn't written in a blog-style, which is good, it's told like a story. It starts off a lot of fun and I found myself flying through the pages, but then it gets dull and tedious and I was skimming a lot through to the end. I think this would have made a great book if it was shorter and less unnecessarily descriptive.

It was a fun read for a while, but through it all it's hard to shake the fact that this is a story of luck. There is no skill involved here.

Grant Trevvarthen says

I looked at the cover of this book, and it had me immediately intrigued.

At first, it looked like the story of the creation of another trade website, but this story had a delightful twist. Kyle Macdonald, a Vancouverite came up with the idea of starting off with a particular item, in this case a Red Paperclip, and trading it up for something 'bigger and better'.

With the help of his very understanding girlfriend Dominique, a native of French speaking Montreal, they with Kyle's father go on a road-trip encompassing other parts of Canada and the U.S. Along the way, they meet many people of various ethnic backgrounds and beliefs.

The items traded for are many and varied from a Fishpen to a doorknob up to a Gas-cooker, to a Recording contract and culminating in a small House.

Kyle becomes somewhat of a celebrity appearing on Radio & TV chatshows, updating a Blog on the internet. I admire Kyle for what he achieved, his drive and tenacity, this was a well written book.

Danielle says

What a great book! A funny, fast read just perfect for a long flight. There are plenty of lessons to learn, too. After all, it's all about the journey. Next time you're faced with a big decision, ask yourself: What would you do if you weren't afraid?

I'm afraid I may have to read this book again!

Elaine Meszaros says

I first became aware of the ORP project when I heard a mention of it on Alice Cooper's radio show (yes he has a show, yes he is quite funny). Unemployed dreamer Kyle MacDonald decides he is tired of sponging off his patient girlfriend Dom. Faced with the choice of finding full-time employment or providing for her in a creative way, MacDonald starts <http://oneredpaperclip.blogspot.com>. Over the course of a year, MacDonald plays the "Bigger and Better" trading game, eventually ending up with a house of his very own. The press goes nuts in both the US and Canada and MacDonald bemusedly gets swept along. What I find most about the book is MacDonald's careful consideration and ground rules for what constitutes a good trade. He coined the terms "funtential" - how much fun is included in the trade. MacDonald is truly a nice guy who thoroughly deserves his house.

Kristin says

I vaguely remembered Macdonald's story when it became a web trending topic probably about midway through. Like most internet stories, it showed up on all the major sites for a few days, then faded away, such that I'd largely forgotten about it until coming upon this book at a sale. Once I got to reading, I remembered the early steps of the trade, like the paperclip for the fish pen, and the fish pen for the doorknob, but definitely don't recall the celebrity involvement of Alice Cooper and Corbin Bernsen.

Macdonald explains that the 'why' and 'who' of the trades are just as important to him as the 'what'. Sure, he sets the ground rule that the trades should be for bigger and/or better things, but with his ultimate goal of a house in mind, he wasn't willing to sell himself out to some company looking for a quick 15 minutes of fame that would also put a bunch of red tape on the trade. He takes a few chances, including trading for one not bigger, and not necessarily better item, both to gauge the response of his fans, who followed the 'one red

paperclip' blog and to show that perception is not the same as reality. In between chapters, Macdonald shares small paragraphs of wisdom to encourage readers to seek out their own 'red paperclip', which doesn't always mean that they should try to turn an office supply on their desk into a residential dwelling by offering trades on Craigslist, but that taking risks can lead to payoffs, and if you're stuck in a rut, try something outlandish to shift your perspective on things.

Overall, I enjoyed the book, knowing full well that the book wouldn't be written unless he'd achieved his goal, but loving the steps he took to get there.

Lisa says

I really loved this book.

It was exactly what I needed at the moment a light novel with some humor that was easy to read.

I read it in no time and would recommend it highly as a light book as it is very interesting.

Bill says

Canadian slacker decides he'd rather play Bigger and Better (a game where you start with a small object and trade for progressively better things) than look for a job. He starts with a paperclip, and over a dozen or so trades, winds up with a house, and becomes an internet celebrity along the way. I think the synopsis of the story is more interesting than the actual telling, but maybe that's just me. I could have completely done without the bogus, high-school-motivational-speaker-esque affirmations between the chapters, though. Had I known this was going to be a "follow your dreams" self-helpy sort of thing, I wouldn't have bothered.

Wendy says

I'm warning you; I'm a harsh critic. I hate being so ruthless when I'm not an author and I know very well that I couldn't have done better, but I just can't seem to help myself.

This book was pretty bad. It was given to me by someone who reads A TON and said she never read it. Now I know why. It's written chronologically (as most memoirs are) using an almost stream of consciousness feel, which I usual love but not this time. Klye McDonald is clearly someone who had nothing better going on in his life so he decided to trade one red paperclip for something "bigger or better" until he ended up with a house. He clearly is not an author. At times, I even began to wonder if he had graduated from high school.

With that being said, I finished the book. I'm still not sure why I bothered, but I did. I guess my curiosity got the best of me. Here, I'll spare you from reading it and just tell you that he finally ends up with a house (a mere 14 trades and 12 months later) and then proposes to his girlfriend by making a ring out of the original red paperclip that began it all. Blah!

Trin says

That guy who traded up from a red paperclip to a house in Saskatchewan tells his story. Unfortunately, he

doesn't tell it particularly well. It's a great story, don't get me wrong, but MacDonald's style...I don't want to call it too "bloggy," as there are a lot of well-written blogs out there. But I could understand someone leveling that criticism, because MacDonald's writing, whether the product of blogging or not, is unfocused, not terribly descriptive—none of the places he visits ever came alive for me—and full of those painfully-awkward sentences and assemblages of sentences where the writer clearly thinks he is being very, very funny...but he is not. The whole book seems so *strained*, like MacDonald was rushed into Getting His Incredible Story Out There! Also, seriously not helping things: he ends every chapter with a few pieces of advice/"affirmation statements." Gag me. I think it's meant to be done ironically, but instead it comes across like those people who say they're watching *Survivor* or *Big Brother* or whatever "ironically," as if that somehow excuses their being glued to the television every week. Sorry, I don't buy it.

Luckily, I didn't buy this book, either—I traded for it, and I've since traded it for something else. I hope MacDonald is proud of me.

Samilja says

Oh, how I thought I'd love this book. Twenty-something embarks upon a quest to trade for a house. A house! Starting with a paper clip. A paper clip! And the story *is* very interesting. But oh, the writing! Glib, ironic, oh-so-clever and witty! Way over the top. A lot like this paragraph. I seriously considered throwing in the towel about 1/3 of the way in.

Luckily, as the story improves with each bigger & better trade, so does the writing. To be fair, our author Kyle was, at the time, a mid-twenties good natured slacker who had enough wit and drive to finagle a house (albeit in Saskatchewan) having started only with *One Red Paper Clip!*. And his writing does seem to be a true attempt at self deprecation which is what the books is ultimately about. Kyle's an every-man and he wants to inspire the rest of us everyday people to take action in our lives.

Don't misunderstand. I think what Kyle managed to do was brilliant and I really liked the attitude with which he did it. I even became fond of the stylized method of chapter separation in the book: a page of observations and suggestions about implementing Kyle's *live your dream* approach to life, despite thinking they were somewhat repetitive and heavy-handed. I actually passed along the book to a good friend, with only a slight caveat, so obviously I didn't hate it.

I enjoyed the tale, I appreciated the concept and philosophy Kyle was trying to realize and I respect that the guy seems truly content and optimistic. But I could have done without the giggly, juvenile observations and dialogue. Like, ya know?

Tracey Wilde says

Enjoyed it but I could have found out the story from a long article. Very padded out. Very repetitive. He tells you something at least three times in three different ways just to make sure you've got it and that is in the same paragraph. The tips at the end of the chapters don't mean anything and I didn't even bother reading them after the first couple. I'm sure that if I met Kyle Macdonald he would definitely say 'Dude' !

Spencer Levin says

In this book Kyle Macdonald has a dream to trade up from this one red paper clip to a house. He makes various trades throughout Canada and the USA. He meets new life long friends and goes on a wild trip to accomplish his one goal. It took him around a year to complete this goal but with the help of many people such as Television stations and many more close family friends he achieves his goal and makes the impossible, possible. I really enjoyed the book it showed his and the traders hardships but also shows there overall common goal of getting Kyle his house and meeting new interesting people.

Stephanie says

This was a good, light, quick read and a lesson on how resourcefulness can merge with motivation (or procrastination, depending on how you look at it). I felt more like I was reading emails from a funny twenty-or-thirty-something friend than a book. I think it will appeal most to those who either know what Craigslist is, have ever had to live on the cheap, or have ever wanted to skip out on their job to do something more interesting that they don't otherwise have time to do. The author gives you a glimpse of the ending right before his story begins. So as with most stories where you pretty much know how it will end but don't specifically know how, some parts felt slow and long simply because they were in the way of the big reveal at the end.

Tory says

The story itself is interesting, but could EASILY have been summarized into one long article. This is an INCREDIBLY poorly-written book that tries too hard to be funny and beats you over the head with every joke at least three times.

Case in point: he's driving a van across Canada. Someone asks him to deliver something for her. His response:

"I don't know, it's not like I have hundreds of cubic feet of extra cargo room or anything..."

'Yeah right!' she said.

I laughed. There were actually many hundreds of extra cubic feet of cargo room left in the truck. That's why it was so funny. Extra cubic feet of cargo are like that."

See what I mean? Why did his editor not tell him to cut all that shit out? Oh, and several full pages in later chapters are taken up by comments on his blog, which I skipped entirely. Obviously, he couldn't come up with enough material of his own -- and even straight-up says something like "glad these comments are writing my book for me!"

Weird Canadian things I had to look up: carpet bowling (a sport), cube van (moving truck), toque (beanie), eave troughs (gutters). Again, why didn't his editor have him add in the non-Canadian term for an international audience?
