

## Beat the system

Nearly two years ago, my predecessor embarked on a business column about a book that had found its way to her desk.

With trepidation, she picked up the copy of "Cheat to Win: The Honest Way to Break All the Dishonest Rules in Business," written by part-time Key West resident Bob MacDonald. What she found was "a good book, full of common-sense advice." So when MacDonald's next project landed on my desk, I figured it would be worth it to embark on my own modern-day book report.

MacDonald is a former insurance industry executive who rose to success by bucking the status quo along the way. His second book, "Beat the System: 11 Secrets to Building an Entrepreneurial Culture in a Bureaucratic World," is a natural extension of "Cheat to Win."

MacDonald said after publishing the first book, he was often stopped at seminars and speaking engagements by people who had read "Cheat to Win" and wanted to know more.

"People had come to me and said that it was a great philosophy and a great concept, but can you be more specific about some things," MacDonald said. "Beat the System" accomplishes that by giving a detailed outline of the 11 specific steps and how to incorporate them into your daily life and workplace.

The practical examples of how you might apply each principal from day to day was what I liked so much about the book. I could actually envision myself in similar conversations, meetings or situations, and each principal and its application really hit home.

In fact, since finishing the book I continue to find myself in a position to apply one of MacDonald's secrets nearly every day. And in several instances, instead of losing my cool, getting frustrated or copping a negative attitude, I heard MacDonald's voice in the back of my head, reminding me that I had the power to put a positive spin on the problem.

Not wanting to give them all away, I'll just tell you that some of my favorite "secrets" included "Know the risk — measure the reward," "Communication — be a shower not a teller," and "Build parallel interest."

According to the book, a parallel interest exists when others care as much about your success as you do because they stand to gain personally from your success. And conversely, a parallel interest exists when you care as much about the success of others as you do for your own success because their success assures your success.

The end result is that "you marshal a powerful force that causes groups to work together to support your individual goals because your success becomes their success."

The other great thing about "Beat the System" is that anyone in any job can find valuable lessons in this book. It's not geared to just the Fortune 500 CEO.

"A lot of people think when you talk about being an entrepreneur that you're talking about being a business owner or you're talking about being in upper management," MacDonald said. "The point

I was trying to make in the book is entrepreneurship is a way of living. The concepts we talk about in the book fit whether you work in the mail room or run your own company."

So remember, entrepreneurship is about an attitude, not what you are in life.

"My philosophy is a real entrepreneur has a real spirit and approach to problems that are just different," MacDonald said.

"Beat the System" is not yet available Borders, but it can be ordered. MacDonald is planning an author talk and book signing at Voltaire Books in Key West on Dec. 30.

*Anne-Margaret Sobota is The Citizen's business editor. Her column runs exclusively each Sunday. She can be reached at [amsobota@keysnews.com](mailto:amsobota@keysnews.com).*