

Book Review by Mike Taigman

*Sacred Cows Make The Best Burgers* by Robert Kriegal and David Brandt

Special extra bonus free book review: *Brain Droppings* by George Carlin.

When I sit down for a meal in a restraint, I usually tell the wait person, “I don’t eat anything that ever had a pulse or a face.” Many of you who have shared meals with me and teased me about being a vegetarian may be a little surprised that I’d recommend a book about cows and burgers. For this book I’ll make an exception. It isn’t about just any old heifer, it’s about “sacred” cows. Those cows live inside your ambulance service, taking up space, getting in the way, and producing voluminous amounts of aromatic fertilizer. (Yes I’m being politically correct, this is a family magazine after all.)

This hilarious management book is brought to you by the authors of another irreverent book, *If It Ain’t Broke Break It*. It’s primary objective is to help you develop change-ready organizations and change ready people. If you don’t think the ability to deal with change is important in our industry, someone should call 911; you need CPR. The book outlines a five-step process:

1. Round up sacred cows.

Challenge your well-worn beliefs, assumptions, and practices, and identify those who have outlived their usefulness. Hint, “If it doesn’t add value to the customer, increase productivity, or improve moral...it moos!”

2. Develop a change-ready environment.

Create an environment where people are more open to innovation and new ideas.

3. Turn resistance into readiness.

Coach yourself and others to recognize and overcome the four resistances to change.

4. Motivate people to change.

Get people excited about change and motivated to act.

5. Develop the seven personal change-ready traits.

Cultivate the personal characteristics needed to thrive in a changing environment.

This book is packed with examples of how unconventional thinking and slaughtering sacred cows has led to success. For example, “Ever since the first caveman started selling clubs, the first and only rule in retail has been location, location, location. So where did the king of retail Sam Walton, open up his first big warehouse store? Bentonville, Arkansas, whose total population couldn’t fill up one of those mega-malls.

Walton had 10 rules of success, most of which revolve around giving great service, top-quality products, and treating your people right. But it's his 10th rule that sets him apart from his competitors. Walton called it the most important one: *Break the rules*.

"If all of your competitors are doing it one way," Mr. Sam used to say, "do it exactly the opposite, and that's where you'll get the edge."

This book is fast paced, easy to read and lots of fun. I recommend it to anyone trying to move their organization forward.

OK since we are talking about entertaining books, here is your bonus book review. It's an irreverent book that has absolutely nothing to do with EMS or management. I believe that occasionally managers need to read something that is just for fun. It reduces stress and improves creativity. *Brain Droppings* by the former Hippie Dippy Weather man from Laugh in, George Carlin, is the most side splitting thing I've read in years. Here's a sneak peek:

"Some favorite oxymorons: assistant supervisor, new tradition, original copy, plastic glass, highly depressed, love recording, authentic reproduction, partial cease-fire, limited lifetime guarantee, elevated subway, standard options, mandatory options, open secret, and wireless cable." Of course the really good stuff we can't print in a family magazine, so you'll just have to buy the book. I think I'll go slay a sacred soy bean and have a tofu burger with a side of sprouts.