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The lowly paperclip attracts little attention in our world of advanced gadgets and increasingly sophisticated technology. But to veteran inventor and design engineer Steven J. Paley, it is a prime example of the qualities that often characterize a great invention--simplicity, elegance, and robustness--and it provided a lasting solution to a common problem.

In this entertaining and insightful exploration of the process of invention, Paley shows why these same three qualities are essential not only to the success of simple devices, but equally to complex inventions from computer chips to nuclear power plants. Whether you're an aspiring inventor or an experienced designer, Paley's expertise, personal examples, and case studies offer detailed guidance on conceptualizing your ideas and turning them into reality.

Paley begins by exploring the essential aspects of creative thinking, from identifying a problem or need, which is often hidden in plain sight, to finding an inspired solution. He shows how ideas can come from a variety of sources such as the natural world, basic physical principles, life experience, or even chance observations. He examines how intuition and the harnessing of subconscious information are key ingredients for the inventive process.

Next, Paley focuses on the three fundamental themes of simplicity, elegance, and robustness. He vividly and persuasively illustrates through many examples how great inventions embody these crucial characteristics.

The author concludes with an in-depth look at the business of invention and the typical inventor's toolkit. He addresses the real-world challenges of turning a good idea into a practical, marketable application, including patents, marketing, and entrepreneurship. He is candid about the realities of hard work and the need to learn from the inevitable mistakes along the way.

Full of insights and practical guidance from a successful inventor and entrepreneur, The Art of

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Invention will open new avenues of creativity for budding and accomplished inventors alike.