

An Entrepreneur's Library: 67 Books for Entrepreneurs



“You will be the same person in five years as you are today except for the people you meet and the books you read.”

Charlie Jones

It's nebulous to try and pin down the keys to success in any field. Our tendency seems to be to look for mechanisms. What was it that caused people to be successful?

Charlie Munger's dictum – “invert, always invert” seems to be more helpful. I've never seen someone that surrounded themselves with people they admired and read books about things they wanted to achieve that didn't fail to make it happen.

Books are the most undervalued asset on Earth, lifetimes and years of wisdom compressed into a few hours, available for a few dollars.

It's why I [read so many books](#) and part of why I wrote [The End of Jobs](#).

How did I pick these 67 books?

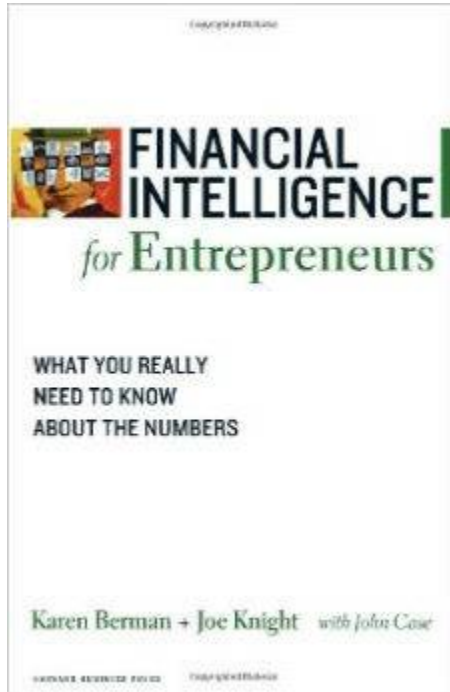
As you're about to find out, I love giving book recommendations (and being recommended books). In choosing from hundreds of books, the criteria I used for these sixty seven books for entrepreneurs were:

Integrated – Many business book lists undervalue the importance of mindset and non-business books for their business value. This list is more based on the concept of entrepreneurship, recognizing that history, philosophy, mindset, meaning and motivation are just as critical to entrepreneurial success as sales, marketing and product development.

Timeless – These books that have some timeless aspect, they'll be just as worth reading in five years as they are today. All these books articulate a few, fundamental principles, each from its own unique angle.

Curated – These books are not just ones I like, but also ones which have been most frequently recommended to me by successful entrepreneurs across a range of industries and from a range of backgrounds.

Finances



[Financial Intelligence for Entrepreneurs: What You Really Need to Know About the Numbers](#)

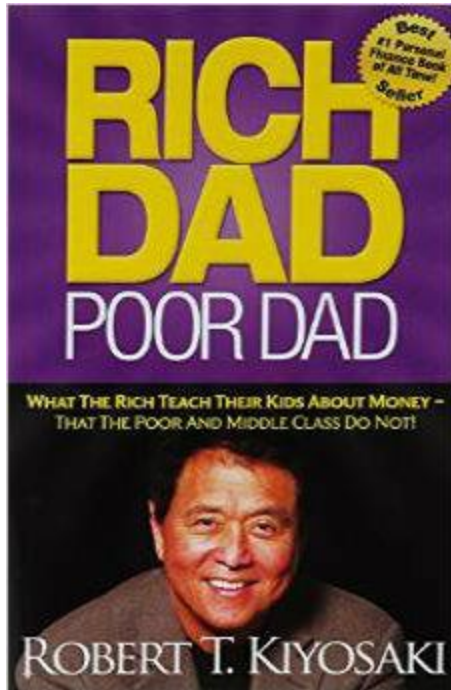
[by Karen Berman](#)

“Accounting is the art of using limited data to come as close as possible to an accurate description of how well a company is performing.”

Were you also a humanities major with no accounting background? Accounting is one of the few subjects I wish I had actually taken in college and while I’m sure there’s plenty of textbooks you could pick-up, this book made me go from staring at P&Ls like they were in Russian to being able to read or create a business prospectus coherently.

I know many entrepreneurs who operate 7-figure businesses and have cited this book as their most valuable resource for gaining the basic financial intelligence to run a business.

Money Mindset



[Rich Dad, Poor Dad](#)

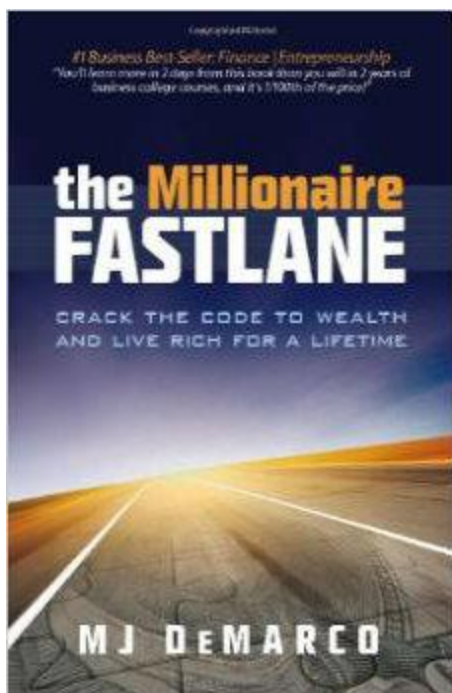
[by Robert T. Kiyosaki](#)

“The rich buy assets. The poor only have expenses. The middle class buy liabilities they think are assets.”

I didn't grow up in a family of entrepreneurs and money wasn't something my family talked about.

Rich Dad, Poor Dad was one of the first books I read that made me start to see how much mindset affects wealth and how little I understood about money and how it works.

The relationship we have with money in our heads profoundly impacts how much of it we have in the real world and Kiyosaki does an excellent job of explaining the key difference between how the poor, middle, class and rich think about money, assets and liabilities.



[The Millionaire Fastlane: Crack the Code to Wealth and Live Rich for a Lifetime!](#)

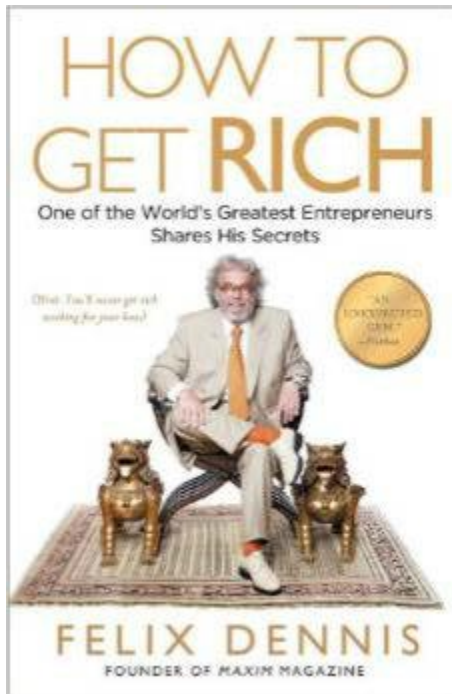
[by M.J. DeMarco](#)

**“Slowlane millionaires are cheap with money.
Fastlane millionaires are cheap with time.”**

Don't be turned off by the title (I was). M.J. Demarco has written a brilliant book using the sidewalk, slow lane, and fast lane to illustrate the different mindsets, habits and goals of the poor, the middle class, and the rich.

Having successfully exited from his company, MJ wrote a book with no marketing or politically correct considerations. His willingness to offend is part of what makes the book so valuable.

He lays bare the implicit promises and math behind much of the dogma the middle class is raised with – count pennies, save for retirement and reveals what the path to wealth looks like.



[How to Get Rich](#)

[by Felix Dennis](#)

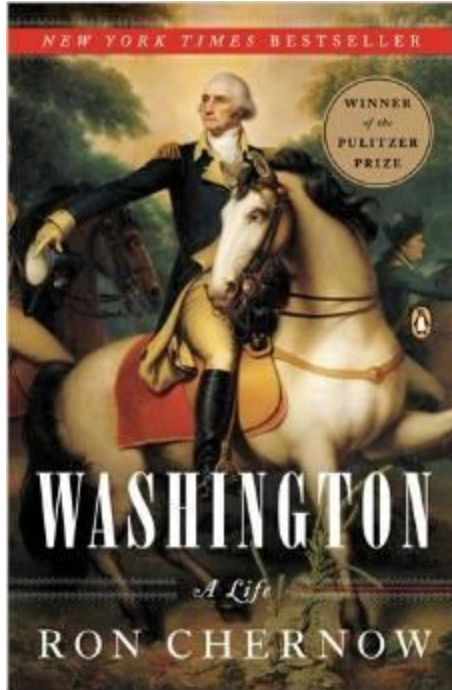
The Germans have a superb word for the (secret) pleasure humans obtain from the misfortunes of others. It is schadenfreude—from schaden meaning “harm” (from which we get the word “shadow”), and Freude meaning “joy.” Those of you who are definitely going to be rich will recognize it often enough in the faces and body language of idiots around you. It is the price you must learn to pay for any attempt to raise yourself in the world. And I suspect that was as true ten thousand years ago as it is today.

The Straight, no B.S. story on how publishing magnate Felix Dennis built his hundreds of millions in wealth. Dennis lays out exactly the path he followed to get rich and the tradeoffs he made to get there.

Nuggets of wisdom on negotiation, maintaining equity at all cost, and the importance of execution over ideas are scattered throughout.

No touchy, feely.

History



[Washington: A Life](#)

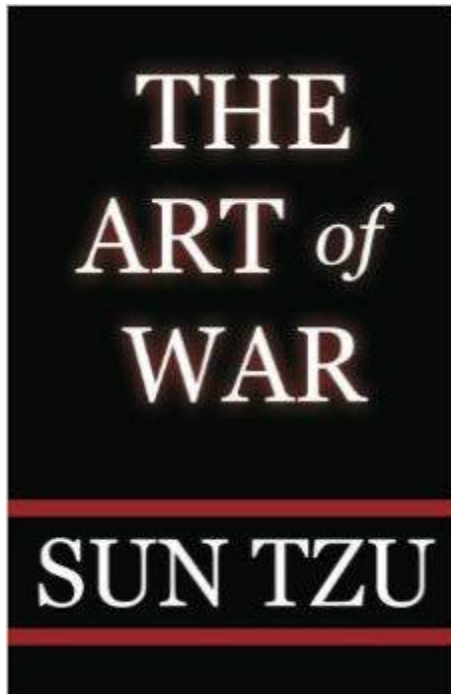
[by Ron Chernow](#)

“At war’s end, he stood alone at the pinnacle of power, but he never became drunk with that influence, as had so many generals before him, and treated his commission as a public trust to be returned as soon as possible to the people’s.”

This book was passionately recommended to me sitting on a cardboard box, eating snails, in a squeezed Vietnamese alleyway and rightly so. Washington’s career is one of the most fascinating biographies I’ve read.

He grew up relatively poor, married into money and slowly leveraged his way up. What’s perhaps most astounding though is the atypical combination of social and economic climbing while maintaining a level of integrity few have since matched.

Washington faced a number of situations where he could have cut corners, but refused. You can see the opportunities he received later on as a result. The level of integrity he maintained throughout his career created the opportunities he had to lead the Army of the Potomac and eventually become the first President of the United States.



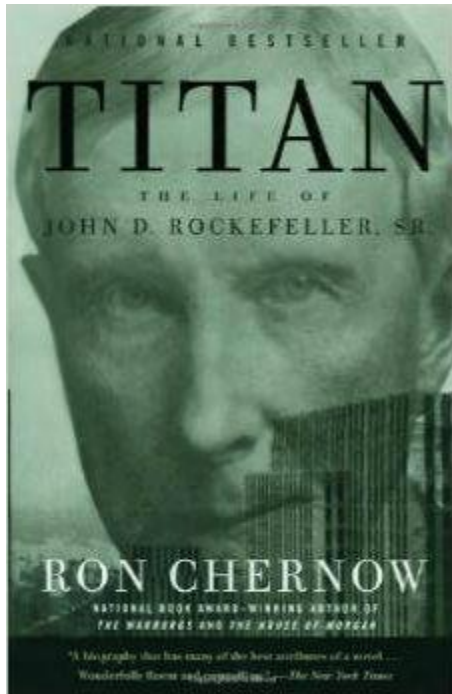
[The Art of War](#)

[by Sun Tzu](#)

“All warfare is based on deception. 19. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near.”

I'm not generally a fan of military histories, but Sun Tzu is widely quoted and cited for a reason. He saw timeless tactics and strategies which have remained true to today.

The book made the biggest impact on me because of how little of it is actually about war. It's rather a deep dive into human nature, managing people and managing your own psychology.



[Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr.](#)

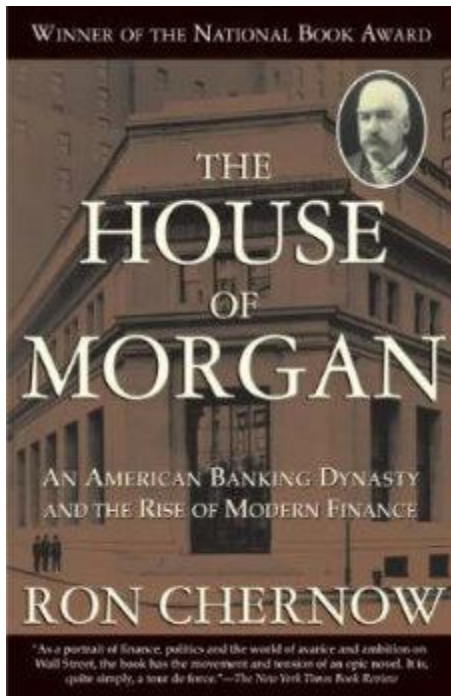
[by Ron Chernow](#)

“Often the best way to develop workers—when you are sure they have character and think they have ability—is to take them to a deep place, throw them in and make them sink or swim.”

Epic. Rockefeller was one of the greatest titans of the Industrial age and Chernow is a masterful storyteller. Chernow captures Rockefeller’s risk-taking and relentless focus, best evidenced by his decision to double down on the oil part of his businesses when the only known oil reserves were in a small town in

Pennsylvania. It was, at the time, a very risky and unclear decision but obviously led to his enormous wealth.

Chernow also captures how dichotomous Rockefeller’s nature was. He had a trait which I’ve seen across many extremely wealthy people that seems, at times, bipolar. He could be ruthless in his business practices, buying out partners in emotional moments and expanding holdings when competitors had a bad run of luck. Simultaneously, he was incredibly generous in his charitable work, giving away much of his fortune in his lifetime.



[The House of Morgan: An American Banking Dynasty and the Rise of Modern Finance](#)

[by Ron Chernow](#)

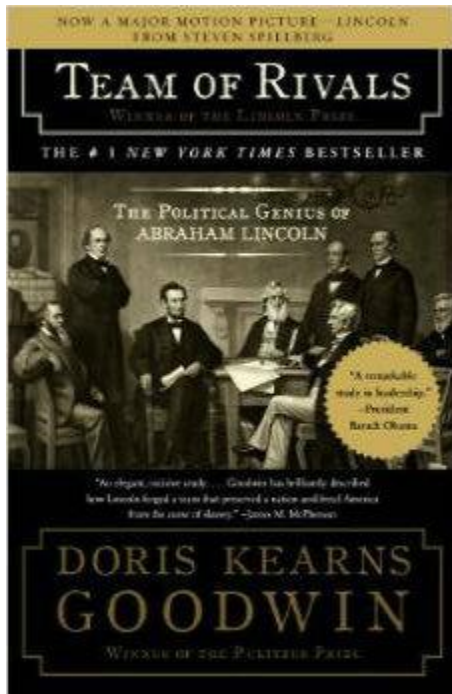
“The Pujo hearings had one immediate consequence that seemed to threaten Morgan power. In December 1913, President Wilson signed the Federal Reserve Act, providing the government with a central bank and freeing it of reliance on the House of Morgan in emergencies; the new Federal Reserve System was a hybrid institution, with private regional reserve banks and a public Federal Reserve

Board in Washington. Yet the House of Morgan moved so artfully to form an alliance with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York that for the next twenty years it would actually gain power from the new financial system.”

Another epic from Chernow. The House of Morgan chronicles the rise of the Morgan banking dynasty from 1850 until the late 20th century and in doing so, gives a gonzo look at the rise of modern finance and the modern corporation.

What does it take to amass that much power? At what point do businesses become political and how much separation is there between capital and governments? What was the role of capital and banks and how has it changed over the last two hundred years?

Chernow confronts all these questions and also dives into the Morgan men themselves and how the personalities of each adapted to the needs of their respective Ages. Similar to Rockefeller, the Morgans, particularly J.P. seemed manic and bipolar at times. J.P. Morgan was notorious for his bursts of negotiating prowess, securing hundreds of millions of profits in minutes.



[Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln](#)

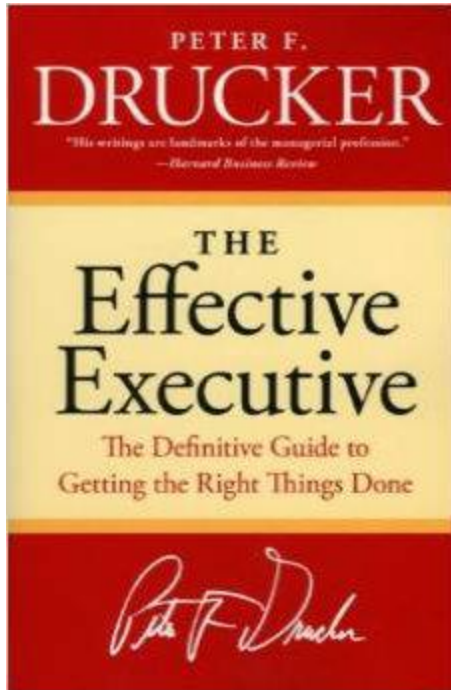
[by Doris Kearns Goodwin](#)

“Freedom is in harmony with our system of government and with the spirit of the age, and is therefore passive and quiescent. Slavery is in conflict with that system, with justice, and with humanity, and is therefore organized, defensive, active, and perpetually aggressive.” Free labor, he said, demands universal suffrage and the widespread “diffusion of knowledge.” The slave-based system, by contrast “cherishes ignorance because it is the only security for oppression.”

Lincoln is frequently cited as the greatest President in U.S. history and not without reason. Seemingly through force of will, he kept a country together. Goodwin highlights one of Lincoln’s defining characteristics – his willingness to surround himself with dissenters. His cabinet serves as a singular example, putting his biggest political rivals into key cabinet positions forced Lincoln to consider every side of the argument and let him build a coalition.

He was also a prolific reader and writer and the excerpts show the impact. The Gettysburg Address is one of the most powerful pieces of writing and propaganda I’ve ever read.

Management



[The Effective Executive](#)

[By Peter Drucker](#)

“That one can truly manage other people is by no means adequately proven. But one can always manage one’s self. Indeed, executives who do not manage themselves for effectiveness cannot possibly expect to manage their associates and subordinates. Management is largely by example.”

Drucker is cited by many as the father of the modern corporation and yet seems to be infrequently read by many founders and CEO. Much of what we take for granted today about management and business was pioneered by Drucker’s thinking and writing.

He was consistently progressive throughout his career, pressing corporations not just for higher profits, but a higher use of it’s people. A timeless classic on leadership.



Rework

by Jason Fried

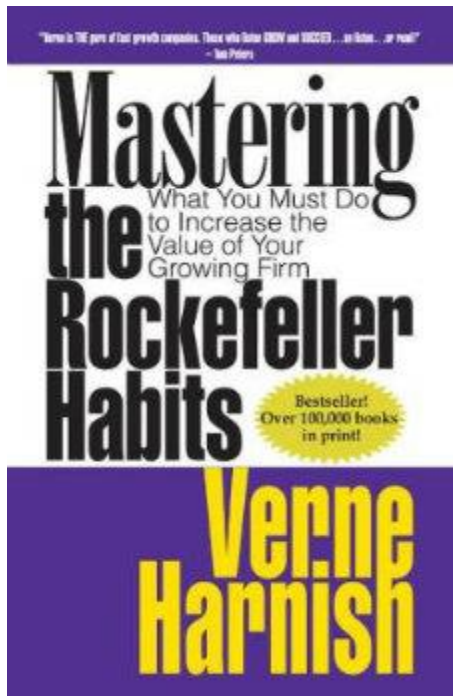
“If you’re constantly staying late and working weekends, it’s not because there’s too much work to be done. It’s because you’re not getting enough done at work. And the reason is interruptions.

Think about it: When do you get most of your work done? If you’re like most people, it’s at night or early in the morning. It’s no coincidence that these are the times when nobody else is around.”

If Drucker founded the modern corporation, Rework may be a manifesto for the post-modern corporation.

Fried, DHH and co at Basecamp push entrepreneurs to question everything about the way modern corporations work from offices to schedules to raising capital to organizational structure using their own company as a testing grounds.

In Rework they chronicle their multi-decade journey in building an organization that is highly profitable, enduring, and meaningful without giving in to many of the traditional “demands” of a fast-growing company.



Mastering the Rockefeller Habits: What You Must Do to Increase the Value of Your Growing Firm

by Verne Harnish

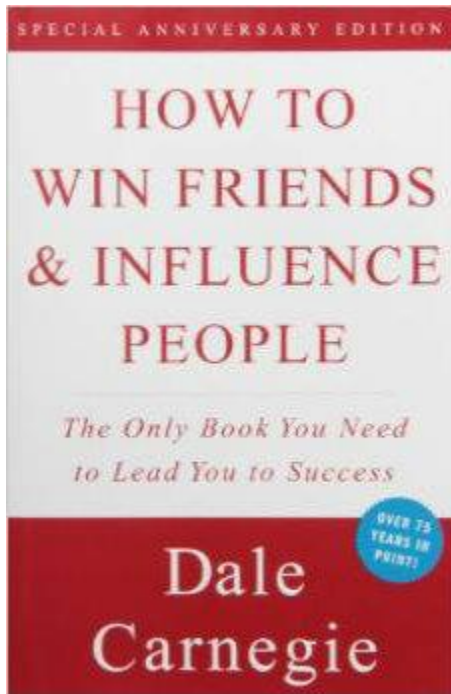
“Rhythm— Does the organization have an effective rhythm of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual meetings to maintain alignment and drive accountability? Are the meetings well run and useful? Titan also confirmed that there is only one underlying strategy— what can be called the “x” factor— which must be discovered, defined, and acted upon to create significant value and ultimately

significant valuations within a business: The “x” factor: identify the chokepoint in your business model and industry and then gain control of that chokepoint.”

More meetings, not less? Yes. A one page planning document? Yes. Many organizational activities like daily meetings which have brought in vogue by movements like the Lean Startup I originally found in the Rockefeller habits.

Harnish has a unique perspective from his position as the head of an executive coaching and planning organization, having seen thousands of companies succeed and fail and he distills down the common lessons for companies struggling with growing pains.

I haven't yet had the chance to read it, but have heard good things about his follow-up [Scaling Up](#).



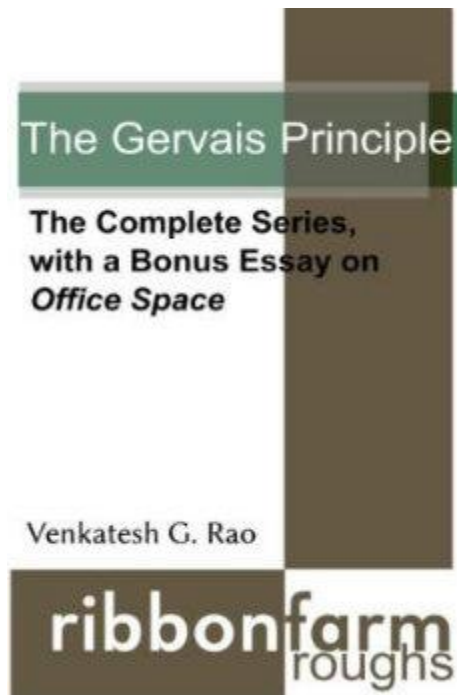
[How to Win Friends and Influence People](#)

[by Dale Carnegie](#)

“I shall pass this way but once; any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.”

This is a killer starter manual for managing people. Carnegie distills the core, fundamental management practices into simple stories and examples that make them easy to grasp and implement.

Carnegie’s book excels because it reduces management, a complex subject, into essential fundamentals and gives useful heuristics based on his examples like “How would Lincoln handle this problem if he had it?”



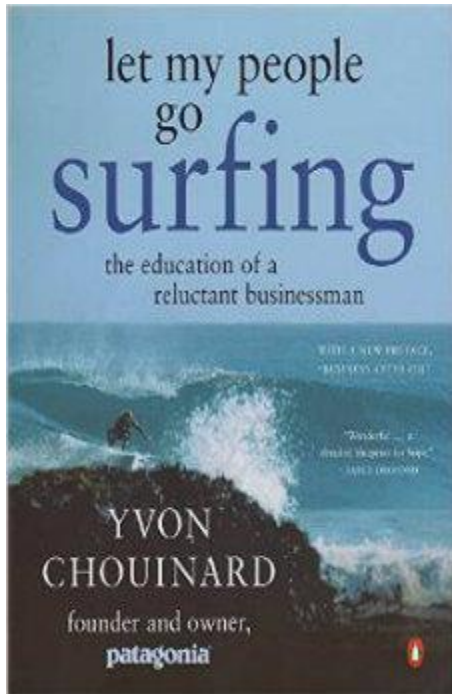
[The Gervais Principle](#) and [Be Slightly Evil](#)

by Venkatesh Rao

“For Nietzsche, God was dead and only the flesh was real. There was only the indifferent Great Bureaucrat of the material universe, Chancellor Entropy, apathetically offering humans a form to fill out, with just one simple check-box choice: “death or booga booga?” The Clueless disdainfully ignore the reams of fine print, and proudly check: death. After trying, and failing to understand the fine print, the Losers cautiously check: booga booga. Finally, the Sociopath frowns doubtfully at the form, and asks: “Can I speak with your supervisor?” “Certainly,” says the Great Bureaucrat. “There’s some additional paperwork for that I am afraid. Just fill these out, and take them over there. Godot will be right with you.”

If you finish Carnegie thinking, this feels overly simplistic, you’re right. In the Gervais Principle, Venkatesh Rao sorts participants in modern corporations into sociopaths, clueless and losers and gives a far more nuanced articulation of how modern organizations work.

In the follow up, *Be Slightly Evil*, he advocates the way to work within is the corporations is to, well, be slightly evil.



Let My People Go Surfing

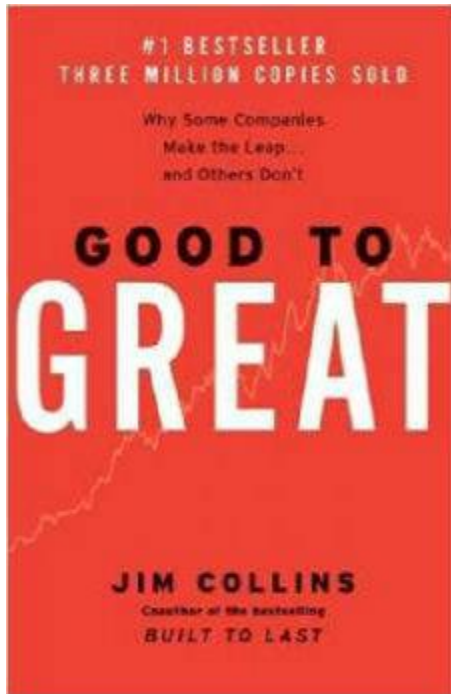
by Yvon by Chouinard

“One of my favorite sayings about entrepreneurship is: If you want to understand the entrepreneur, study the juvenile delinquent. The delinquent is saying with his actions, “This sucks. I’m going to do my own thing.” Since I had never wanted to be a businessman, I needed a few good reasons to be one. One thing I did not want to change, even if we got serious: Work had to be enjoyable on a daily basis. We all had to come to work on the balls of our feet and go up the stairs two steps at a time. We needed to be surrounded by friends who could dress whatever way they wanted, even be barefoot. We all needed to have flextime to surf the waves when they were good, or ski the powder after a big snowstorm, or stay home and take care of a sick child. We needed to blur that distinction between work and play and family.”

In many ways, Chouinard’s emphasis on a more integrated corporation pioneered the modern lifestyle brand and this is his manifesto.

Focus and Values First are the story of Chouinard and his company, Patagonia. The book chronicles Chouinard’s seemingly unlikely creation of one of the biggest outdoor apparel brands in the world all the while taking plenty of time off for surf trips and mountaineering.

It was striking the degree to which company decisions were driven by values, like everyone should have time to surf. Another manual for building a post-modern corporation.



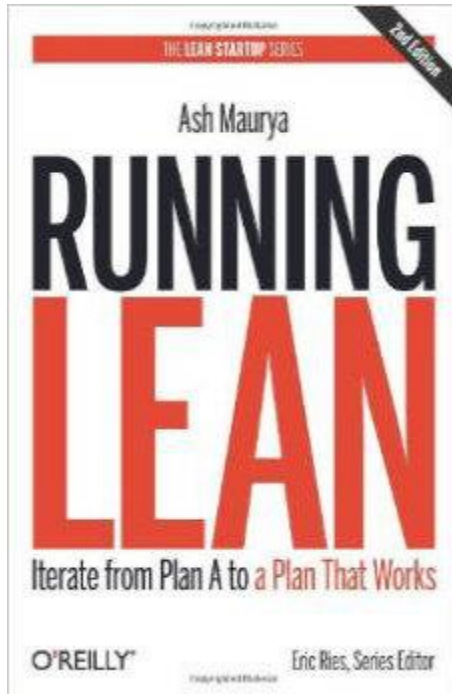
Good to Great

by Jim Collins

“The good-to-great companies did not focus principally on what to do to become great; they focused equally on what not to do and what to stop doing.”

In almost every discipline, there is a what-got-you-won't-get-you-there phenomenon. What it takes to go from zero to good is an entirely different skillset and mindset than what it takes to go from good to great.

Collins looks at stories of companies that have made the latter transition and what the skillsets involved in that transition are. Collins particular skill is in showing the patterns that emerge from different companies and articulating them clearly and concisely. Focus, humility, and people-centricity come up throughout the book.



[Running Lean](#)

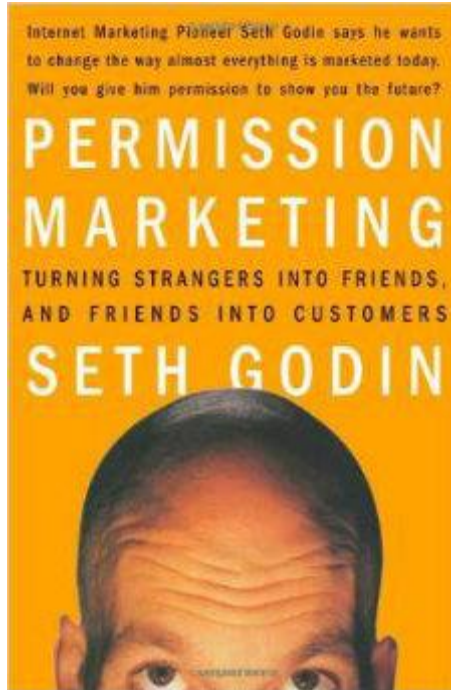
[by Ash Maurya](#)

“Your job isn’t just building the best solution, but owning the entire business model and making all the pieces fit.”

Though written after Eric Reis’s more popular Lean Startup, I thought Ash Maurya’s treatment was more helpful for implementing in a software startup. For around six months, I was going through this book at night planning what to work on the following day.

Maurya lays down the fundamental principles of how technology has reshaped the rules for building and scaling a business and then gives templates and step-by-step guides for turning those principles into results.

Marketing and Persuasion



[Permission Marketing: Turning Strangers Into Friends And Friends Into Customers](#)

[by Seth Godin](#)

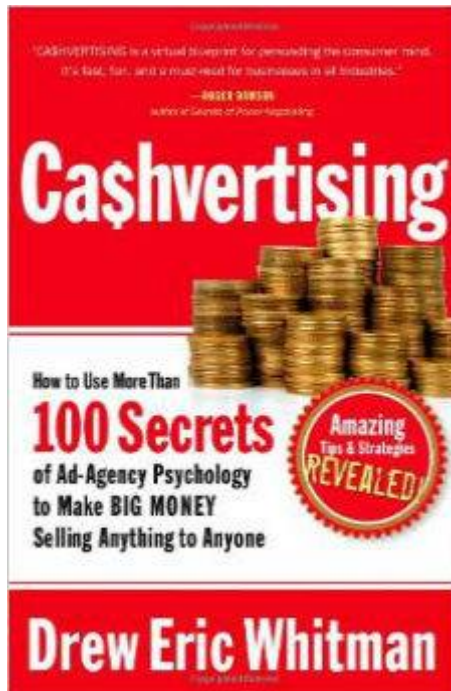
“Frequency led to awareness, awareness to familiarity, and familiarity to trust. And trust, almost without exception, leads to profit.”

Perhaps the defining book for marketing in the internet era, Godin expounds on the benefits of marketing with permission and building trust for entrepreneurs and why it’s long past time Mad Men style advertising goes the way of the dodo.

A must-read for anyone seeking to understand the origins and psychology of online marketing and how it’s changed marketing and building distribution forever.

Ca\$hvertising

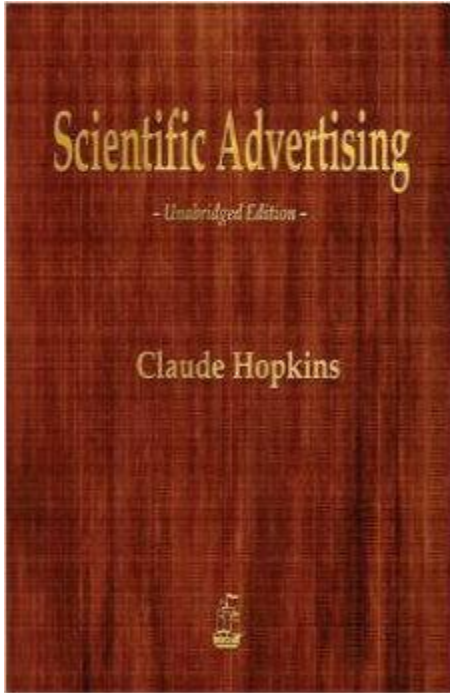
by Drew Eric Whitman



“An understanding of why people buy is gained by a willingness to acquire proved and tested principles of commercial psychology to selling.”

The line between marketing and psychology is thin and blurry if existent at all. Whitman breaks down a lot of the psychological fundamentals of marketing and how to apply them to direct response marketing.

Godin and the rash of permission marketers that have followed him have built on the direct response marketers that came before them and Whitman lays out many of the timeless principles and some more timely tactics for direct selling.



Scientific Advertising

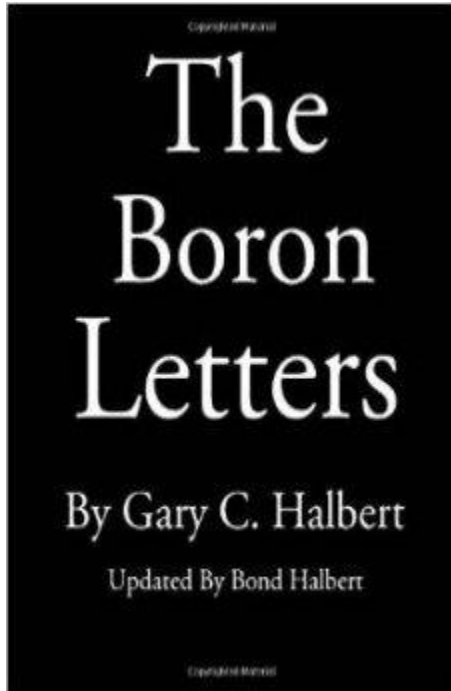
by Claude C. Hopkins

“The only purpose of advertising is to make sales. It is profitable or unprofitable according to its actual sales. It is not for general effect. It is not to keep your name before the people. It is not primarily to aid your other salesmen. Treat it like a salesman. Force it to justify itself. Compare it to other salesman. Figure its cost and result.”

One of the classics cited by copywriters around the world. Much of modern, direct response marketing has been built on the back of the principles Hopkins

outlined in 1918.

Reading Hopkins, I started to see what aspects of marketing were timeless as opposed to timely and re-focus myself on fundamentals.



[The Boron Letters](#)

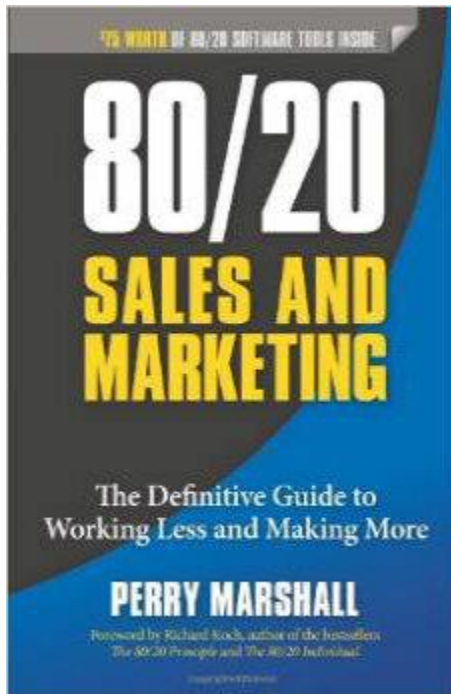
[by Gary Halbert](#)

“The money is where the enthusiasm is. Please remember this! Remember it also, when, in the future, you need to hire someone. Always look for the most enthusiastic person, not necessarily the most qualified.”

Another classic cited by many copywriters.

Halbert is considered by many, the father of modern copywriting and many of the best direct response copywriters have gone through his entire [archives](#).

In the Boron Letters, a series of letters written by Gary Halbert to his son during a stint in prison, Halbert distills down the most valuable lessons he’s learned on life, marketing, and health to pass on to the next generation.



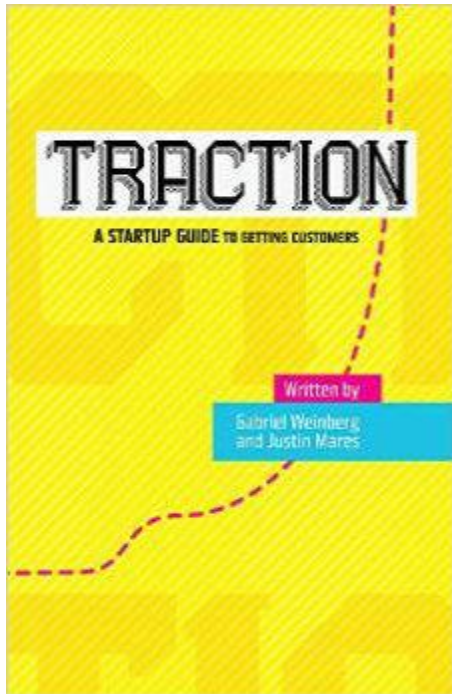
[80/20 Sales and Marketing: The Definitive Guide to Working Less and Making More](#)

[by Perry Marshall](#)

“Selling to the right person is more important than all the sales methods, copywriting techniques, and negotiation tactics in the world. Because the wrong person doesn’t have the money. Or the wrong person doesn’t care. The wrong person won’t be persuaded by anything.”

One of the most impactful books on my thinking in 2014, Perry Marshall’s 80/20 sales and marketing is a book about the fundamental properties of the 80/20 principles and power law distributions that packs a 1-2 punch for as a primer on sales and internet marketing.

While most people think in terms of linear results, this book shows that the people who achieve truly remarkable results are ones that ask, how can we 10x, not how can we double.



[Traction: A Startup Guide to Getting Customers](#)

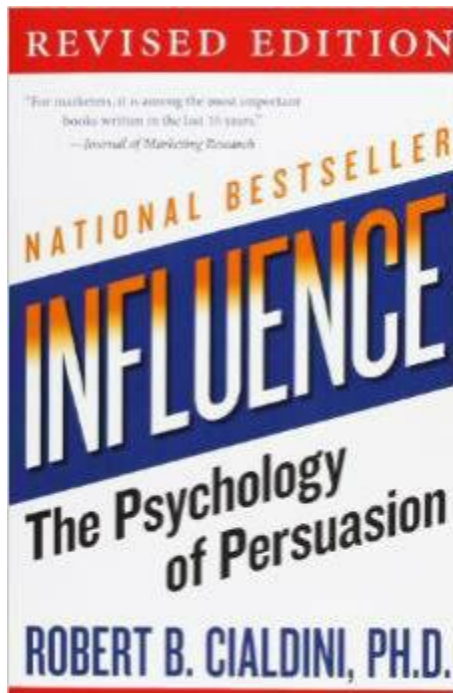
[by Gabriel Weinberg](#)

“The 50% Rule If you’re starting a company, chances are you can build a product. Almost every failed startup has a product. What failed startups don’t have are enough customers. Marc Andreessen, founder of Netscape and VC firm Andreessen-Horowitz, sums up this common problem: “The number one reason that we pass on entrepreneurs we’d otherwise like to back is their focusing on product to the exclusion of everything else. Many entrepreneurs who build great products simply don’t have a good distribution strategy. Even worse is when they insist that they don’t need one, or call [their] no distribution strategy a ‘viral marketing strategy.’”

Traction takes a few fundamental marketing principles and illustrates them in a hyper-practical guide of nineteen channels startups can use for getting early customers.

The first principle, quoted above, is always spend 50% of time on distribution. Mares and Weinberg point out that the natural gravity of a company is always product and only by actively allocating resources and time to marketing can a startup succeed.

The second principle, that “At any stage in a startup’s lifecycle, one traction channel dominates in terms of customer acquisition” is illustrated in nineteen primary channels as told by interviews with forty successful founders.



Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion

by Robert B. Cialdini

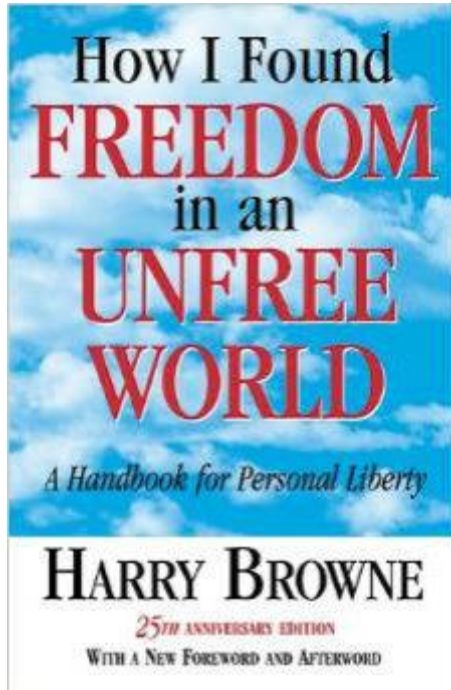
“You and I exist in an extraordinarily complicated stimulus environment, easily the most rapidly moving and complex that has ever existed on this planet. To deal with it, we need shortcuts. We can’t be expected to recognize and analyze all the aspects in each person, event, and situation we encounter in even one day.”

Influence distills down the fundamental psychology of persuasion into six core principles that appear across industries and channels.

Based on human nature rather than transient tactics, Cialdini taps into timeless principles.

From sales to marketing to networking to business development, all of business is built around the six core principles.

Mindset



[How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World: A Handbook for Personal Liberty](#)

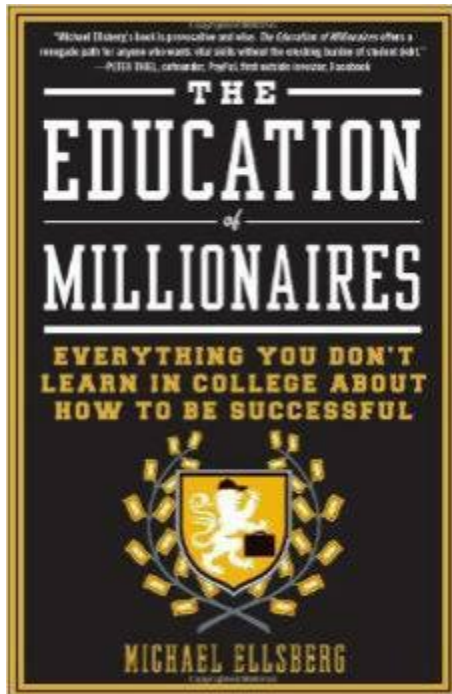
[by Harry Browne](#)

“Desires are limitless; resources are limited. These two conditions are the reasons that individuals must make choices. Individuals decide how they’ll use their limited resources to satisfy their strongest desires. In doing so, they develop value scales, which we can see only by looking at the exchanges they’re willing to make. Perhaps an individual can’t tell you exactly what’s on his value scale, but he chooses in accordance with it when faced with a decision. And he chooses that which he believes will bring him the most happiness.”

Ostensibly a handbook book about living a life based on Libertarian principles, *How I Found Freedom in an Unfree World* is in more a case for radical honesty with both ourselves and others and letting come what may as a result.

Browne takes very fundamental notions of liberty and sovereignty and reflects on years spent applying them on his his life.

If you’re relatively libertarian or sovereign minded, Browne will force you to examine what that philosophy looks like applied across domains from relationships to business and not just selectively as so many of us do.



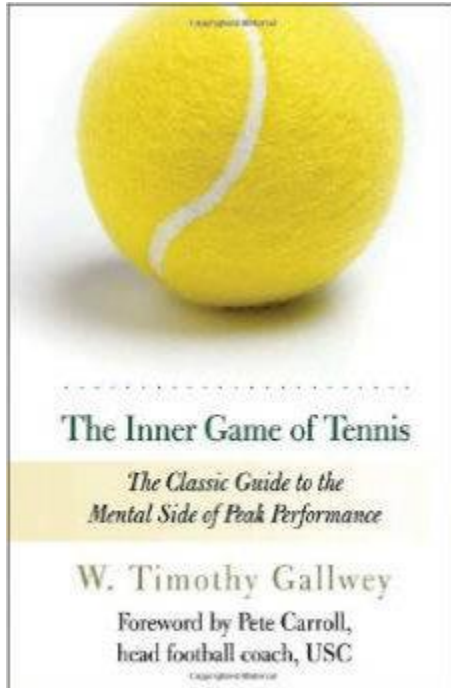
[The Education of Millionaires: It's Not What You Think and It's Not Too Late](#)

[by Michael Ellsberg](#)

“There are two decisions you need to come to in order to be free, and to be more effective. First is that you are not entitled to anything in the world, until you create value for another human being first. Second, you are 100 percent responsible for producing results. No one else. If you adopt those two views, you will go far.”

I first read Ellsberg's book in 2012 and have periodically revisited it since. Ellsberg does a terrific job of distilling down a lot of core entrepreneurial principles for the newly initiated. I frequently recommend this book to friends who feel disillusioned with traditional education.

After selling the reader on the value of an entrepreneurial education, Ellsberg touches on the fundamentals of sales, marketing, personal branding, meaningful work and mentorship.



[The Inner Game of Tennis: The Classic Guide to the Mental Side of Peak Performance](#)

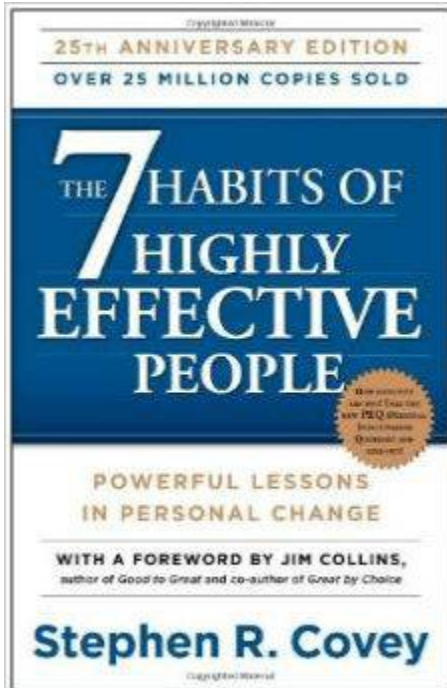
[by W. Timothy Gallwey](#)

“It is said that all great things are achieved by great effort. Although I believe that is true, it is not necessarily true that all great effort leads to greatness. A very wise person once told me, “When it comes to overcoming obstacles, there are three kinds of people. The first kind sees most obstacles as insurmountable and walks away. The second kind sees an obstacle and says, I can overcome it, and starts to dig under, climb over, or blast through it. The third type of person, before deciding to overcome the obstacle, tries to find a viewpoint where what is on the other side of the obstacle can be seen. Then, only if the reward is worth the effort, does he attempt to overcome the obstacle.”

I was obsessed with this book perhaps because I played competitive tennis for half a decade or perhaps because like many other books on this list, the title is deceptive – it has very little to do with tennis.

Gallwey points out that peak performance is achieved largely through counter intuitive means. Tennis players thinking about exactly how to swing the racket or move the other player around the court are rarely good players. The best operate from an entirely different mindset, allowing themselves to seemingly effortlessly operate at peak performance.

Gallwey uses tennis as an analogy for how to translate peak performance into other domains.



7 Habits of Highly Effective People

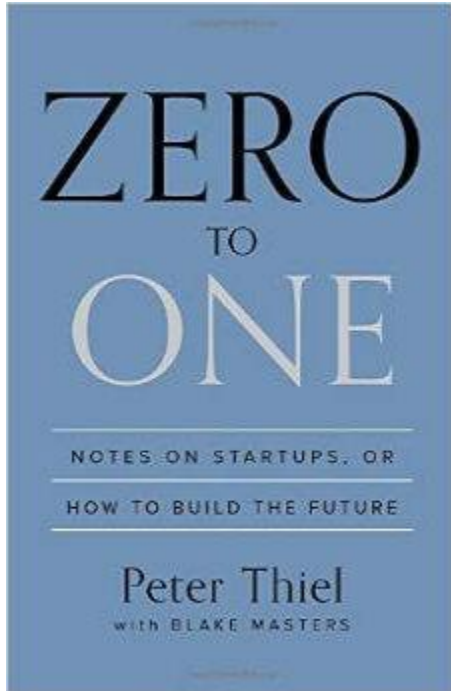
by Stephen Covey

“That which we persist in doing becomes easier— not that the nature of the task has changed, but our ability to do has increased.” By centering our lives on correct principles and creating a balanced focus between doing and increasing our ability to do, we become empowered in the task of creating effective, useful, and peaceful lives... for ourselves, and for our posterity.”

Perhaps the most fundamental self-improvement or personal development book on the market today.

Covey explains and gives readers a strategy for implementing the most important principles he saw across decades of working with individuals to become more effective.

Reminders and emphasis to focus on the important, non-urgent tasks, remember to sharpen the saw and the difference between effectiveness and efficiency have stuck with me since I read it a decade ago.



[Zero to One](#)

[by Peter Thiel](#)

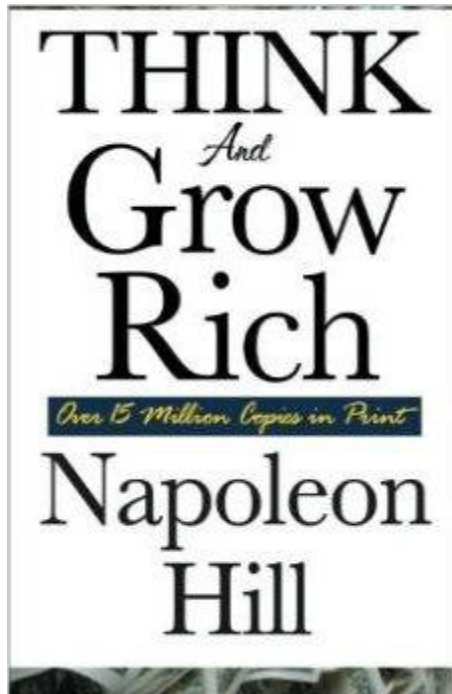
“The business version of our contrarian question is: what valuable company is nobody building?

This question is harder than it looks, because your company could create a lot of value without becoming very valuable itself. Creating value is not enough— you also need to capture some of the value you create.”

One of the world’s leading venture capitalists and co-founder of Paypal, Thiel’s perspective on the future and technology is difficult to match.

Thiel gave a series of talks to a class at Stanford which were turned into a book.

His book is a repository of counter-intuitive truths about the promise of the internet age for entrepreneurs, the role of monopolies in advancing society, and the questions successful startup founders must ask themselves before beginning.



[Think and Grow Rich](#)

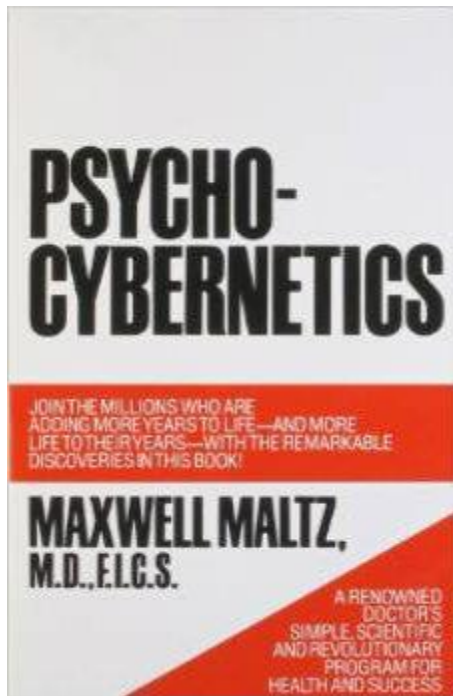
[by Napoleon Hill](#)

“You are the master of your destiny. You can influence, direct and control your own environment. You can make your life what you want it to be.”

Napoleon Hill, one of the earliest publishers of success magazine was given a grant by Andrew Carnegie to go around and interview the most successful men of the era to discover what it was they all had in common.

Hill, having interviewed many of the men who built the U.S. distilled their lessons down into a set of principles and goals. Some more expected: organized planning and persistence, some not so much: The mystery of sex transmutation and auto-suggestion.

While I wouldn't take everything in the book at face value, this is one of the books that spawned the business self-improvement industry and the fundamentals are all there.



Psycho-Cybernetics

by Maxwell Maltz

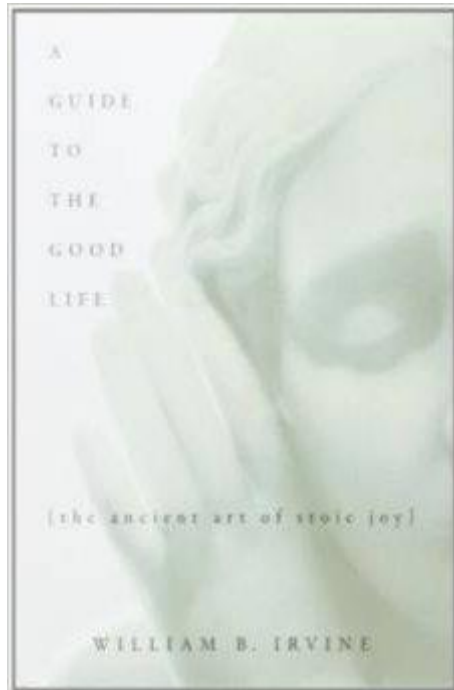
“You must have a wholesome self-esteem. You must have a self that you can trust and believe in. You must have a self that you are not ashamed to be, and one that you can feel free to express creatively, rather than hide or cover up. You must know yourself—both your strengths and your weaknesses—and be honest with yourself concerning both.”

Maltz was a plastic surgeon who noticed there was a small segment of his patients who, even after surgery, were unable to adjust their self-image. Looking in the mirror at their fully reconstructed face, they still saw the post-accident scars.

In seeing the phenomenon over and over, Maltz studied the psychology behind how we view ourselves and what it takes to radically alter self-perception.

In doing so he outlines a program based on the premise that happiness, success, failure and misery are habits and once we're made aware of them, we can change them to suit our ends.

Life Philosophy



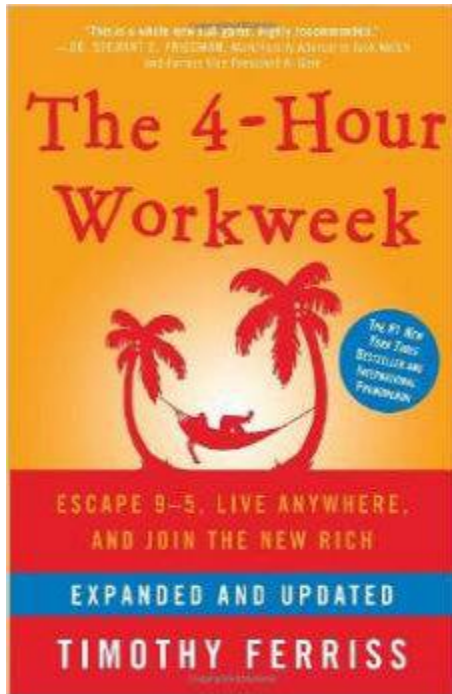
[A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy](#)

[by William B. Irvine](#)

“By contemplating the impermanence of everything in the world, we are forced to recognize that every time we do something could be the last time we do it, and this recognition can invest the things we do with a significance and intensity that would otherwise be absent.”

Stoicism is in vogue and for good reason. As we confront a modern world with ever more activity, distraction and opportunity, a renewed focus on a stoic practice makes sense.

Irvine’s treatment of Stoicism is extremely accessible and practical for putting into use tomorrow in making better decisions and better managing your own psychology.



[The 4-Hour Workweek](#)

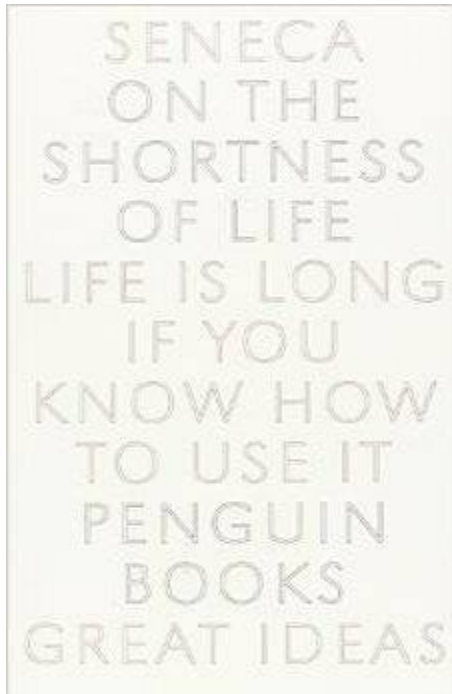
[by Timothy Ferriss](#)

“You spent two weeks negotiating your new Infiniti with the dealership and got \$ 10,000 off? That’s great. Does your life have a purpose? Are you contributing anything useful to this world, or just shuffling papers, banging on a keyboard, and coming home to a drunken existence on the weekends?”

Not frequently categorized as a philosophy book, Ferriss’s pioneering concept was not his clever outsourcing or automation tactics, but his redefinition

of currency.

Is \$400,000 a year worth 80 hour work weeks, no time to travel and a bankrupt emotional life? Ferriss redefined income into money, time and mobility and in doing so changed the way ambition could be expressed.

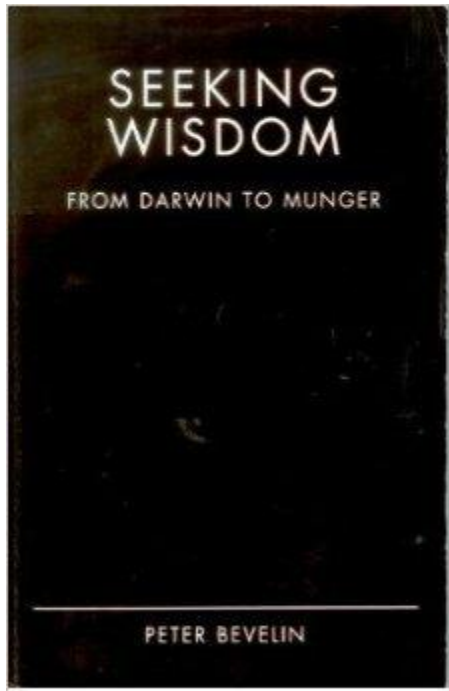


On the Shortness of Life

by Seneca

“Men do not suffer anyone to seize their estates, and they rush to stones and arms if there is even the slightest dispute about the limit of their lands, yet they allow others to trespass upon their life—nay, they themselves even lead in those who will eventually possess it. No one is to be found who is willing to distribute his money, yet among how many does each one of us distribute his life! In guarding their fortune men are often closefisted, yet, when it comes to the matter of wasting time, in the case of the one thing in which it is right to be miserly, they show themselves most prodigal.”

Perhaps the most densely highlighted book I've ever read (though *The War of Art* comes close), Seneca's essays are a tragically hilarious reminder that time, the only truly scarce resources, is the one we find ourselves most prone to squander and offers practical, timeless advice on how to better spend our time.



[Seeking Wisdom: From Darwin To Munger](#)

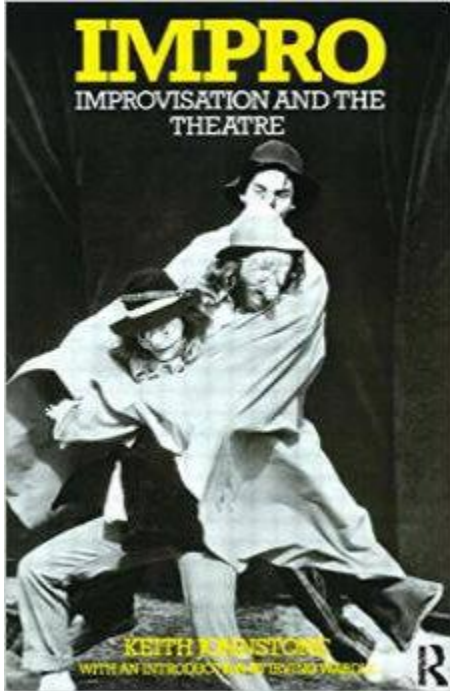
[by Peter Bevelin](#)

“Around here I would say that if our predictions have been a little better than other people’s, it’s because we’ve tried to make fewer of them.”

An essential primer on timeless mental models, Seeking Wisdom is the result of Bevelin’s own quest for wisdom and he distills down the principles he discovered from some of history’s wisest individuals.

Bevelin digs into the writings of some of history’s wisest individuals from Charles Darwin to billionaire Charlie Munger and extracts the principles they all share.

Perhaps most importantly the book emphasizes the and makes the clear the value of wisdom over knowledge and the difference between the two.



[Impro](#)

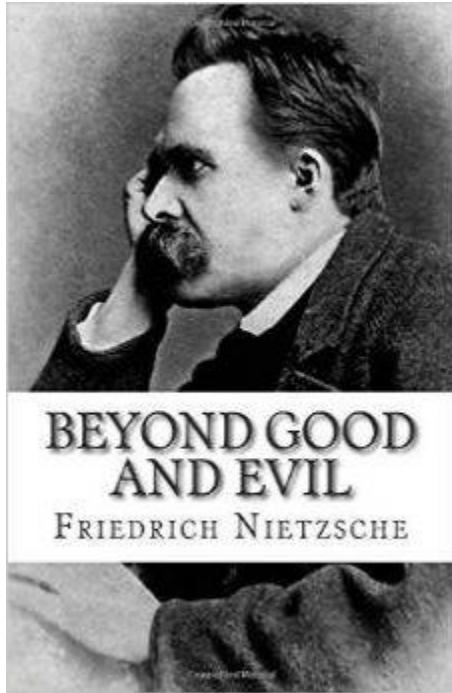
[by Keith Johnstone](#)

“Most people lose their talent at puberty. I lost mine in my early twenties. I began to think of children not as immature adults, but of adults as atrophied children. But when I said this to educationalists, they became angry.”

Impro, cleverly disguised as a book about how to teach improv, is one of the most insightful books into human nature I've read.

Johnstone's journey as a student cum teacher of improvisational comedy reveals much about how modernity has affected us and how much we stand to gain by a return to more childish modes of thinking.

The chapters on mask work and how simply changing physical appearance can dramatically affect the way we interact with the world are terrific.



[Beyond Good and Evil](#)

[by Friedrich Nietzsche](#)

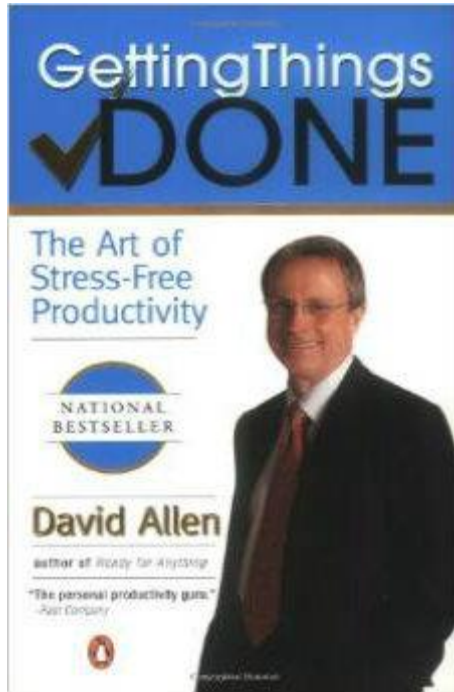
“Was it not necessary to sacrifice God himself, and out of cruelty to themselves to worship stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, nothingness? To sacrifice God for nothingness—this paradoxical mystery of the ultimate cruelty has been reserved for the rising generation; we all know something thereof already.”

When I asked a friend where to begin a study of philosophy, the answer was unequivocal: Nietzsche. Beyond Good and Evil.

Nietzsche is arguably the most impactful philosopher on modern western thought and Beyond Good and Evil is the best condensation of his philosophy.

The book forces you to re-examine commonly held notions of good, bad and evil. Strength is good, weakness is bad and evil is what the weak call the strong to justify their existence. Not for the easily offended.

Productivity and Prioritization



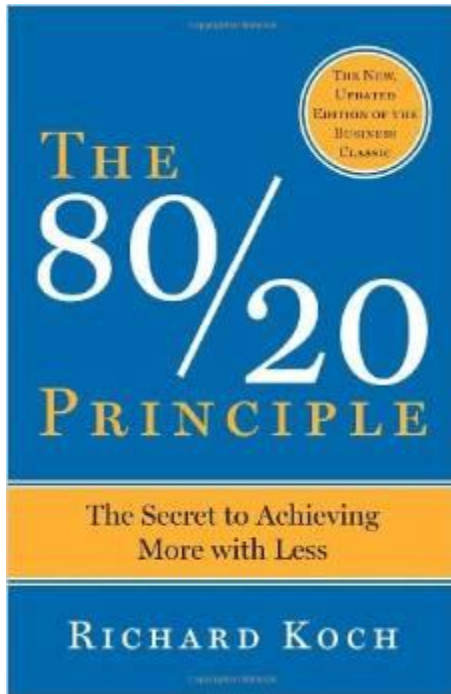
Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity

by David Allen

“Thinking in a concentrated manner to define desired outcomes is something few people feel they have to do. But in truth, outcome thinking is one of the most effective means available for making wishes reality.”

When people tell me “I feel disorganized,” the first place I send them is to Allen. His “GTD” system is the basis for most modern productivity systems, [my own included](#). Allens fundamental contribution is that your mind is not a storage device, it is meant for creative and innovative thought and you should build a system to support that.

As we’re bombarded by more and more emails, texts and stimuli, Allen outlines a system to manage that and focus on, well, getting things done.



[The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Achieving More with Less](#)

[by Richard Koch](#)

“Why should you care about the 80/20 Principle? Whether you realize it or not, the principle applies to your life, to your social world and to the place where you work. Understanding the 80/20 Principle gives you great insight into what is really happening in the world around you.”

You could probably trace a dozen bestsellers (including *The Four Hour Work Week*) back to the 80/20 principle from Koch.

Koch shows the appearance of the 80/20 principle across dozens of domains, cementing its existence as a natural law.

A delightfully simple articulation of a tremendously important concept, Koch reveals how a focus on the 80/20 principle propelled him through a career as a management consultant and into an almost unmatched track record as an investor.

He also reveals the benefits it's had on his personal life, from relationships to health.



[The ONE Thing](#)

[by Gary Keller](#)

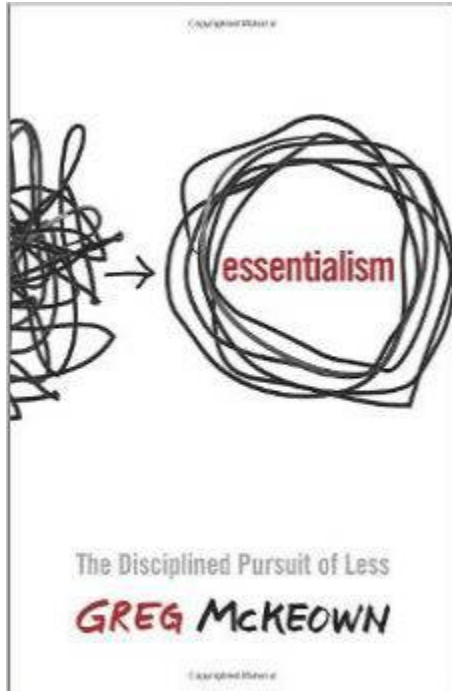
“What’s the ONE Thing I can do such that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”

Another 130 page business book about a concept that can be summed up in 1 sentence? Yes. Another one. I hated to love this book. But, love it I did.

About 70% into the book I made a note that, “this book just drills. It’s attacking one point in space from every possible angle. the one thing of the books is it to

teach people the ONE Thing.”

In a world with an ever increasing number of options and distractions, the scarcity is attention and focus and the ones that will reap the rewards are the ones that acknowledge and build their lives not around novelty and breadth, but meaning and depth.



Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less

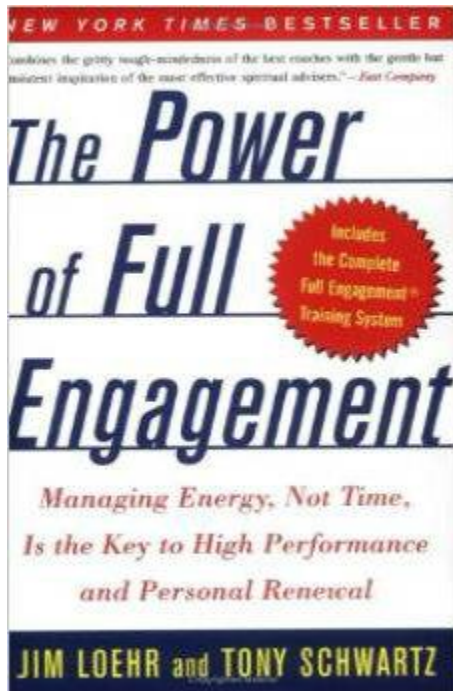
by Greg McKeown

“...the basic value proposition of Essentialism: only once you give yourself permission to stop trying to do it all, to stop saying yes to everyone, can you make your highest contribution towards the things that really matter.”

Along much the same lines as *The ONE Thing*, Essentialism drills on the dramatic results that focus creates and acknowledges that life and business inherently is a question of trade offs.

You can't have everything, but by focusing on the right things, you can have dramatically more than you ever imagined possible.

Once establishing the value of focus and essentialism, McKeown gives some helpful tips for saying no, prioritizing and implementing the books' precepts.



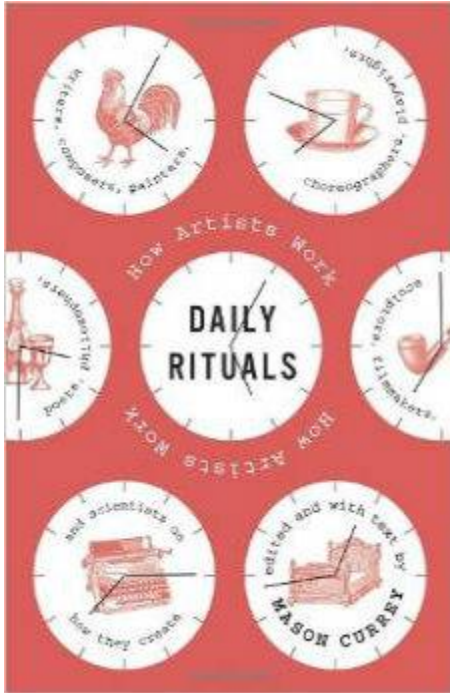
[The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, Is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal](#)

[by Jim Loehr](#)

“The number of hours in a day is fixed, but the quantity and quality of energy available to us is not. It is our most precious resource. The more we take responsibility for the energy we bring to the world, the more empowered and productive we become. The more we blame others or external circumstances, the more negative and compromised our energy is likely to be.”

The Power of Full Engagement is an acknowledgement that most people’s conception of productivity (doing more) is wrong, that the real question is how to prioritize.

Loehr points to the essential importance of renewal and energy management in achieving this highest levels of performance and gives frameworks and systems for better managing energy to achieve higher levels of performance.



Daily Rituals

by Mason Currey

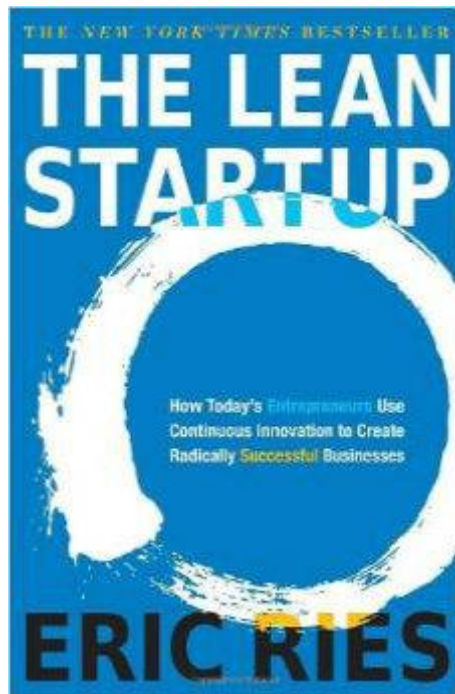
“Sooner or later,” Pritchett writes, “the great men turn out to be all alike. They never stop working. They never lose a minute. It is very depressing.”

Daily Rituals traces the routines of some of history’s more prolific writers and artists through journal entries and interviews that Currey spent years unearthing.

Reading through, you see trends start to emerge. Foremost, as Pritchett noted, an unrelenting focus on their craft for decades, outsourcing everything but the work only they can do and finding their most productive times seem to be the keys.

Amphetamines appear to help as well.

Product Creation



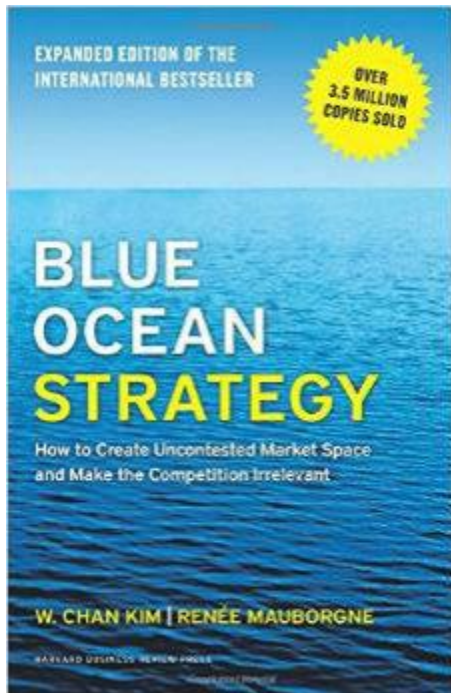
[The Lean Startup](#)

[by Eric Reis](#)

“Because startups often accidentally build something nobody wants, it doesn’t matter much if they do it on time and on budget. The goal of a startup is to figure out the right thing to build—the thing customers want and will pay for—as quickly as possible. In other words, the Lean Startup is a new way of looking at the development of innovative new products that emphasizes fast iteration and customer insight, a huge vision, and great ambition, all at the same time.”

Reis kicked off a movement with his lean startup methodology and rightfully so. As technology transforms industries, the answer to the question “can it be built” is almost always yes. The better question is “should it be built and if so, how do we build it?”

Reis’s methodology digs into the core of these questions to reduce waste and focus on creating something the market values.



Blue Ocean Strategy

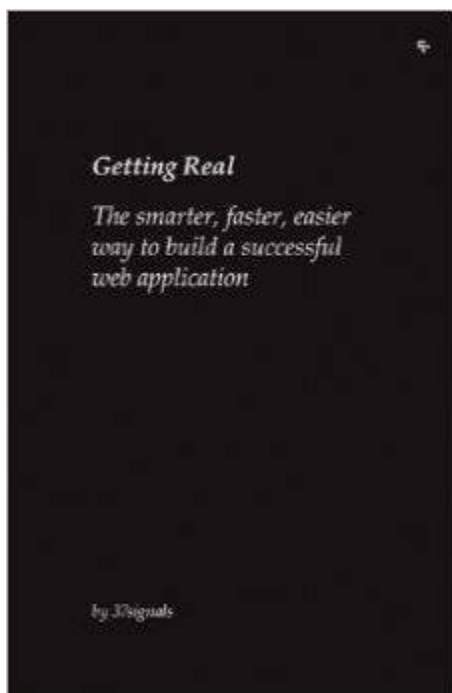
by W. Chan Kim

“Value innovation is the cornerstone of blue ocean strategy. We call it value innovation because instead of focusing on beating the competition, you focus on making the competition irrelevant by creating a leap in value for buyers and your company, thereby opening up new and uncontested market space.”

Blue Ocean Strategy is in some ways a predecessor to Lean Startup in that it emphasized value innovation.

Too many entrepreneurs are enamored innovation without creating market value, building a product nobody wants, or extracting value from the market without innovating.

Both are poor long term strategies, and Blue Ocean Strategies outlines a process for innovating in a way that creates value for the market, or blue oceans – highly profitable, uncontested market space.



[Getting Real: The Smarter, Faster, Easier Way to Build a Web Application](#)

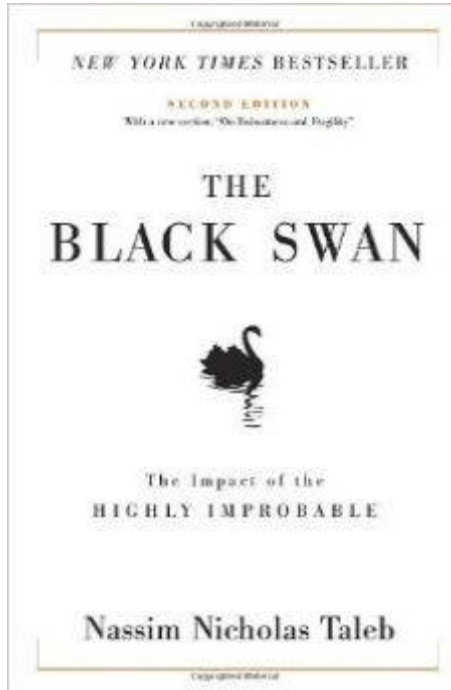
[by 37 Signals](#)

“Constraints force creativity. Run on limited resources and you’ll be forced to reckon with constraints earlier and more intensely. And that’s a good thing. Constraints drive innovation. Constraints also force you to get your idea out in the wild sooner rather than later.”

Specifically targeted at web applications, Getting Real is a bootstrapper’s guide to building products and chronicles the journey, principles and tactics 37 signals used to go from a consulting firm to a highly profitable product business with a team distributed around the world.

The book was pieced together based on blog posts written in the process of building their first product, Basecamp, and gives a no-holds-barred gonzo look at the reality of building a product without venture funding.

Business Philosophy



[The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable](#)

[by Nassim Nicholas Taleb](#)

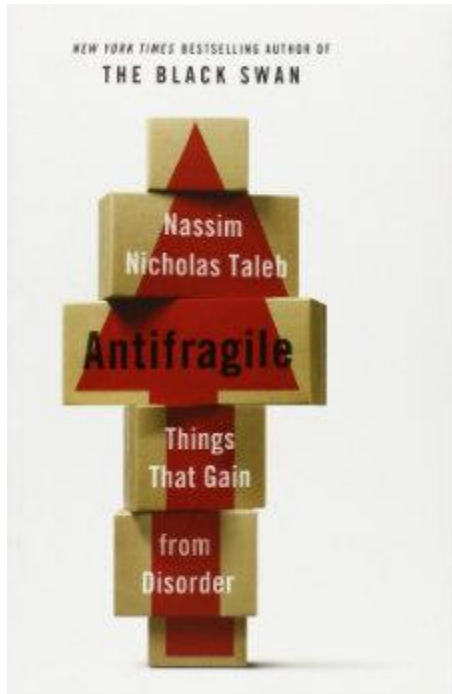
“The inability to predict outliers implies the inability to predict the course of history”

The Black Swan fundamentally altered my perception of the world. Published in 2007, the book foresaw the financial collapse in 2008 and explained the underlying structure that made it inevitable.

The basic tenet is that we can not predict the future and that as the world becomes more globalized and technology advances, our ability to do that is decreasing.

The result are black swan events: unpredictable, highly improbable events that define the course of history – from World Wars to Financial Collapses.

The way to manage this, Taleb confront in his next book...



[Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder](#)

[by Nassim Nicholas Taleb](#)

“A human body can benefit from stressors (to get stronger), but only to a point. For instance, your bones will get denser when episodic stress is applied to them, a mechanism formalized under the name Wolff’s Law after an 1892 article by a German surgeon. But a dish, a car, an inanimate object will not— these may be robust but cannot be intrinsically antifragile.”

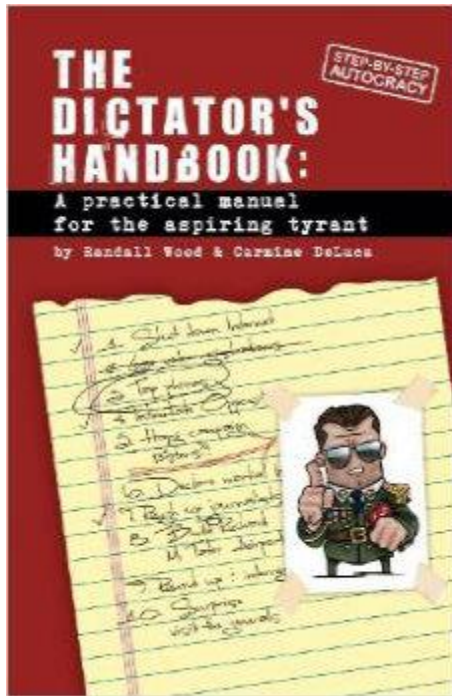
Taleb’s most significant work, this book was novel in a way few other books I’ve read have been. A section of it forms the thesis for a chapter of [The End of Jobs](#).

The book is a critical analysis of modernity written as we live in modernity.

Antifragile builds on *The Black Swan*, that the most impactful events are unpredictable, by explaining that in a world or life where the future is unpredictable, the best we can do is to make ourselves, our careers, and our businesses robust to volatility or antifragile – benefiting from volatility.

Prediction is for the naive.

[Full Notes Here](#)



[The Dictator's Handbook](#)

[by Randall Wood](#)

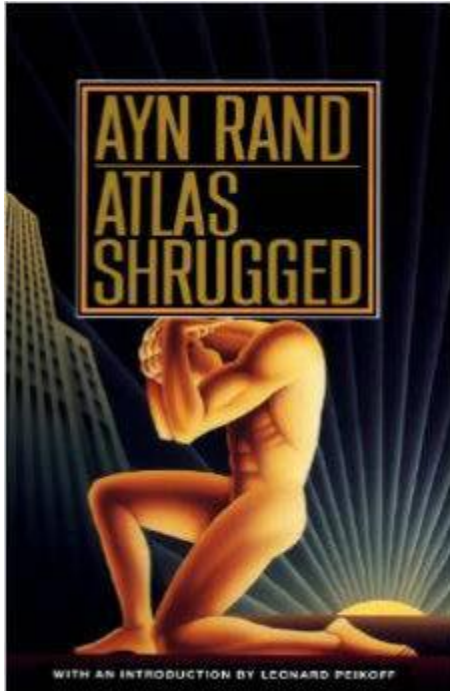
“Pursuing the perfect world for everyone is a waste of time and an excuse for not doing the hard work of making the world better for many.”

Cleverly written as a handbook for dictators, the book outlines some of the fundamental mechanisms of power. While Wood uses examples of the government, it's just as true for organizations.

The two big take aways I got are covered first in the quote above – that idealism is just as useless as endless pessimism, it makes nothing better.

The second is that justice and fairness in a group or society has nothing to do with the sense of justice and fairness in it's leaders, but rather the degree to which power is systematically distributed.

Are democracies more just than dictatorships because democratic leaders are enlightened and unable to take power or because the system has distributed power enough that one individual doesn't hold all the power?



Atlas Shrugged

by Ayn Rand

“...man who stifles his mind is a stalled machine slowly going to rust, that the man who lets a leader prescribe his course is a wreck being towed to the scrap heap, and the man who makes another man his goal is a hitchhiker no driver should ever pick up— that your work is the purpose of your life, and you must speed past any killer who assumes the right to stop you, that any value you might find outside your work, any other loyalty or love, can be only travelers you choose to share your journey and must be travelers going on their own power in the same direction.”

Atlas Shrugged is not unjustly lauded. In a society that in many ways looks down on capitalism as a necessary evil, Rand argues that self-interest and hard work are the essentials to life.

I have to assume Rand read a lot of Nietzsche. I know for a fact she took a lot of amphetamines and considering how prolific she was, it's little surprise. Could easily be called the capitalist's handbook.



[Anything You Want](#)

[by Derek Sivers](#)

“If you want to be useful, you can always start now, with only 1 percent of what you have in your grand vision. It’ll be a humble prototype version of your grand vision, but you’ll be in the game. You’ll be ahead of the rest, because you actually started, while others are waiting for the finish line to magically appear at the starting line.”

Delightful. Sivers’ reputation as a business philosopher is well earned. His book is filled with these little nuggets of wisdom about business, life and

intersection of the two.

It’s one of those books you can keep re-reading and each time you realize something else profoundly true about it based on your intermittent life experience.



[The Fourth Economy: Inventing Western Civilization](#)

[by Ron Davison](#)

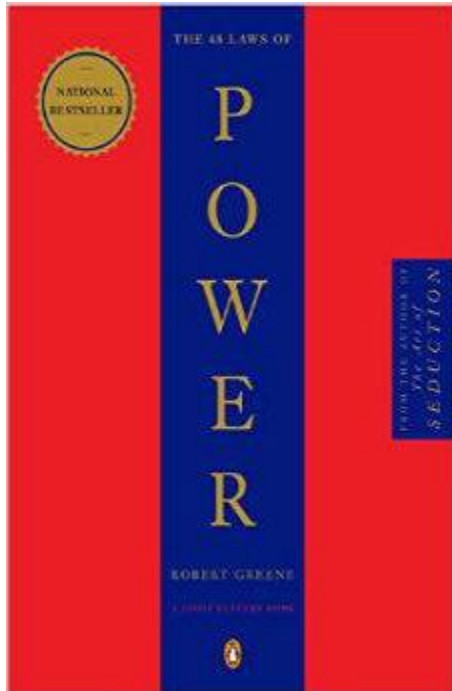
“It seems likely that the Internet will do for the corporation what the Guttenberg press did for the church. That is, it will break up structures we had always assumed were permanent: it will render temporal what we assumed was timeless.”

The last time I re-read this book, I picked up my phone to text Ron “your book makes me want to run through a wall.” It greatly inspired me in the writing of [The End of Jobs](#).

The Fourth Economy chronicles the last 700 years of Western history placing it in a framework that places us at the transition point from the Third Economy (The Knowledge Economy) to the Fourth Economy (The Entrepreneurial Economy).

The broader implication being that power is distributing. From Popes, to Kings, To Bankers, to CEOs, to Entrepreneurs, we are poised at the precipice of the largest democratization of power in human history.

[Full Notes Here](#).



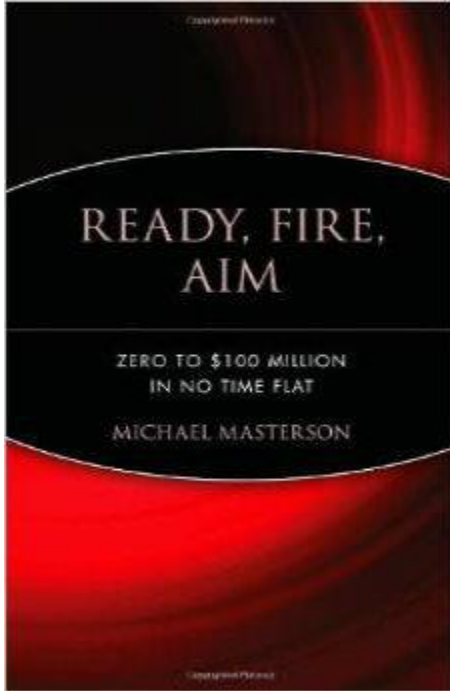
[The 48 Laws of Power](#)

[by Robert Greene](#)

“Be wary of friends—they will betray you more quickly, for they are easily aroused to envy. They also become spoiled and tyrannical. But hire a former enemy and he will be more loyal than a friend, because he has more to prove. In fact, you have more to fear from friends than from enemies. If you have no enemies, find a way to make them.”

Greene’s best work, the Laws of Power explores the nature of power through 48 laws exemplified using historical vignettes.

While Greene probably goes too far in his proclamations of how power functions and over simplifies in some places, the book is more than worth reading if simply for it’s barefaced, amoral look at what it requires to gain, keep and lose power.



[Ready, Fire, Aim: Zero to \\$100 Million in No Time Flat](#)

[by Michael Masterson](#)

“the truth about entrepreneurship: that the freedom it gives you is usually the freedom to work twice as long and twice as hard as you ever did, even if you thought you were working too much for someone else.”

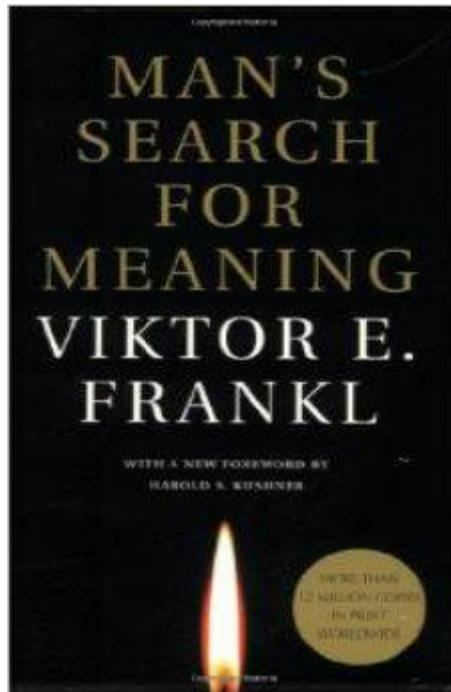
Masterson, the pen name of Mark Ford of Agora publishing, is legit. This book lays out how he built a succession of \$100 million dollar companies over the course of his

After spending months trying to come up with an algorithm for product development, Masterson’s key insight for me was don’t rely too much on data, for businesses under \$10 million, the best decisions are usually made by the founder’s gut instinct.

Meaning and Motivation

[Man's Search for Meaning](#)

[by Viktor E. Frankl](#)



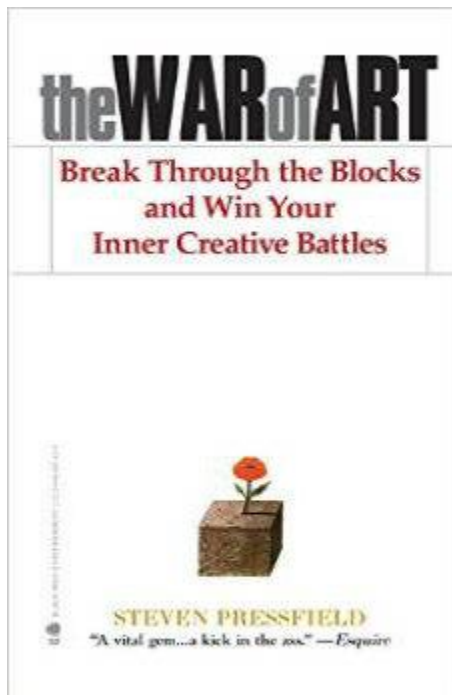
“Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation. You cannot control what happens to you in life, but you can always control what you will feel and do about what happens to you.”

This book is another one of my most re-read books. Often called the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy, Frankl discards Freud's Will to Pleasure and Nietzsche's Will to Power, insisting that it is instead a Will to Meaning that fundamentally drives

man.

Calling on his experience in the Nazi concentration camps, Frankl saw that the difference between death and survival in the most abject of conditions devoid of pleasure or any hope of power was instead a clinging to meaning, that one's life can have meaning beyond oneself.

He then gives a prescription for how we can better align our lives with a fundamental sense of meaning.



[The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks & Win Your Inner Creative Battles](#)

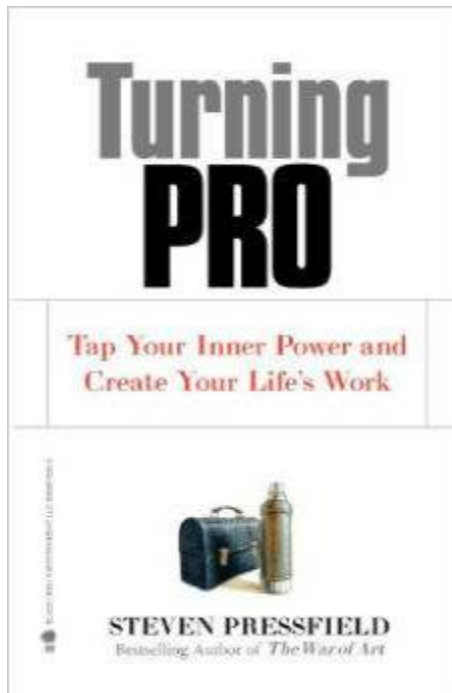
[by Steven Pressfield](#)

“Are you paralyzed with fear? That’s a good sign. Fear is good. Like self-doubt, fear is an indicator. Fear tells us what we have to do. Remember our rule of thumb: The more scared we are of a work or calling, the more sure we can be that we have to do it.”

This one also goes on my list of books that makes me want to run through a wall. Pressfield articulates a concept he calls the Resistance -s a force that anyone who has ever endeavored to change their life has felt. The fear of the blank screen and blinking cursor. It is what holds us back from doing our best work.

Instead of offering solutions to escape it, Pressfield instead insists that it must be confronted, that we must wake up each morning and fight the war of art and that the act of fighting is victory.

Don’t read it at night, you won’t be able to sleep.



Turning Pro

by Steven Pressfield

“Ambition, I have come to believe, is the most primal and sacred fundament of our being. To feel ambition and to act upon it is to embrace the unique calling of our souls. Not to act upon that ambition is to turn our backs on ourselves and on the reason for our existence.”

Pressfield marches on. There is a point in fighting the War of Art that marks a transition, when we turn pro.

When we realize the battle, the war which we are called to fight and embark on it, day in and day out. That is turning pro.

Again Pressfield avoids offering easy solutions, insisting that it's confronting the Resistance, and expressing ambition that's fundamental to the human condition.



Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?

by Seth Godin

“The job is what you do when you are told what to do. The job is showing up at the factory, following instructions, meeting spec, and being managed.”

Someone can always do your job a little better or faster or cheaper than you can.

The job might be difficult, it might require skill, but it’s a job.

Your art is what you do when no one can tell you exactly how to do it. Your art is the act of taking personal responsibility, challenging the status quo, and changing people.

I call the process of doing your art ‘the work.’ It’s possible to have a job and do the work, too. In fact, that’s how you become a linchpin.

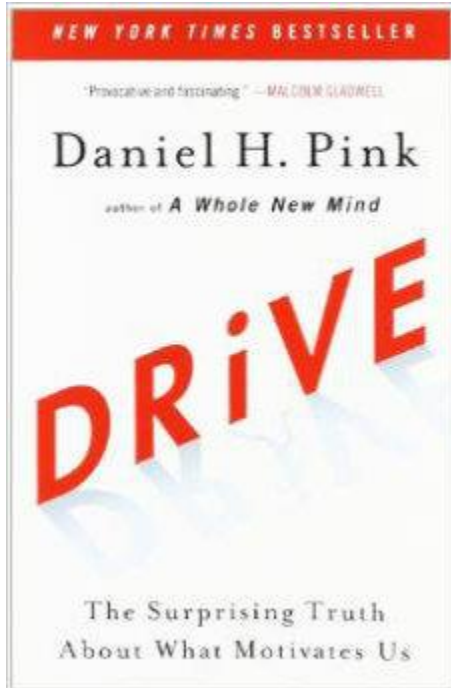
The job is not the work.”

The Industrial age is over. That jobs and following orders is no longer a real option. We must instead become linchpins, create, connect and ship our work.

After I finished it, I sat down and wrote an impassioned email to two college friends. They both quit their corporate jobs in the next 12 months, so there would appear to be something there.

Linchpin was a book I heavily referenced and revisited in writing [The End of Jobs](#).

Seth’s best book.



[Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us](#)

[by Daniel H. Pink](#)

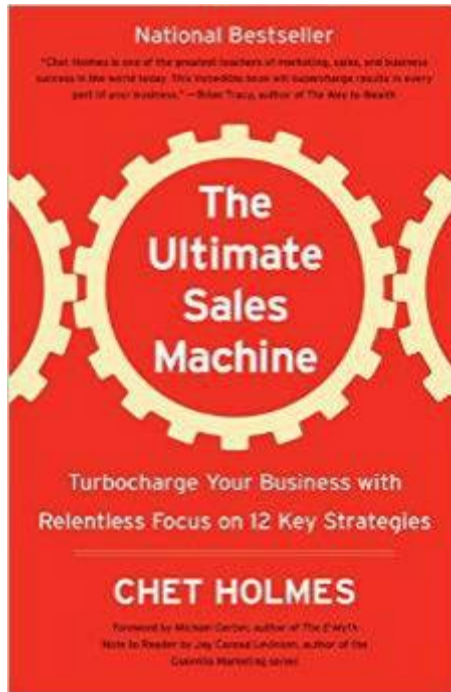
“Think for a moment about the great artists of the last hundred years and how they worked—people like Pablo Picasso, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Jackson Pollock. Unlike for the rest of us, Motivation 2.0 was never their operating system. Nobody told them: You must paint this sort of picture. You must begin painting precisely at eight-thirty A.M. You must paint with the people we select to work with you. And you must paint this way. The very idea is ludicrous. But you know what? It’s ludicrous for you, too. Whether you’re fixing sinks, ringing up groceries, selling cars, or writing a lesson plan, you and I need autonomy just as deeply as a great painter.”

Drive was a big influence on me and plays a big role in [The End of Jobs](#). Pink distills motivation into two systems – Motivation 1.0 and Motivation 2.0.

Motivation 1.0 is the system that powered the industrial revolution, a system based on carrots and sticks, incentives and punishment to get the work done.

What Pink uncovers and explains is that the motivation and drive to do entrepreneurial work is categorically different. Traditional financial incentives fall short and instead Pink offers a way to create the autonomy, purpose and growth which drive entrepreneurs to do great work.

Sales



[The Ultimate Sales Machine: Turbocharge Your Business with Relentless Focus on 12 Key Strategies](#)

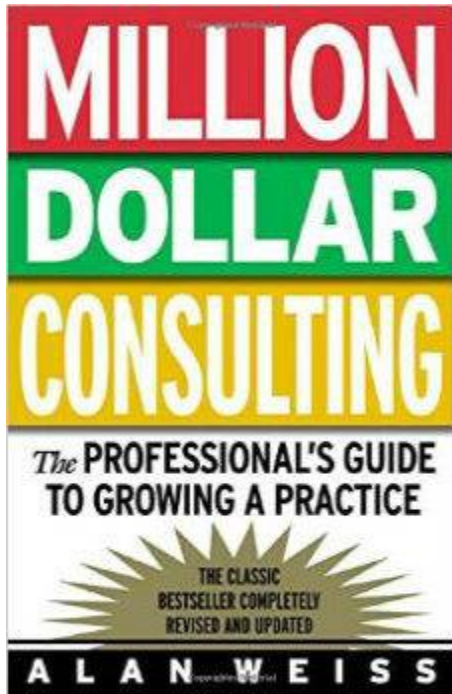
[by Chet Holmes](#)

“Building a sales machine is not going to be about doing 4,000 things; it’s going to be about doing 12 things 4,000 times each.”

A killer for building sales organizations and teams. Holmes book shows how he is able to take commodity businesses and successfully scale them through building a sales and marketing machine.

His book inspired me to dress up like a [bartender at a](#)

[trade show \(to great effect\)](#).

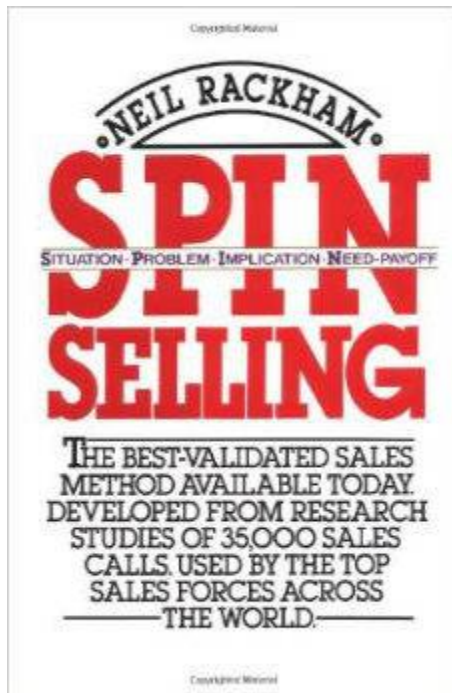


[Million Dollar Consulting: the Professional's Guide to Growing a Practice](#)

[by Alan Weiss](#)

“The key is not to outthink your competitors, because doing so is unlikely and overwhelmingly tiring. The key is to have no competitors because you have defined your own playing field and written your own rules (taken the sharp right). The specialty chemical firm did this, avoiding the suffering of myriad organizations in similar straits that have vainly tried to play by others’ rules. I did it, made a fortune, and emerged to write this book because I determined how I would play the game. However, the idea itself isn’t mine. It’s practiced by the most successful businesspeople and entrepreneurs in the world.”

Weiss is rightly regarded as one of the foremost experts on consulting and selling consulting services. I read this book when I got into consulting and it was essential for helping me understand how to positioning myself, write proposal and understand that 80% of consulting revenue will come from repeat engagements.



[SPIN Selling](#)

[by Neil Rackham](#)

“The solution lies in better needs development, not in objection handling. Particularly if you are getting price objections, cut down on the use of features and, instead, concentrate on asking Problem, Implication, and Need-Payoff questions.”

Whereas The Ultimate Sales Machine is effective for building sales organizations, SPIN Selling is the essential guide to developing individual sales scripts.

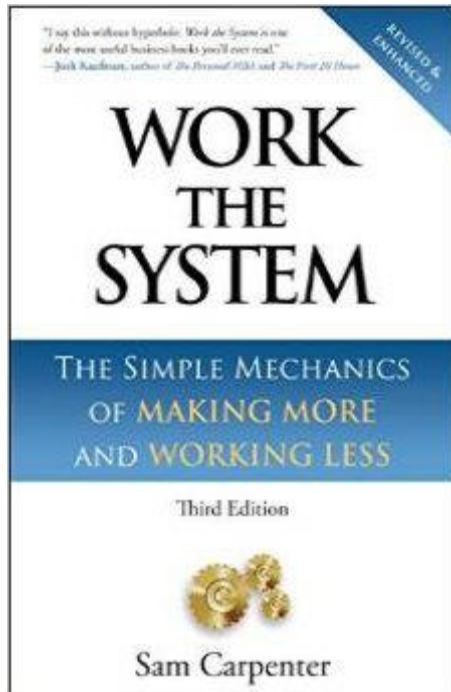
Based on an extensive research project, the book breaks sales down into a defined process that lays to rest common, and mistaken, notions about sales.

Many new salespeople overemphasize the importance of trying to be persuasive with an individual prospect instead of having a defined process to identify the best prospects for their product or service and make the sale.

The book teaches how to sell through better understanding prospect needs and educating them on how your solutions solves it instead of cheesy used car salesman.

Everytime I start a new sales campaign, I review the book and build out my script based on the questions.

Systems



[Work the System: The Simple Mechanics of Making More and Working Less](#)

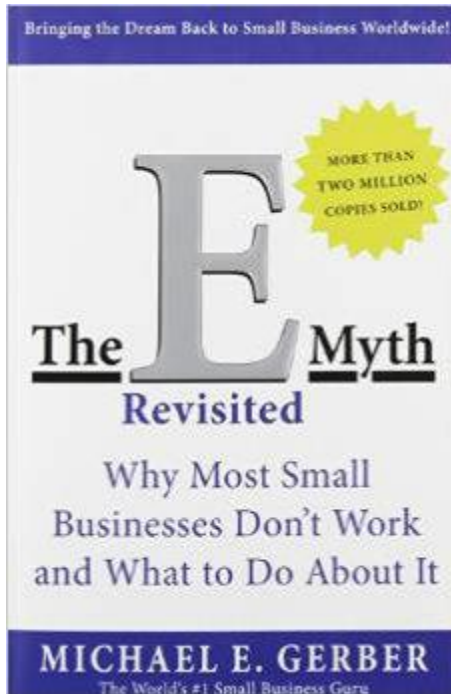
[by Sam Carpenter](#)

“My overall life role is as a project engineer: that is, someone who accepts a problem, designs a mechanical solution, and then makes that solution work in the real world. I’m a project engineer in every aspect of my life including the personal roles of father, son, brother, husband, and friend.”

Sam Carpenter put in words something I’ve always found true – systems liberate. Much to the chagrin of many creatives and entrepreneurs, it is in fact the development of defined processes and systems which enable freedom, creativity and profits.

Must-read for anyone who feels “stuck” in their business and unable to get out of day-to-day operations.

Sam explains how he used systems to for increase profits, the quality of his team all while decreasing his time investment in the business.



[The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It](#)

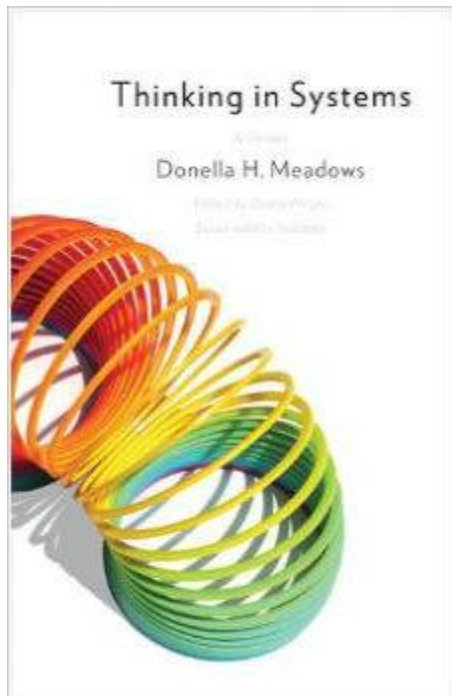
[by Michael E. Gerber](#)

“To The Entrepreneur, the business is the product. To The Technician, the product is what he delivers to the customer.”

Gerber's book gets at the same principle as Work the System, but told through the story of an individual entrepreneur.

The E-Myth is about the difference between building a job and building a business.

Gerber distinguishes between the entrepreneur – who is focused on the end result the customer gets and the technician who is focused on the craft itself and how moving from technician to entrepreneur is a way to make more money while helping more customers.



Thinking in Systems: A Primer

by Donella Meadows

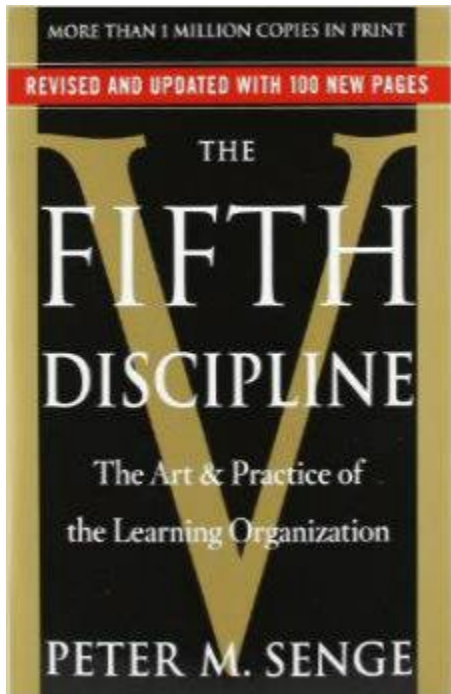
“God grant us the serenity to exercise our bounded rationality freely in the systems that are structured appropriately, the courage to restructure the systems that aren’t, and the wisdom to know the difference!”

Meadows work is aptly named and is a terrific primer in systems thinking.

Our default condition when something goes wrong is to blame ourselves or someone else, when always there is a system at fault, even if we haven’t yet uncovered it.

Modern research on habits and organizational behavior reveal something most people are loath to accept – you are a monkey. Your brain is mostly a monkey brain and trying to overcome that is futile, but building systems around that is highly productive.

Instead of trying not to eat the cake in the fridge or check your email on your phone, throw the cake out and turn off email on your phone. Systems liberate and Meadows dives in the fundamental nature of how systems operate across domains.



[The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization](#)

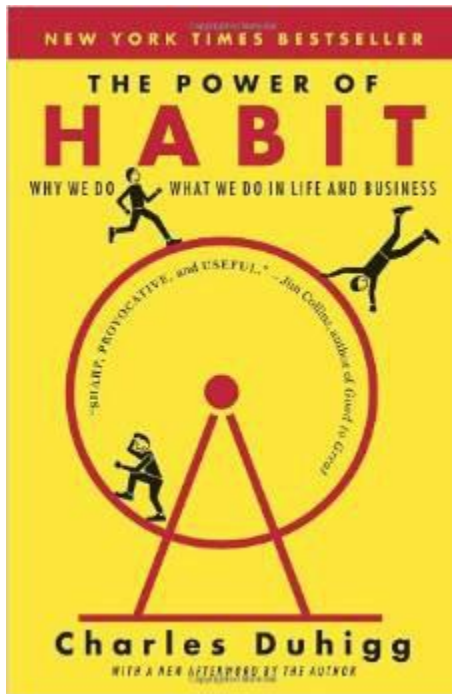
[by Peter Senge](#)

“making money for a company is like oxygen for a person; if you don’t have enough of it you’re out of the game.” In other words, profitability is a performance requirement for all businesses, but it is not a purpose. Extending Drucker’s metaphor, companies who take profit as their purpose are like people who think life is about breathing. They’re missing something.”

Senge builds on work from thinkers like Drucker and applies a deep view of systems thinking to corporations.

Companies, like individuals, are just a collection of systems and re-engineering how those systems work can, and does dramatically change companies.

Senge advocates and outlines the creation of learning organizations, companies designed to continually improve and innovate.



[The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business](#)

[by Charles Duhigg](#)

“... your habits are what you choose them to be. Once that choice occurs— and becomes automatic— it’s not only real, it starts to seem inevitable, the thing, as James wrote, that bears “us irresistibly toward our destiny, whatever the latter may be.”

Aristotle said that “You are what you repeatedly do.”

Duhigg gives an instruction manual for how to change our habits, what we repeatedly do, and in so doing change ourselves.

We make almost all our decisions on autopilot, following in the same footsteps as we did the day before. Once we realized how to unearth those habits and consciously redirect them, we eventually become autopilots headed towards doing things we want to do and find meaningful.

Want more?

The impact of books for me has as much if not more to do with when I read it in my life trajectory than the book itself. Curious if a book is right for you? Email me at taylor@taylorpearson.me, [tweet me](#), or [facebook me](#), I love to recommend (and be recommended) books.

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