

BOOK
RAPPER

*Book Of
The Year*
2016



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Each year I am aim to read 50 books.

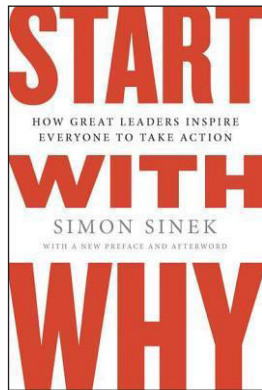
I have no clear method for selecting these books. They are almost certain to be non-fiction. And, it really is a case of what ever sparks my interest at the time. They don't even have to be brand new. Some books might be ancient... like ten years old! LOL!

I do it because I love to learn and reading is one way that I love to learn. I feel that an entire book on a single subject provides me with some depth and breadth on a subject.

Also, I believe that too few people are building a depth and breadth of knowledge today. If they are reading at all, it is lightly. And, following in the spirit of our number one book for this year, this could be a limiting move for your future career prospects.

This book is split into two sections. The second section is my Top Ten Books for 2016. These countdown in order from ten to one. In our first section are all the other books that I've read this year. These are in the order that I have read them. And, I've picked a few that stand out and deserve a special mention.

For each book, I have added a short comment. In some cases I loved the book and in others it didn't meet my expectations. I repeat, it didn't meet my expectations. That's not to say it won't meet yours...

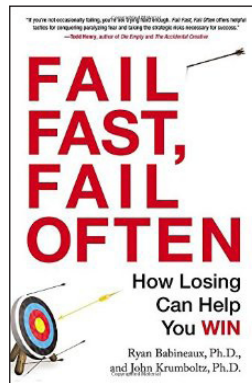


START WITH WHY

SIMON SINEK

A classic. Had I not been reading this for the second or third time it would have made the top ten. It was our #3 best book for 2011.

RECOMMENDED



FAIL FAST, FAIL OFTEN

RYAN BANINEAUX AND JOHN KRUMBOLTZ

I thought this might be a good book for me and, it was only okay. I suspect this was because I wasn't their audience. It was written more for the career person than for the small business operator. For the intended audience it might be bold and adventurous and for me it wasn't.

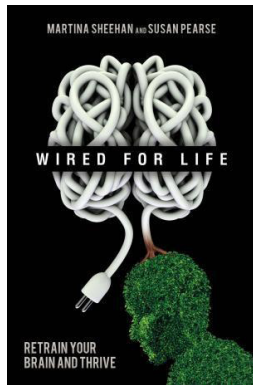


THE ONE THING

GARY KELLER WITH JAY PAPASAN

An important idea! Our priority is one thing, not many. We rapped this book over at Book Rapper as part of a double act with Essentialism by Greg McKeown. The Book Rapper version is called Focus. The point of The One Thing is to help you define the one thing you will focus on and then take action. It's simple, direct and essential for anyone wanting to be productive in our distracting world.

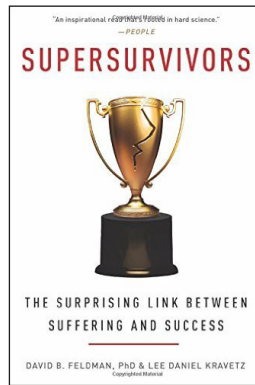
RECOMMENDED



WIRED FOR LIFE

MARTINA SHEEHAN AND SUSAN PEARSE

This book is all about our brains and unravelling how we are wired. A strong part of the book focuses on the fears that we encounter and how our brains respond – sometimes well and sometimes not. This is a good simple easy read with a solid message. It's not filled with science and can be applied in a practical way to your daily life.

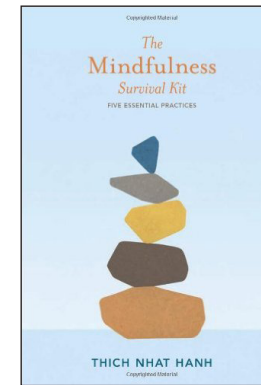


SUPER SURVIVORS

DAVID FELDMAN AND LEE DANIEL KRAVETZ

The sub-title of this book is eye-catching: The surprising link between suffering and success. I really liked the in-depth stories and case studies in this book. They were interesting and challenging because they do focus on people surviving difficult situations. For me, there was great comfort in reading this book because it showed what human beings can endure and it offered some sound suggestions as to how you can apply this to your life.

RECOMMENDED



THE MINDFULNESS SURVIVAL KIT

THICH NHAT HANH

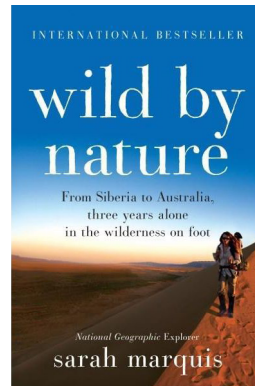
Not Thich Nhat Hanh's best work in my view. Love the Buddhist style metaphors and this one didn't have the grunt or depth I wanted.



DO - DISRUPT

MARK SHAYLER

An entertaining short sharp read. The intent is good and it lacked some depth and substance for me. Love the fun design!

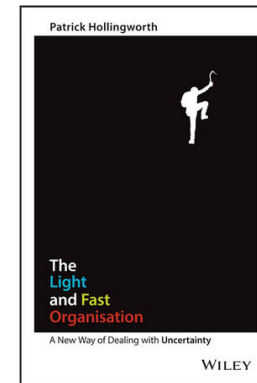


WILD BY NATURE

SARAH MARQUIS

Loved this! I read the whole book in 24 hours! Need I say more? It's a spectacular adventure story of humans at play. It almost made the top ten. Born to Run just pipped it! Check out Sarah's TED talk too!

RECOMMENDED

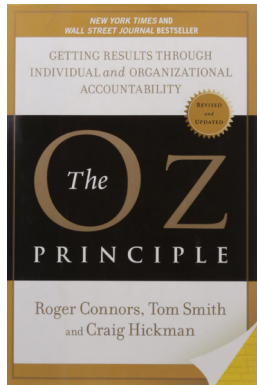


THE LIGHT AND FAST ORGANISATION

PATRICK HOLLINGWORTH

Loved the rock climbing stories. Plus, this book includes some great contemporary views of the fast pace of organisations and how to be nimble to keep up with the marketplace. This is a really good book except for one thing... It's based on a single model or diagram and as it progressed more and more layers were added to the same model. In the end it started to feel a tad forced and over worked. This left me feeling flat. Close!

RECOMMENDED



THE OZ PRINCIPLE

**ROGER CONNORS, TOM SMITH
AND CRAIG HICKMAN**

Published in 1994 and sold over 600,000 copies. Wow! Unfortunately, that wasn't my experience. More like... a bit old. Perhaps, I'm being harsh. This book just promised a lot and didn't provide a lot of fresh insight for me.



WHEN IT'S RIGHT TO BE WRONG

RUSSEL HOWCROFT

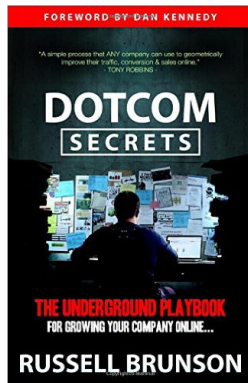
This one occurs to me as cashing in on his TV fame. This book was definitely written in days not months. A bit of a throw-away.



CLEARING CLUTTER

ALEXANDRA CHAURAN

I really liked the piece about emotional clutter. Whilst not as majestic as Marie Kondo, well worth a read if you want to clean up your act.

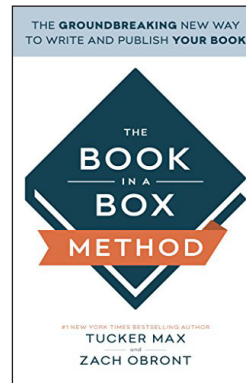


DOTCOM SECRETS

RUSSELL BRUNSON

Excellent! Great to have a leading Internet marketer put out a good book. Brunson is behind the software Click Funnels. Most books by Internet marketers are heavily self-promotional, whereas this has some real juice in it. Perfect for someone starting out, plus some advanced tips too. Close to the top ten.

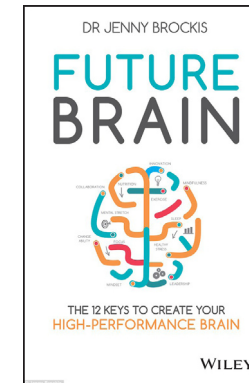
RECOMMENDED



BOOK IN A BOX METHOD

TUCKER MAX AND ZACH OBRONT

Nice, neat, simple. Like their own method, this book is an easy read that provides good guidance on how to write your own book. If you're are writing a book this could be a useful resource.



FUTURE BRAIN

DR JENNY BROCKIS

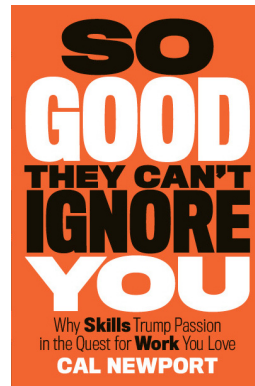
Perhaps the most disappointing read of the year. The title and cover image offer so much. If you're new to reading about the brain this might work for you. It didn't work for me because it's not really about the Future Brain at all, more of a summary of some current and not-so-current thinking.



MANAGE YOUR DAY TO DAY

JOCELYN GLEI (EDITOR)

I'm not really into these edited books where you grab a short something from a bunch of experts. They usually leave me feeling flat and not learning a whole lot.

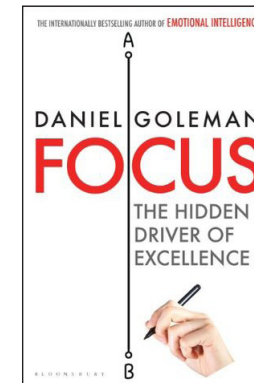


SO GOOD THEY CAN'T IGNORE YOU

CAL NEWPORT

Love this! This is Cal's first book and more specifically about career advice. It's not the usual clichés either, it has some wise words for all of us about careers, passion and life. Cal's second book Deep Work is our Book of the Year.

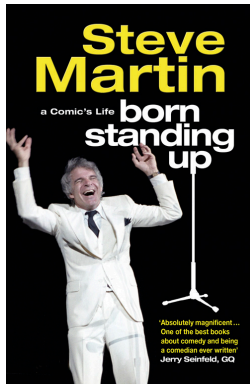
RECOMMENDED



FOCUS

DANIEL GOLEMAN

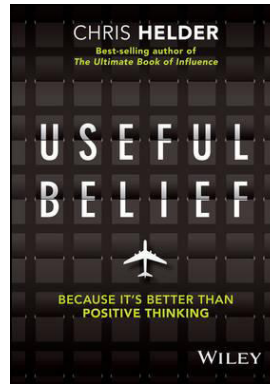
There was something missing in this one for me. It's good, it's solid and it's detailed. Perhaps it's the style. It's almost predictable and curated bits rather than an integrated story. This is a strong book as you'd expect from someone of Goleman's stature. I just can't quite put my finger on why I didn't like this more.



BORN STANDING UP

STEVE MARTIN

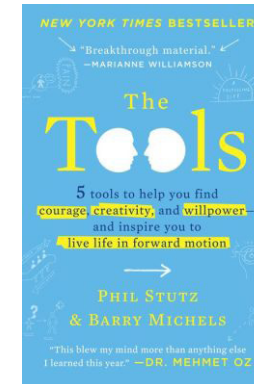
A fascinating insight into comedian Steve Martin's long slow, steady path to success. It highlights the fine line between making it and not. His quote: "Be so good they can't ignore you" was borrowed by Cal Newport for his book title.



USEFUL BELIEF

CHRIS HELDER

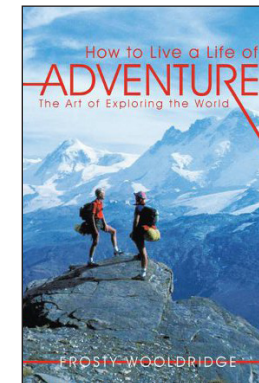
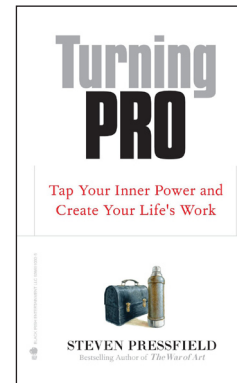
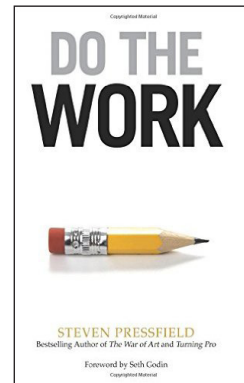
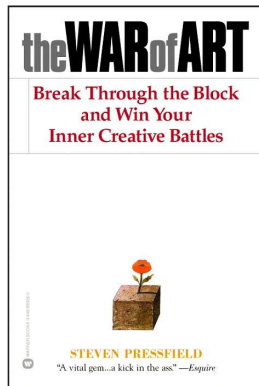
Another disappointment. The title promised so much and delivered so little of insight and value.



THE TOOLS

PHIL STUTZ AND BARRY MICHELS

I like the format of this book. It provides five simple tools that you can use to move your life forward. There are a bunch of stories and case studies that lead to some simple exercises that you can practice. Worth a read if you're feeling stuck.



WAR OF ART, DO THE WORK, TURNING PRO

STEVEN PRESSFIELD

I love Steven Pressfield's work. Re-reading these three books has almost become an annual event for me as a necessary kick up the butt. A great companion set to Ryan Holliday's *The Obstacle is the Way*.

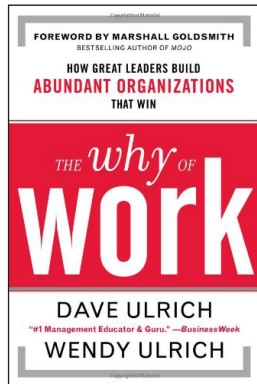
Turning Pro was #4 on my best books for 2014.

RECOMMENDED

HOW TO LIVE A LIFE OF ADVENTURE

FROSTY WOOLDRIDGE

This is perhaps the most unlikely book on the list. It's not pretty and it is inspiring. Frosty is an adventurer who shares his long-list of experiences walking, cycling, sailing, skiing etc around the world. Perfect if you want some juice for exploring our world.

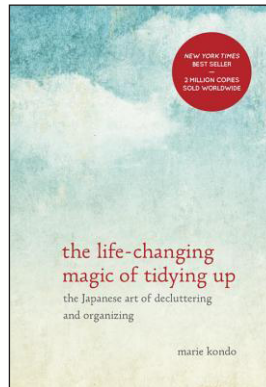


THE WHY OF WORK

DAVID ULRICH AND WENDY ULRICH

This is an important book that just missed our top ten. It's important because the why in work is missing. For most of us the paycheck is no longer enough and the results from engagement surveys confirm this. This is a well-thought out package that provides diagnostic tools and a strong framework for building purpose and motivation into any organisation.

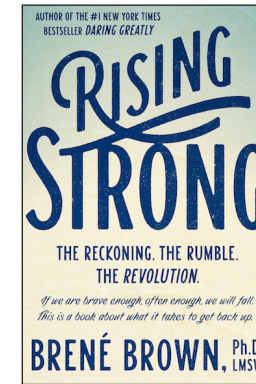
RECOMMENDED



THE LIFE CHANGING MAGIC OF TIDYING

MARIE KONDO

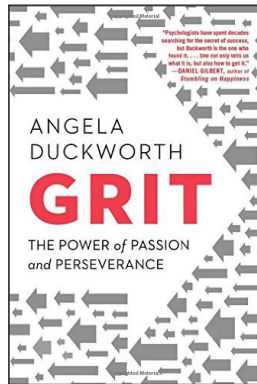
This is such a worldwide phenomenon that I just had to read it to know what everyone was talking about. Most books talking about clutter or tidying keep it at the practical level of shifting your stuff. In contrast, Kondo brings an almost religious and spiritual zeal to the task of keeping your life in order. This will inspire some people into beautiful action and others into rolling their eyes.



RISING STRONG

BRENE BROWN

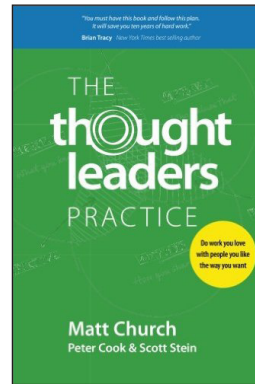
I love Brene Brown's message. To use her own term, it's wholehearted. It's about being in life, engaged with the people around you and finding your best way forward. This one started a little slowly for me and picks up good speed as the stories entwine each other. This book will engage your emotions and make you question your relationships. Read this if you want more out of life. Brown's earlier book *Daring Greatly* was #6 on our Best Books for 2014.



GRIT

ANGELA DUCKWORTH

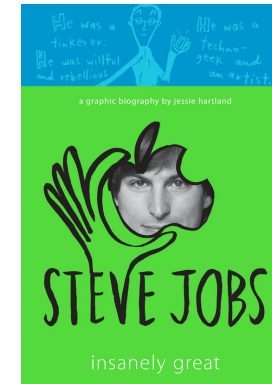
The topic and title of this book is brilliant and timely. It was well reviewed and recommended and it just didn't come across with any strong insights for me. Perhaps some of the other books that I'd read on resilience and persistence stole it's thunder.



THE THOUGHT LEADERS PRACTICE

MATT CHURCH, PETER COOK
AND SCOTT STEIN

This is an excellent book. It's a great road map of principles and practices for individual business experts wanting to make a living from their ideas. This is the best of the three in the series by the leaders of the education company Thought Leaders. Read this to be a thought leader in your field. Had I not been so familiar with this body of work it would have easily made the Top Ten.

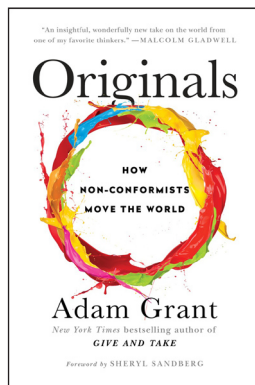


STEVE JOB - ILLUSTRATED

JESSIE HARTLAND

This was a fun read. It's comic style traces Steve Jobs from jobless (sic) to CEO of the Decade.

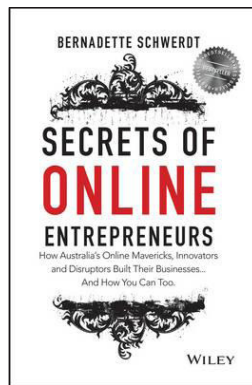
RECOMMENDED



ORIGINALS

ADAM GRANT

This one was also a major disappointment and most likely due to my own super high expectations. I wanted to be blown away and I wasn't. Adam's earlier book *Give and Take* was our Book of the Year for 2014. This set a high standard and I expected similar, particularly since it was about creativity. However, I think sometimes I forget how much I know. And, given I am a creative I thought there might be some insights for how I do things. Alas, not really. It may be a great book for you and I think I expected too much.



SECRETS OF ONLINE ENTREPRENEURS

BERNADETTE SCHWERDT

I loved reading this book. The style, the humour and the format make this a super enjoyable read, which is often not the case for business books. The content is valuable too. For me, a lot of it wasn't new because I work in a similar space. For someone starting out this would be a brilliant reference guide.

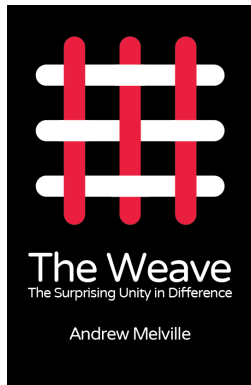
RECOMMENDED



CAPTURE MORE CUSTOMERS WITH VIDEO

JULES BLUNDELL

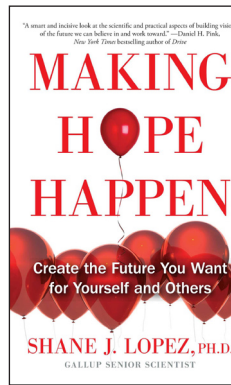
This is a great example of a self-promotional book. All books are that, this one simply has a great blend of promote and inform. Whilst most self-published books are terrible, this is a beautiful design that feels good to pick up and hold.



THE WEAVE

ANDREW MELVILLE

I worked with Andrew to create this book. And, I'm really proud of what we've published. It's a super charged metaphor that I expect will grow in value as it is worked with and matures over the next 12 months. This has the potential to be really big!

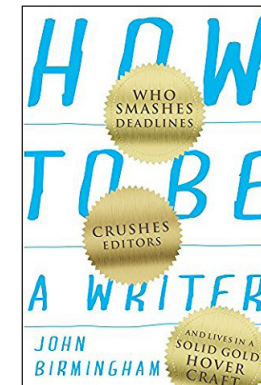


MAKING HOPE HAPPEN

SHANE J LOPEZ

This book is by one of the world experts in hope. It's solid, filled with fascinating stories and for me, it highlights the power of some of our simple emotions. This book also provides a wealth of strategies that you can employ to be more resilient in the face of obstacles.

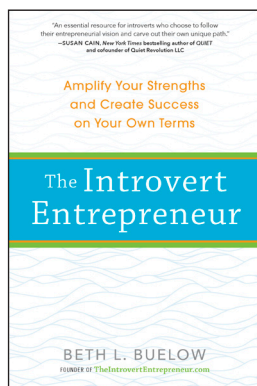
RECOMMENDED



HOW TO BE A WRITER

JOHN BIRMINGHAM

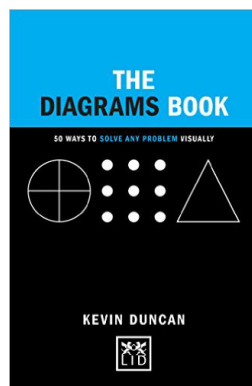
This was a fun book that was more joke than value. I enjoyed the read and I wouldn't put a high value on recommending it.



THE INTROVERTED ENTREPRENEUR

BETH L BUELOW

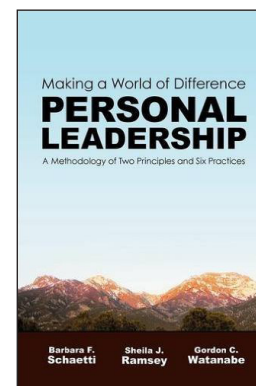
As an Introvert I was really curious to hear what Buelow had to say about also being an entrepreneur. Mostly, this confirmed a whole bunch of stuff that I had found through years of falling over. For example, I love producing content. And, this is a great strategy for an introvert who wants to avoid direct sales. If you're just starting out in business and you lean to the introvert side of things, this book will be a great resource for you. Plus, it's a super example of a neat niche.



THE DIAGRAMS BOOK

KEVIN DUNCAN

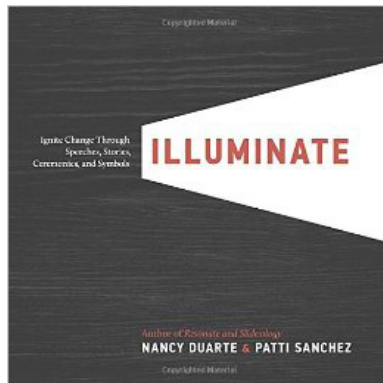
If you're new to using visual diagrams to communicate your ideas then this book is a gem. It includes lots of examples and variations for you to explore. For me, this is an area I know a little about so it wasn't so ground breaking for me.



PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

BARBARA SCHAETTI, SHEILA RAMSEY AND GORDON WATANABE

I've had this book on my shelf for several years. And, I'd had several attempts at reading it. Unfortunately the first two chapters are like walking through sludge. It's so weighed down in academic conceptual auditory digital language I put it down. This time I pushed through and was rewarded with the treasure in the form of the two principles and six practices. The practices cut to the core of what's needed in today's leaders. If it was more readable this would be a big winner!

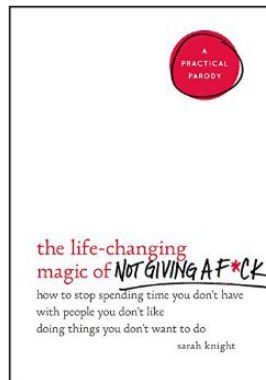


ILLUMINATE

NANCY DUARTE AND PATTI SANCHEZ

Again, my expectations derailed me here. I loved Duarte's two previous books, Slideology and Resonate. Resonate was our #8 best book for 2011. They're both beautiful visual stories. I purchased this one sight unseen online thinking that I must have a printed copy in my library. Alas, no. It was filled with words, words and more words. Despite this, it's a good read, with some strong ideas for leaders shaping the future of their organisations through story.

**BOOK
RAPPER**



THE LIFE CHANGING MAGIC OF NOT GIVING A F**K

SARAH KNIGHT

This book is a parody of the Marie Kondo books on clearing your clutter. It's a lot of fun and a lot more useful than I expected. If you care too much about what other people think then this entertaining book might set you free.



MAKE YOUR STORY REALLY STINKIN' BIG

HOUSTON HOWARD

Like Houston We Have a Narrative, this story telling book goes beyond merely giving us another version of the Hero's Journey. Howard works in transmedia telling stories across multiple forms of media. For instance, gaming, movies and books. Howard presents a big view of how to create a context or, more specifically, how to create a new world, to tell stories that will live on and grow forever. It's filled with lots of contemporary examples. It's a reference book for the storyteller. Very close to making the top ten.

RECOMMENDED

The Top Ten



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Book*

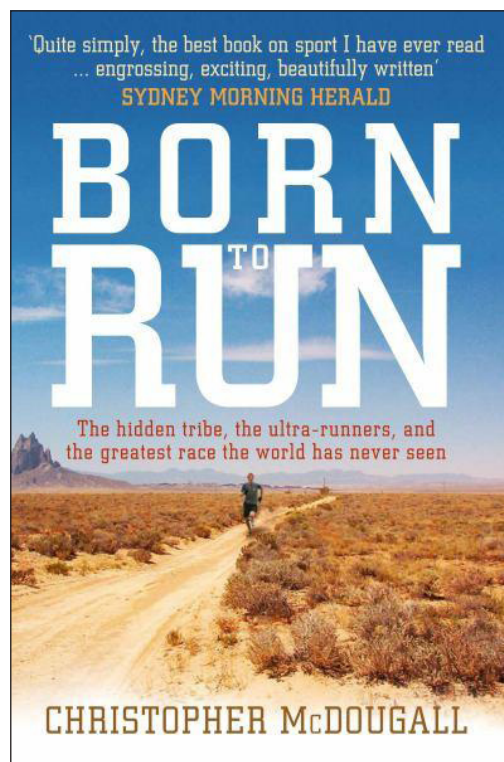
HOW I CHOSE MY TOP 10

Firstly, I read 50 books for the year which gave me a few to choose from.

Then, in selecting my Top Ten Books of 2016 I looked for three things:

1. A big idea – something new that rocked my world and changes how most of us think
2. Inspiring – it opens up an opportunity for me that I hadn't previously considered
3. Great design. Unfortunately, none of these books made this list because of their design.

10

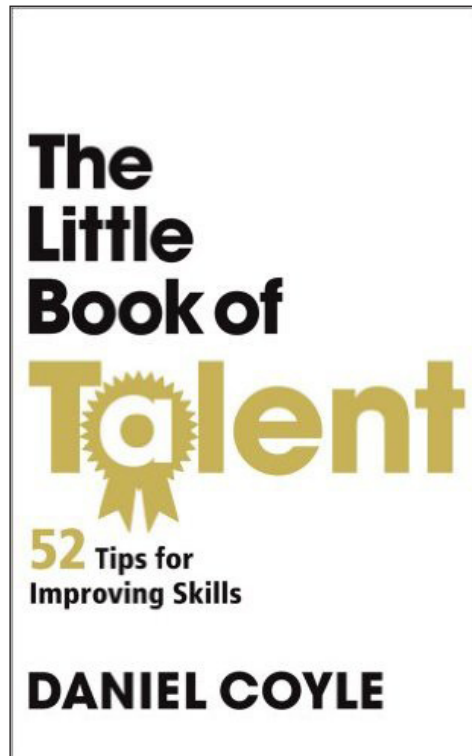


Born to Run

Christopher McDougall

Even though this book is an international best seller, it was a big surprise to me. I was curious and I wanted to find out what all the fuss was about. It's a story about endurance runners in the US and a mythical tribe of runners from Mexico. Then about three quarters through the book, it unleashes a big bomb about human beings and running. I won't spoil the story and it will change how you think and move. It also points out why modern running shoes are more likely to cause you injuries. Buy this for a great read and a knock-your-socks-off insight into human beings.

9



The Little Book of Talent

Daniel Coyle

This is a more practical companion piece to *Peak* by Anders Ericsson and Robert Pool. It also continues earlier work by Daniel Coyle that I haven't read. This is the best and most simple guide I've seen on how to apply Deliberate Practice. Whilst *Peak* gives the full back story, this neat little book tells you how to apply it. Buy this if you are serious about mastering what ever you do.

8



Houston, We Have a Narrative

Randy Olson

I've been reading a few books on story telling lately. Most of them spend too much time reciting their version of Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey and too little time on anything interesting or original. This book bucks that trend. Olson points to a number of other narrative structures to make your stories and message design way more interesting. He's a former scientist turned filmmaker so he knows both sides of the challenge to create and share your message. I've been using this as a template to write my latest book on Project Passion . Buy this to engage your audience more effectively.

7

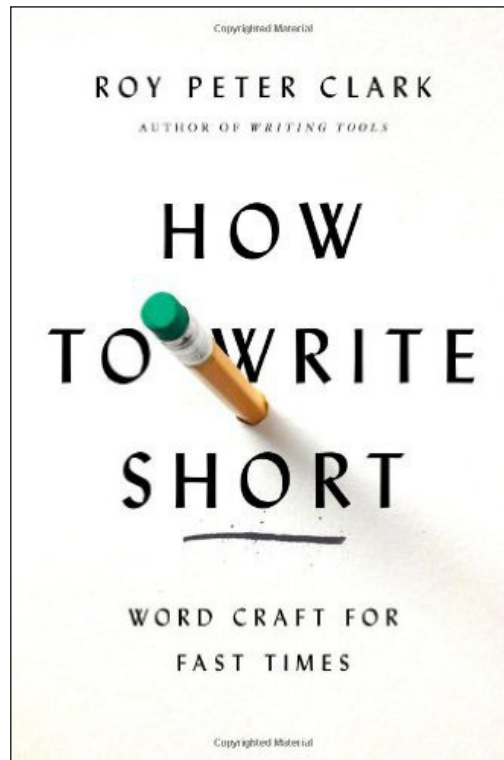


TED Talks

Chris Anderson

Chris Anderson is the curator of TED talks where the world's top thinkers present their big ideas. As part of Anderson and his teams role is to coach presenters how best to deliver their magic. This book is the result of that experience. In my view, it's the best book on presenting that I've read. The stunning part is that it references lots of TED video examples so you can look listen and learn from what Anderson is saying in the text. Buy this to present your ideas – your career and your business depends on it.

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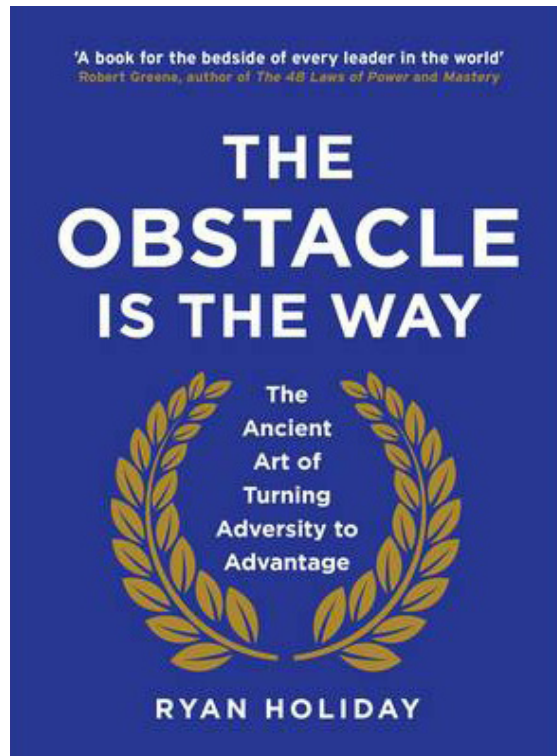


How to Write Short

Roy Peter Clark

In an age of information overwhelm, short writing is crucial. This book shows you how. The author is one of America's leading writing coaches. And, this book is filled with numerous tips, tricks and things to practice. The booty prize is reading it. The real value is practicing what it says. This is my new writing bible! Buy this if you want to write shorter and sharper. Brilliant!

5

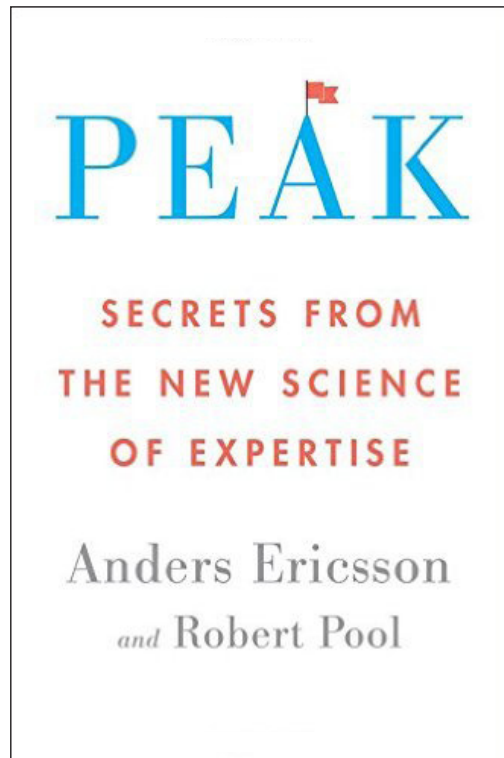


The Obstacle is the Way

Ryan Holiday

This book has a special place in my library. It's the first time ever I've read a book from cover to cover. Then, picked it up again and read it from cover to cover again. It was confronting and inspiring. This book draws on the Greek philosophy of enduring adversity with persistence called Stoicism. The challenge for me was that I have a lot of experience with coaching. And whilst I was trained in a lot of fancy techniques to have people take action, this one short-circuits all of them. All you really need is to 'keep going.' Buy this if you need a kick up the butt.

4

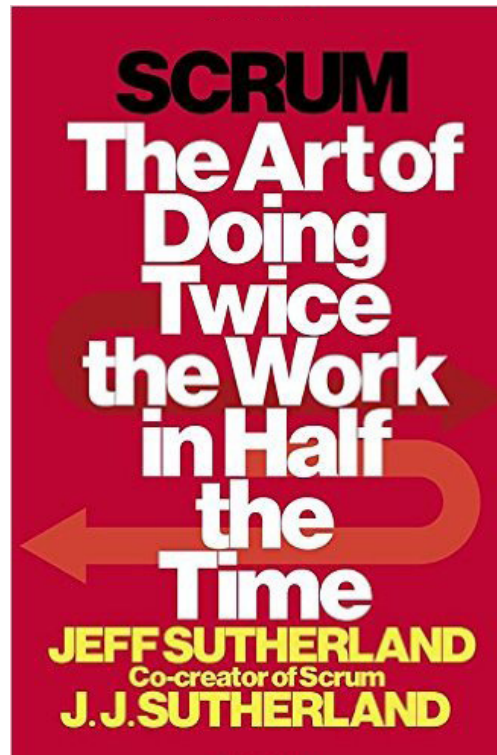


Peak

Anders Ericsson and Robert Pool

A great deal of the multi-billion dollar corporate training spending is a big waste of money. It fails to deliver results because participants fail to learn skills they can transfer to their work. Anders Ericsson is a world expert on high performance and creator of the Deliberate Practice framework. Malcolm Gladwell made Ericsson's 10,000-hour rule popular in his book *Outliers*. To be a world expert at anything requires lots of short, tightly defined exercises that provide immediate feedback for your learning. Think of a tennis player drilling lots of serves or volleys or lobs. Buy this book if you want to be the master of your career skills AND are willing to do the work to produce results. My prediction is this book will soon hit corporate training and it will change everything!

3

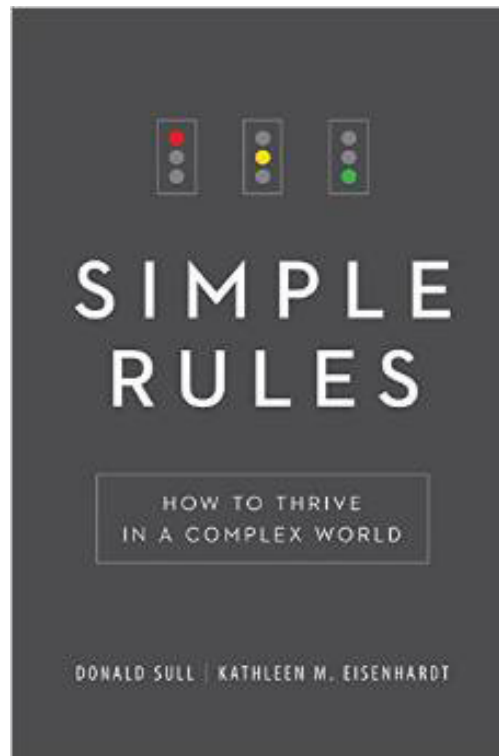


Scrum

Jeff Sutherland

This one is another game changer for me and for Project Passion. My usual architect inspired approach to running projects is to create a huge plan. Then I'd organize the tasks in sequence and hibernate until I've completed all of them. Unfortunately, this approach usually meant I failed. In contrast, Scrum focuses on shorter sharper time frames. It comes from the Agile software movement. And, elements of it have been famously adopted by the Lean Startup mode for entrepreneurs. This book gives you the back story and the overview of how to do it. Buy it if you're serious about completing your projects on time and in budget.

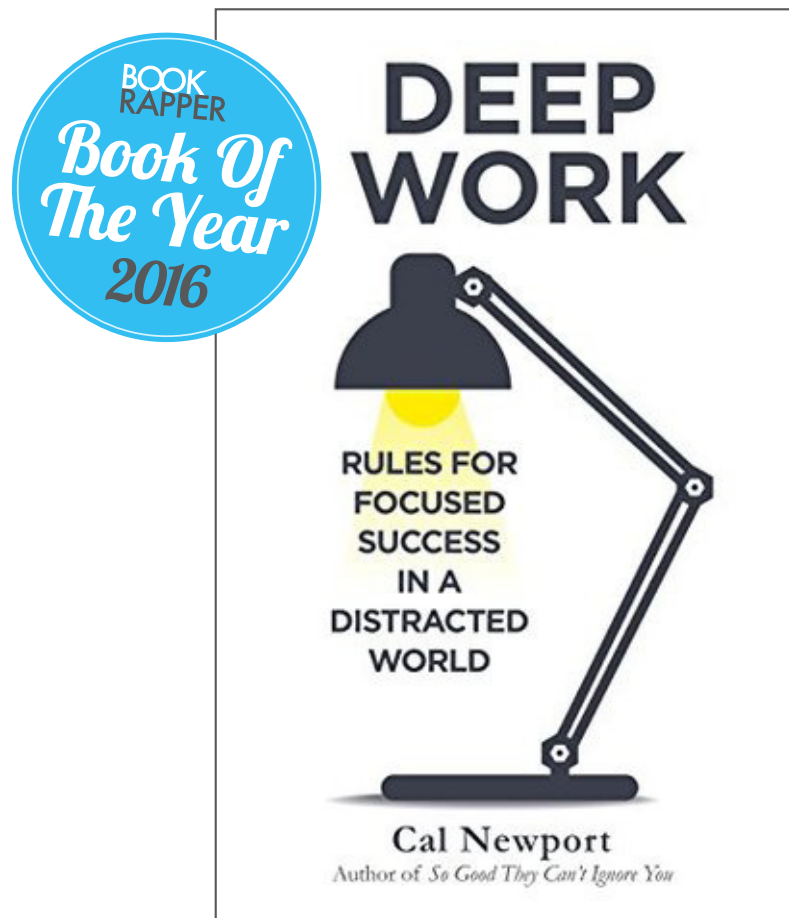
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Simple Rules

Donald Sull and Kathleen M Eisenhardt

This book changed everything for me! Prior to reading this book I used to be constantly scribbling in my notebooks new and different plans. Often all this inspired was me dancing from one project to the next. Disaster! In contrast, using simple rules I now have a much cleaner focus plus I'm sticking to my plans more easily. This is a key resource for Project Passion . Buy it if you want to stay on track, be more strategic and get more done with less effort. This is an essential survival guide for our busy lives and cluttered minds.



Deep Work

Cal Newport

This book points to something really significant.

The opposite of deep work is shallow work. If you think about that for a moment you can probably guess at what we're talking about. At one extreme we have playing on social media and flipping emails around. And, at the other we have time devoted to deep, original and strategic thinking.

In our age of distraction this is the best career advice you'll ever get: do more deep work.

Plus it points to a major social challenge. The key is not simply to get more powerful work done, it's what are you training your brain for? This has profound implications for you, your organisation and our society.

Buy this if you want your career to be worth something in the next few years.



More...

Want to dig a little deeper?



Geoff McDonald

Clearly, I can't help myself...

To have read over 500 books in the past 12 years means I'm a compulsive reader and learner. I thrive on ideas and I get excited about what's happening in the world and what is now possible. I'm a creator, an innovator and an explorer.

My first career was as an architect. However, this was disrupted before I left university. I was in the last group of architecture students to study a five-year degree without touching a computer. I've been studying the impact of computers and digital technology ever since.

Also, I've presented at international design conferences, authored six books and over 60 ebooks, exhibited my paintings and sculptures, written over 950 blog posts, published almost 100 podcast episodes, I'm a sports-junkie and the creator of Book Rapper.

My current focus is Project Passion . It's all about bringing your ideas to life, fulfilling your projects and overcoming your most important business challenges. It's been inspired by many of the books in this guide - particularly the top four books.

You can email me here: Geoff@GeoffMcDonald.com



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