

15 Must-Read Business Books on Leadership and Personal Development in the Last 5 Years

inc.com/marcel-schwantes/15-must-read-business-books-on-leadership-and-pers.html

By Marcel Schwantes Marcel Schwantes is principal and founder of Leadership From the Core , a leading provider of servant-leadership training and coaching designed to create healthy, engaged, and profitable work... Full bio @ MarcelSchwantes Principal and founder, Leadership From the Core @ MarcelSchwantes

7/18/2017

The problem with producing any "top" [business book list](#) is the elimination process. Over the last five years, there have been numerous publications by top authors worthy of mention.

For this [list](#), I have focused heavily on [science-backed leadership books](#) that teach us where the future of motivation (self and team), productivity, employee engagement, and positive work culture is headed.

[Grit](#) by Angela Duckworth

Pioneering psychologist Angela Duckworth shows anyone striving to succeed--be it parents, students, educators, athletes, or business people--that the secret to outstanding achievement is not talent but a special blend of passion and persistence she calls "grit." Malcolm Gladwell, author of *The Tipping Point*, says "Grit is a persuasive and fascinating response to the cult of IQ fundamentalism. Duckworth reminds us that it is character and perseverance that set the successful apart."

[Superbosses: How Exceptional Leaders Master the Flow of Talent](#) by Sydney Finkelstein

No matter the industry, the most extraordinary leaders have an uncanny ability to inspire people. Through more than 200 interviews, Finkelstein identifies how these "superbosses" do it. Reid Hoffman, co-founder and chairman of LinkedIn, says, "Superbosses shows the incredible impact that great managers can have, both on their employees and on entire industries. Syd has written a true leadership guide for the Networked Age."

[How to Have a Good Day](#) by Caroline Webb

A former McKinsey consultant, Webb offers evidence-based ways to balance work and life. Daniel Pink, author of *To Sell Is Human* and *Drive*, calls it "a smart, thorough, and eminently practical book." He adds, "Just about every page offers a science-based tip to help you become better off--or, in many cases, just plain better."

[Conscious Capitalism](#) by John Mackey and Rajendra Sisodia

Re-released in 2014, Mackey and Sisodia, leaders of the [Conscious Capitalism](#) organization, describe the movement in the context of Mackey's reflections as co-founder of Whole Foods Market. Bill George, bestselling author of *True North*, says "This is the book I always wanted to write." How Amazon's [recent buyout of the grocery chain](#) is going to affect the movement's purpose, if at all, remains to be seen, but this is still a worthy book representing an important cause.

[Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for Your People Like Family](#) by Bob Chapman and Raj Sisodia

An inside look at Barry-Wehmiller, known for its outstanding people policies and its off-the-charts morale, Bob Chapman (CEO of Barry-Wehmiller) and Raj Sisodia use real-world examples to illustrate how the humanity so

often absent in today's businesses and boardrooms is actually a direct path to sustained growth. Amy Cuddy, famed Harvard Business School professor and social psychologist, praises the book: "To give people the power and freedom to care for each other, to trust that people want to do well and be good--it doesn't get better than that."

***Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges* by Amy Cuddy**

Cuddy logs in her own entry with this smashing 2015 *New York Times* bestseller. She advocates for the ideas on presence and power posing set forth in her wildly popular 2012 TED Talk, "[Your Body Shapes Who You Are](#)." Her findings will help you to call on your self-confidence at the times you need it most--a first date, a job interview, and even those prickly conversations you hesitate to have with loved ones. Brene Brown, author of *Daring Greatly*, says, "Cuddy shows us how bringing our boldest, most authentic selves to challenging situations inspires others to do the same. This book is a game-changer!"

***What Works: Gender Equality by Design* by Iris Bohnet**

Presenting research-based solutions to address gender bias, Iris Bohnet demonstrates what more can be done, often at shockingly low cost and surprisingly high speed, to end gender inequality and move the needle in classrooms and boardrooms, in hiring and promotion, benefiting businesses, governments, and the lives of millions. Adam Grant, famed Wharton professor and author of *Give and Take*, calls it, "Compelling, lucid, and filled with actionable insights."

***Mastering Civility: A Manifesto for the Workplace* by Christine Porath**

In a world where divisive politics has undermined civil behavior in general, Porath's book combines scientific research with fascinating evidence from fields such as neuroscience, medicine, and psychology to provide managers and employers with a much-needed wake-up call. The world's top executive coach, Marshall Goldsmith, author of *Triggers* says, "This book offers the key to a healthier, happier, more productive workplace, better customer relationships, and higher profits."

***Radical Candor* by Kim Scott**

A former Google and Apple executive, Scott is a CEO coach in Silicon Valley who believes, says Daniel Pink, that "workplaces are too nice--really 'fake nice'--and that we'd all be better off with unvarnished honesty, especially when it comes to evaluating performance." Sheryl Sandberg, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Lean In*, says it will "help you build, lead, and inspire teams to do the best work of their lives."

***Leadership Lessons From a UPS Driver: Delivering a Culture of We, Not Me* by Ron Wallace**

Ron Wallace was a UPS delivery driver for six years before he began rising through the ranks, ultimately becoming president of UPS International. Instead of writing a typical business memoir that celebrates the leader as celebrity, Wallace shares essential tips for growing the best team of inspired employees to make any business thrive.

***Trust Factor: The Science of Creating High-Performance Companies* by Paul J. Zak**

Zak, the director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies at Claremont Graduate University, opens a window on how brain chemicals affect behavior and why trust gets squashed. Packed with examples from the Container Store, Zappos, and Herman Miller, *Trust Factor* harnesses our neurochemistry to effectively cultivate workplaces where trust, joy, and commitment compound naturally. Skip Prichard, author of *Leadership Insights*, calls this book "fascinating."

***Why Motivating People Doesn't Work...and What Does: The New Science of Leading, Energizing, and Engaging* by Susan Fowler**

As a leadership coach and researcher, Fowler collected a significant amount of data to illustrate that traditional carrot-and-stick motivational techniques don't work. She reveals what actually *does* work based on her experience with Microsoft, NASA, Mattel, and the Catholic Leadership Institute. Marshall Goldsmith praises this book: "Fowler shows how to guide employees toward seeing their jobs in a new way, as potential sources of personal fulfillment. Achieving company goals will become something they own, because now it really matters to them."

***Are You Fully Charged?: The 3 Keys to Energizing Your Work and Life* by Tom Rath**

Drawing on his extensive research, Tom Rath's latest bestseller provides us with the three key pillars that can help create a life of more meaning and perspective: being part of something larger than ourselves, valuing people and experiences over mere stuff, and understanding that looking after our own well-being is the first step to doing more for others. Arianna Huffington, author of *Thrive* and co-founder of The Huffington Post, says, "*Are You Fully Charged?* is about renewing ourselves in the fullest sense. An essential book for anyone wanting more out of life."

***Just Listen: Discover the Secret to Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone* by Mark Goulston**

Drawing on his experience as a psychiatrist, business consultant, and FBI hostage-negotiation trainer, Goulston provides brilliant yet doable techniques for getting through to others. *Time* magazine says, "The author draws on hostage-negotiation techniques to instruct readers on how to deal with defiant executives, angry employees, or self-destructing management teams."

***The Best Place to Work: The Art and Science of Creating an Extraordinary Workplace* by Ron Friedman**

Award-winning psychologist Ron Friedman uses the latest research from the fields of motivation, creativity, behavioral economics, neuroscience, and management to reveal what really makes us successful at work. Seth Godin, author of *Lynchpin* and *The Icarus Deception*, says "Ron Friedman helps us get back on track, exploring not only what work is for, but how we can leap forward and become more human, more alive, and more effective."