

The 20 Best Business Books of 2017

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Tim David , Contributor Ex-magician, author of “Magic Words: The Science and Secrets Behind 7 Words that Motivate, Engage, and Influence,” and human connection enthusiast

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There’s no end to the list of motivational quotes encouraging us to read more. “Those who don’t read have no advantage over those who can’t.” (Commonly attributed to Mark Twain) “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.” (Dr. Seuss) “Poor people have big screen televisions. Rich people have big libraries.” (Jim Rohn) “Do you even read, bro?” (Everyone on the Internet, circa 2013.)

Thoreau said we ought to “Read the best books first, or you may not have a chance to read them at all.” But which books are the best? Every “best books” list is subjective. Even the iconic [NY Times Bestseller list isn’t completely based on numbers.](#)

I hunted specifically for **business books** published in **2017**. Finding the titans of the industry were easy (Tim Ferriss, Adam Grant, Simon Sinek, etc.) but I also wanted you to discover some new books and authors because “If you read what everyone else is reading, then you’ll think what everyone else is thinking.” There’s just too much good stuff out there for a “Top 10” list.

I scoured bestseller lists, followed every Amazon “customers also bought” rabbit trail, asked the social media sphere for its opinions, combed through [GoodReads](#) recommendations, and last but not least, cherry-picked my personal library (which, I’m proud to say, is bigger than my 130-inch TV screen. I suppose Jim Rohn would call me me middle-class.)

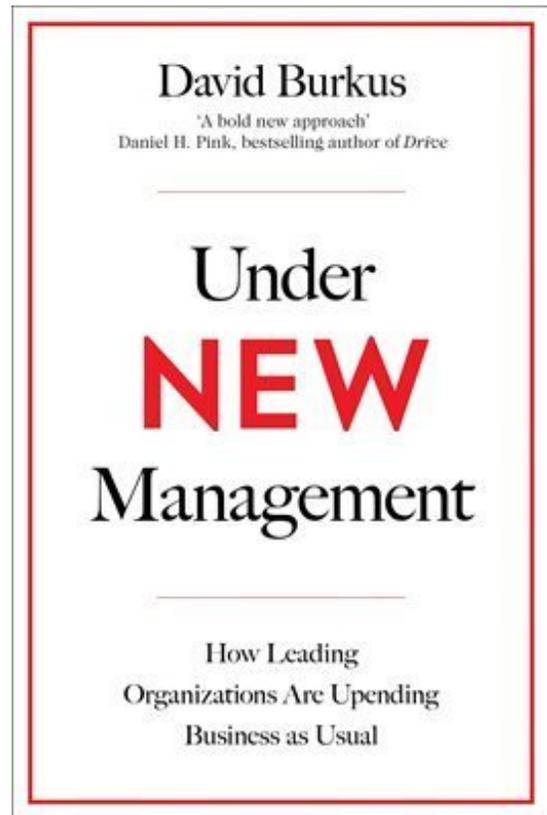
Needless to say, that’s a LOT of books. Here are the stand-out winners. (Speaking of winning, you can [win a SIGNED COPY of every book on this list by clicking here](#))

20. Under New Management: How Leading Organizations Are Upending Business as Usual

by David Burkus

Praised equally by celebrity authors and the over 100 “verified purchase reviews” on Amazon, this book would have been higher on the list had it originally come out in 2017. (The hardcover version was first released in ‘16. Bumped down on a technicality.) I love books that merge science and practice to challenge the status quo. This book doesn’t just tear down common practices such as performance reviews, job interviews, open offices, and employee retention policies, but it also offers solid alternatives with evidence and examples to back up each recommendation. Provocative and actionable, this book is everything a good business book should be.

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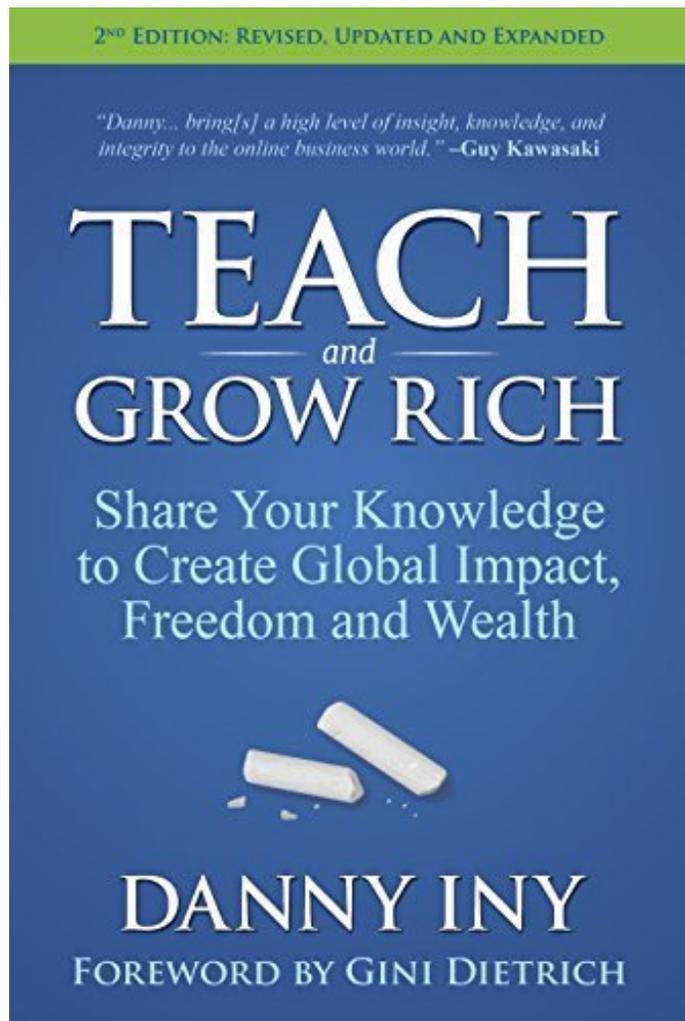


19. Teach and Grow Rich: Share Your Knowledge to Create Global Impact, Freedom, and Wealth

by Danny Iny

What can I say? I like the cut of Danny Iny's jib. He's someone you'll want to follow in 2018. This effort from him is a practical guide written from obvious hands-on experience. You get a proven blueprint, several case studies, the motivation to do it all by yourself, and the instructions to leverage the work and influence of others. Another casualty of the technicality, this book drops to number 19 because the 2nd edition was released in 2017. Fortunately, it's updated and expanded enough to warrant inclusion here among the best business books of 2017.

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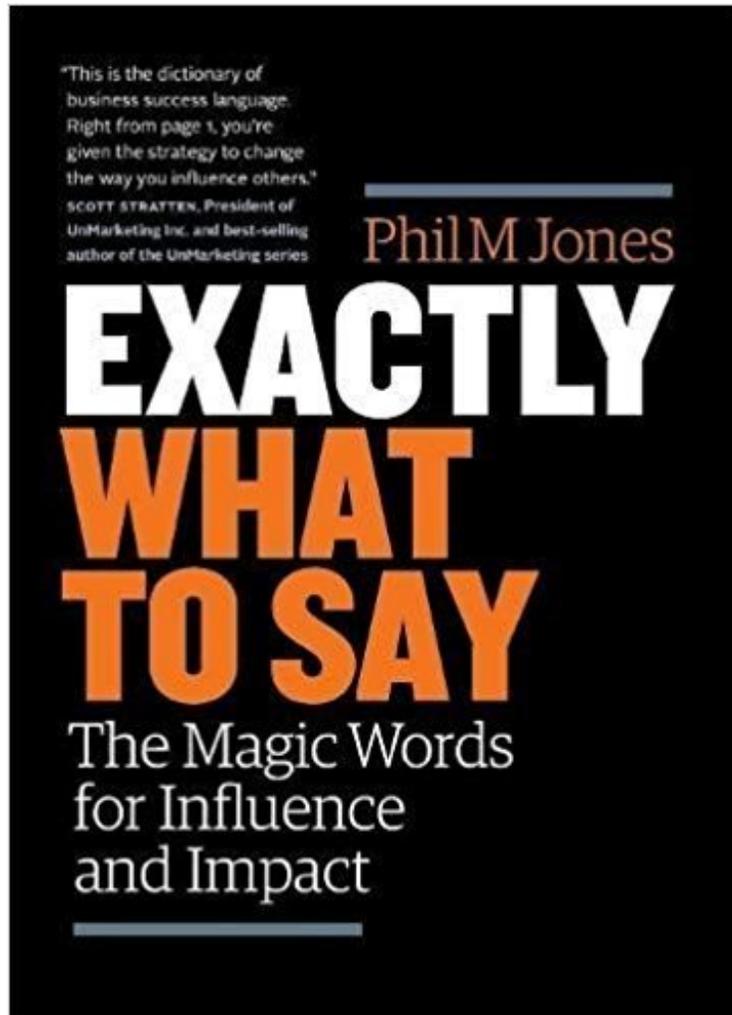


18. *Exactly What to Say: The Magic Words for Influence and Impact*

by Phil M. Jones

Any book with “Magic Words” AND “Influence” in the sub-title wins brownie points with me. There isn’t a quicker read on this list than this little gem from Phil M Jones. Its laser focus on hands-on application makes it a sure winner with any busy salesperson. Unlike many books, these pages deliver on the promise their cover makes. You won’t just read it. You’ll *use* it.

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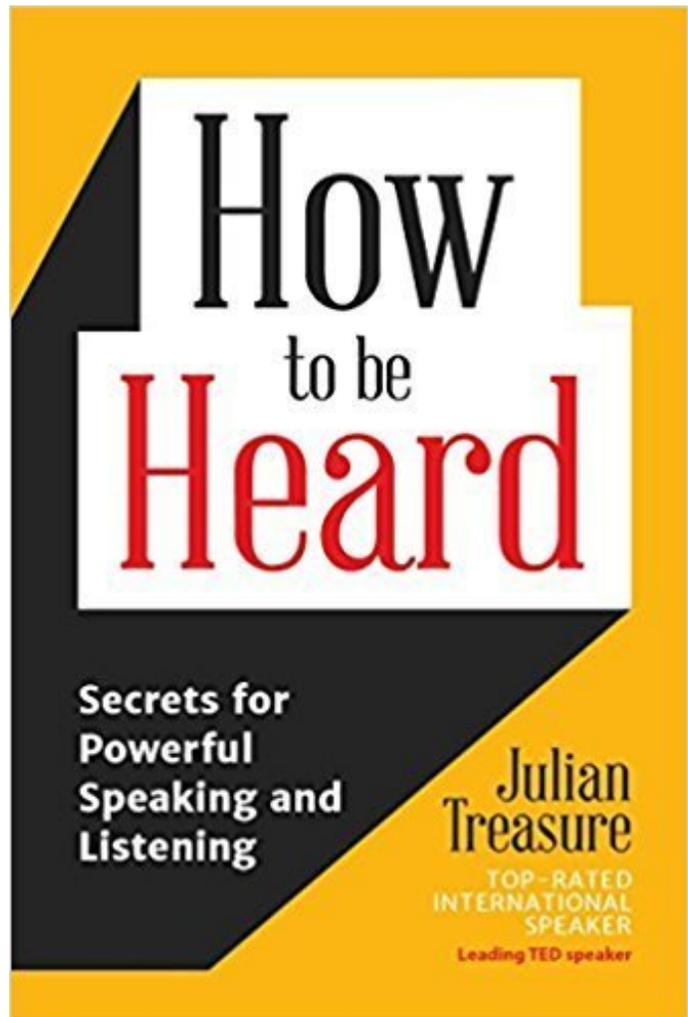


17. *How to Be Heard: Secrets for Powerful Speaking and Listening*

by Julian Treasure

Julian's TED talks have been viewed over 50 million times, including one that puts him in the top 10 all-time most-viewed list. Not bad company to be in. Treasure's specialized expertise is unique and fascinating: business sound. From designing audio logos to ambient background noise in retail locations, Julian is a master listener. He also understand how "sound affects" the human brain and decision-making. Fortunately for the rest of us, this book turns his sights to the common practices of speaking and listening - something we should all be doing better. And with this book, now we can.

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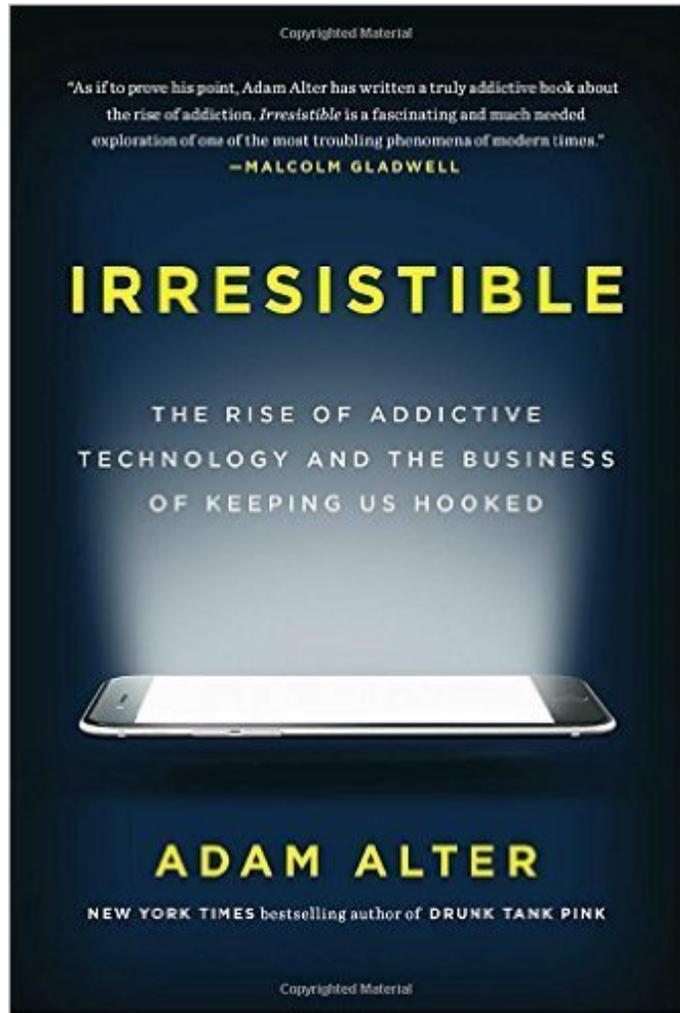


16. Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked

by Adam Alter

Adam Alter is a New York Times bestselling author, associate professor of marketing at NYU, and impressively endorsed by the likes of Malcolm Gladwell, Adam Grant, and Arianna Huffington. This book is at once enjoyable and also - to use Alter's word - "unsettling". Why didn't Steve Jobs let his kids use an iPad? He lays out at least a half-dozen similar examples of the world's greatest public technocrats also being its greatest private technophobes. But *WHY?* This book provides a riveting explanation, as well as some hope for how we can resist the irresistible.

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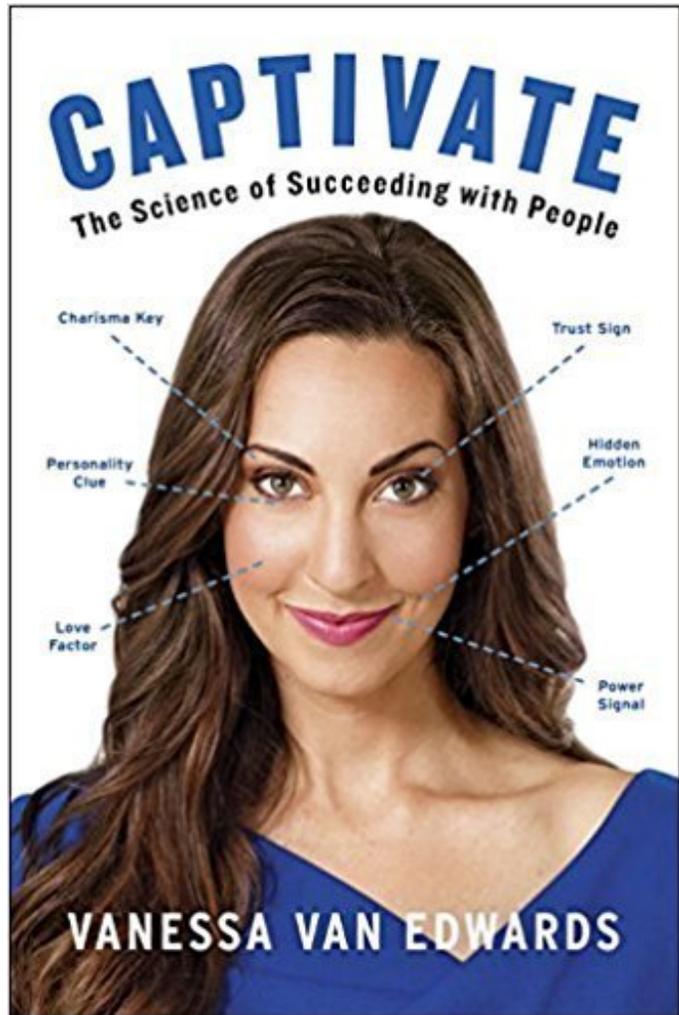


15. *Captivate: The Science of Succeeding with People*

by Vanessa Van Edwards

I like science. I also like people. I'm fascinated by what makes us tick. Van Edwards does a nice job of breaking down successful human interaction in a conversational way. It's science, with style. This book is a whirlwind of interactive surveys, interesting research findings, engaging stories, diagrams, thought-provokers, helpful insights, and personality. Lots of personality. It's clear Van Edwards is passionate about this topic and excited to share her discoveries with you.

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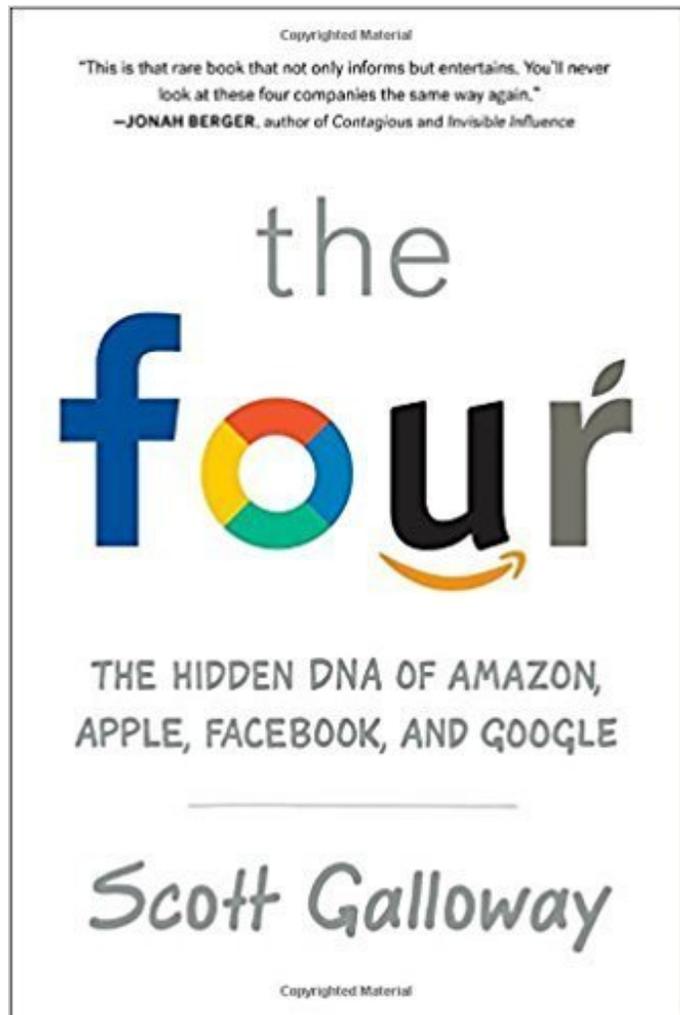


14. *The Four: The Hidden DNA of Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google*

by Scott Galloway

Scott Galloway is a verbal force. This is both a fearless assault on the four biggest companies in the world and an insightful deconstruction of the lessons we can all learn from them. Anyone who passes the event horizon of this book will be entertained, enlightened, and occasionally offended. More than worth the time it takes to read.

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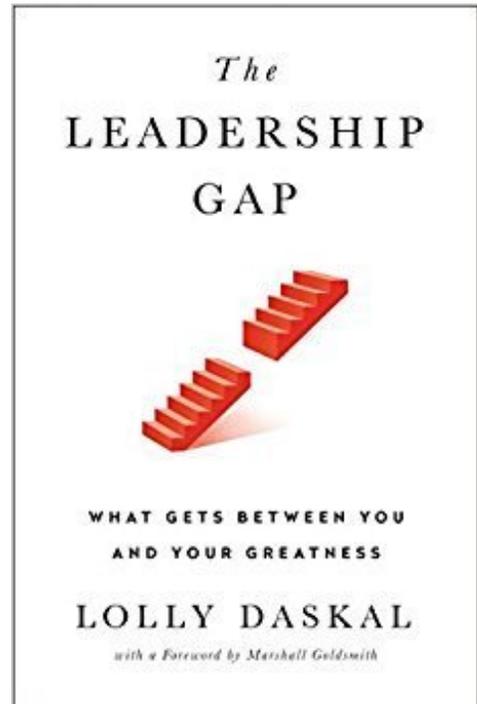


13. *The Leadership Gap: What Gets Between You and Your Greatness*

by Lolly Daskal

One of the country's top executive coaches, Lolly Daskal does with this book what all great coaches do, gently and constructively point out your weaknesses. There are only two ways to get better, improve your strengths or reduce your weaknesses. Daskal lays out the seven different leadership archetypes, explains how to identify yourself in them, and shows you how to overcome your weak spots. It's a practical guide full of pithy quotes and enduring wisdom from a career spent in the trenches alongside the country's top executives.

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12. *Extreme Teams: Why Pixar, Netflix, AirBnB, and Other Cutting-Edge Companies Succeed Where Most Fail*

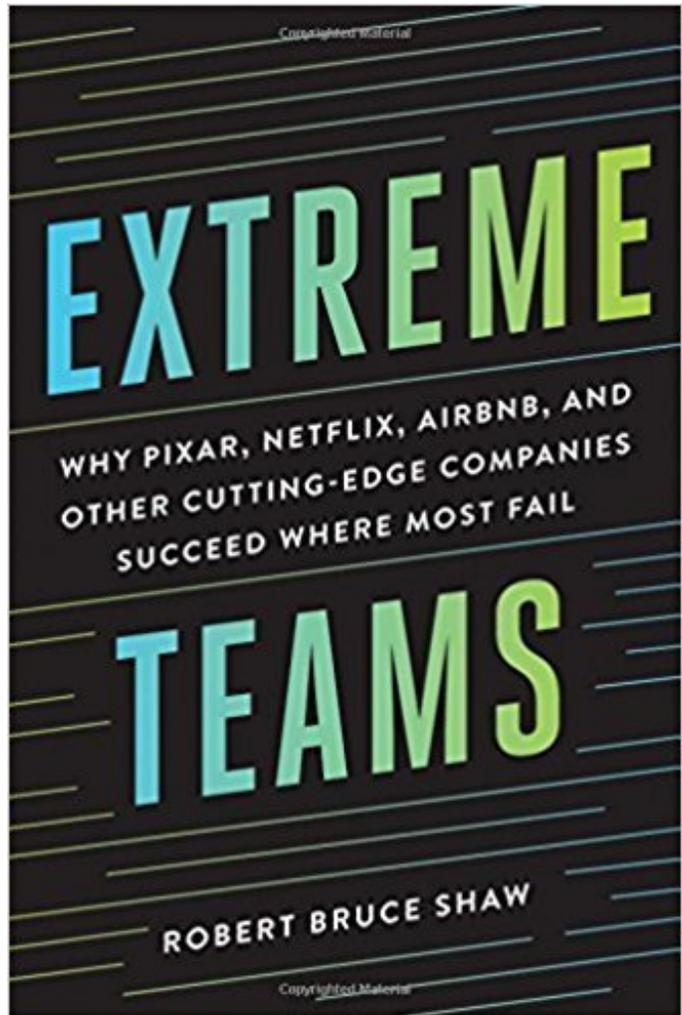
by Robert Bruce Shaw

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You'd think a guy with a Ph.D. from Yale would write an academic textbook. Instead, Shaw sets his sights on the "real world" by profiling seven successful companies made up of what he calls "extreme teams." His definition of an extreme team is one that *embraces bold new approaches that go beyond what is found in conventional firms*. When you read this book, you'll learn those bold new approaches and why they are fast-becoming required practice in an ever-changing business environment. Great stuff.

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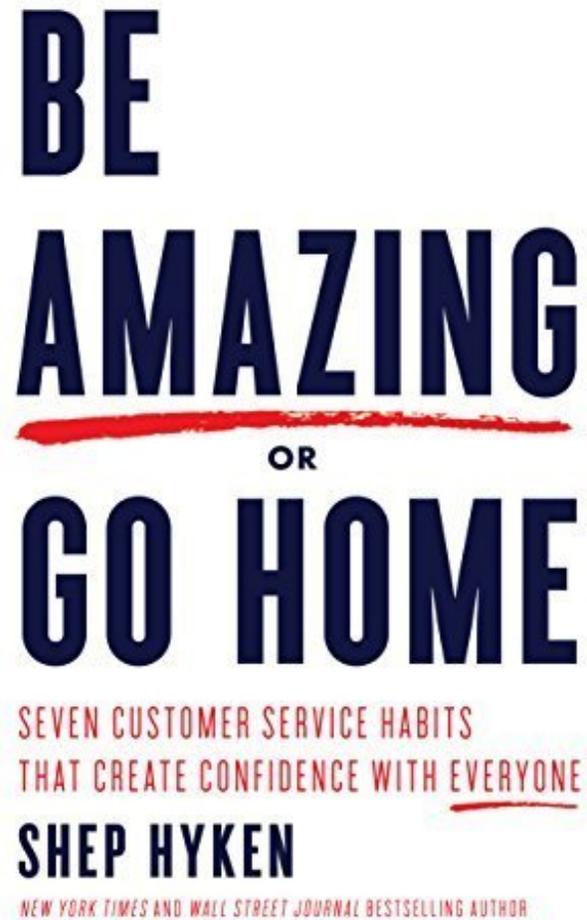


11. *Be Amazing or Go Home: Seven Customer Service Habits that Create Confidence with Everyone*

by Shep Hyken

Shep Hyken is a Hall of Fame speaker who clearly knows how to help people learn. His first business was as a children's party magician (mine too!) The concept of "amazing" is hard-wired into who he is. More importantly, it is a skill and a mindset he knows how to transfer to others. This is one of those books that you'll read in one or two sittings, then immediately think of a few people you'll want to gift it to.

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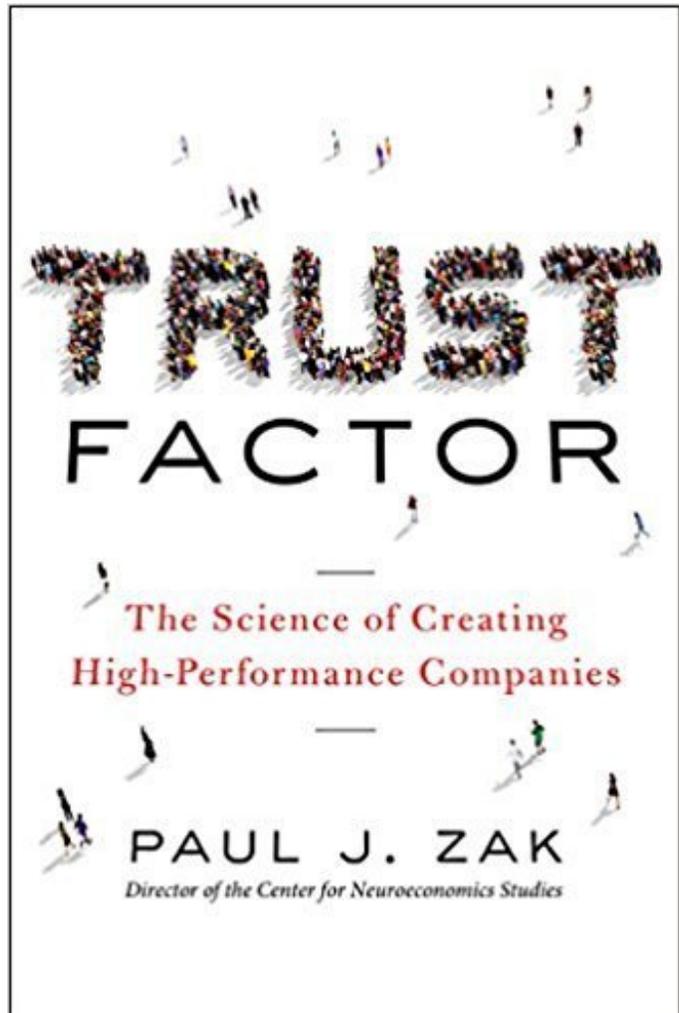


10. *Trust Factor: The Science of Creating High-Performance Companies*

by Paul J. Zak

With this book, neuroscientist Paul Zak turns the neurotransmitter oxytocin into an acronym for the eight “classes of management policies that build trust.” Boldly, he claims that NOTHING else influences organizational trust outside of these eight factors. It all seems pretty simple. Do these eight things consistently, build a culture based on trust, and everyone will perform at a high level. Full of strong science and practical examples, *Trust Factor* demystifies the process of creating great culture within organizations.

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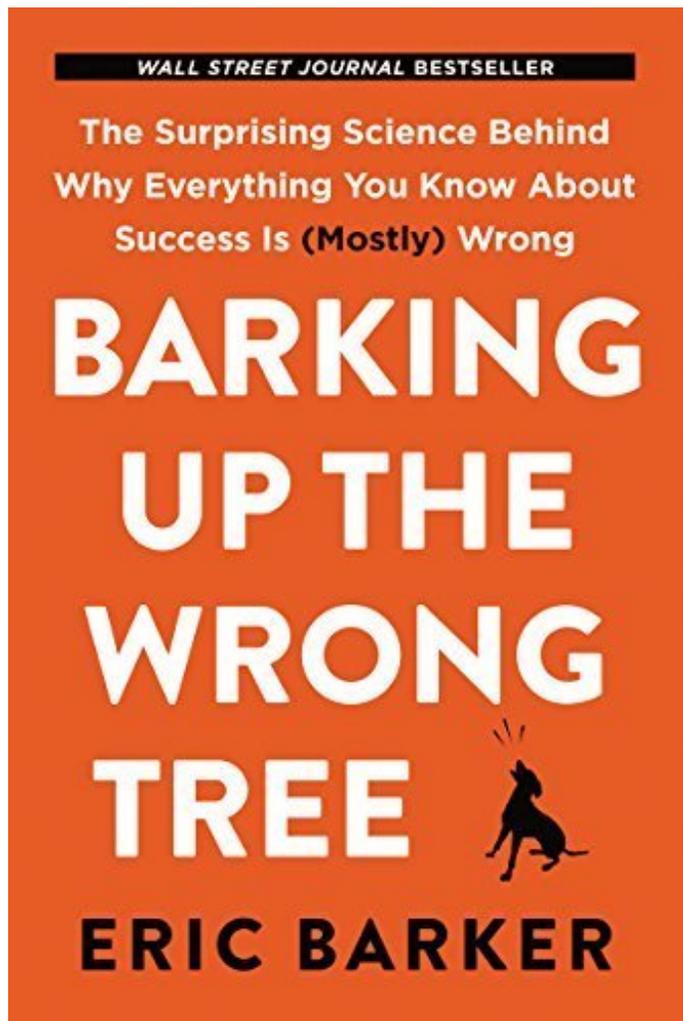


9. Barking Up the Wrong Tree: The Surprising Science Behind Why Everything You Know About Success Is (Mostly) Wrong

by Eric Barker

Eric Barker is one of my favorite writers. He's got a way of compiling scientific research into tasty nuggets that are informative, but *also very readable*. In short, he makes learning even more fun than it already is. In this WSJ bestseller, he picks apart some age-old pearls of wisdom and discovers that they might not be so wise after all. Nice guys finish last? Nope. Quitters never win? Not really true. Believe in yourself? Maybe. Maybe not. When you finish this book, you'll have a much stronger sense of how success really works. I highlighted and underlined so much in this book that it really messed up my Kindle screen.

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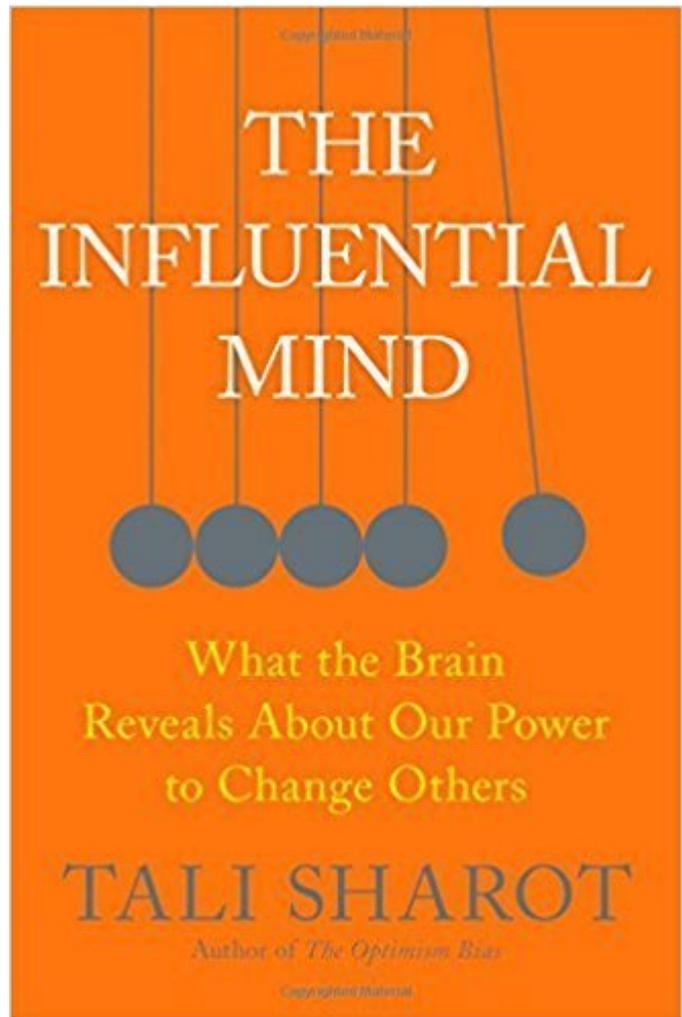


8. *The Influential Mind: What the Brain Reveals About Our Power to Change Others*

by Tali Sharot

“So good! This book is so good.” I found myself muttering that out loud to myself several times while reading this. A skilled writer and a sharp thinker, neuroscientist Tali Sharot has assembled a strong work of non-fiction that fans of Malcolm Gladwell, Dan Pink, and Robert Cialdini will love. I’ve long believed that influence is a huge key for success and this book instantly deserves a place among the classic literature on the topic.

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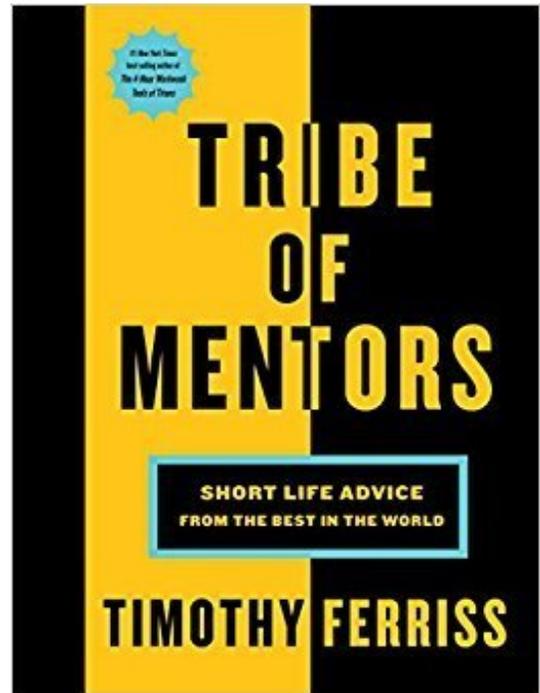


7. Tribe of Mentors: Short Life Advice from the Best in the World

by Tim Ferriss

After a personally challenging year, Tim Ferriss sought answers from the best in the world. The difference between Tim and the rest of us, is that he can get just about anyone to agree to an interview. The other difference is that Tim is better at the art of extracting life lessons from highly successful people. This book teases out answers that the best of the best didn't even know they had. Essentially a collection of over 130 interviews, this book weighs in at almost 600 pages. The good news is that this isn't something you'll want to read for speed anyway. This is one that should be sipped and pondered.

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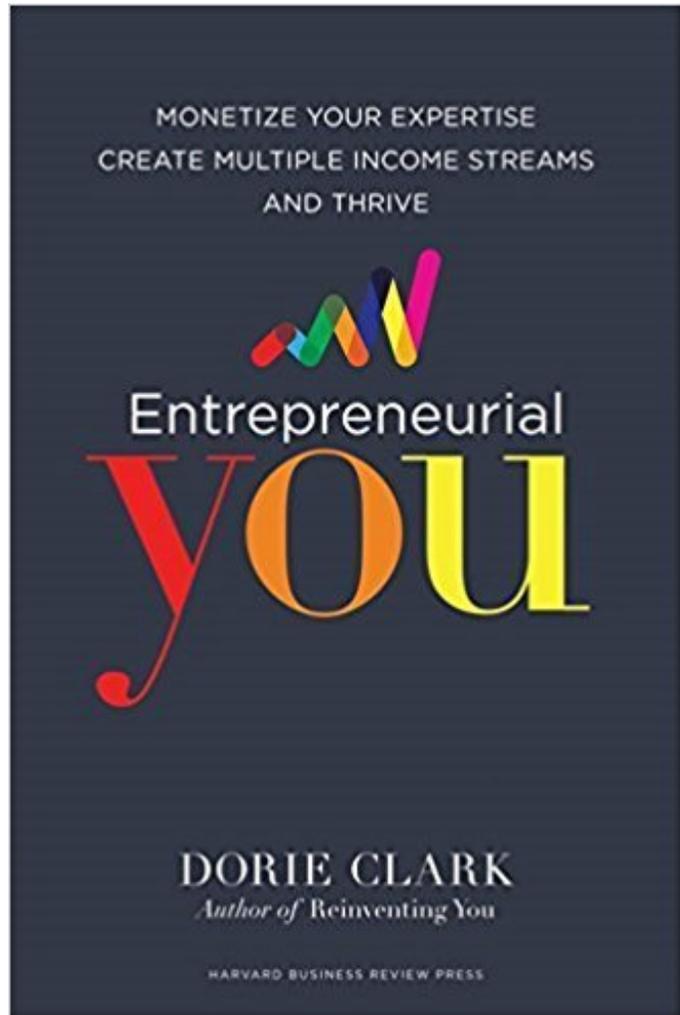


6. Entrepreneurial You: Monetize Your Expertise, Create Multiple Income Streams, and Thrive

by Dorie Clark

Some books are on this list because they're written exceptionally well and some are here because they contain amazing information. This one's got both going for it. I've been a fan of Dorie Clark since she released *Stand Out*, and her latest effort did not disappoint. With the diligence of an investigative journalist, she seeks out effective and proven entrepreneurial strategies from the best in the world and compiles a guide that could literally be worth a fortune if you follow it.

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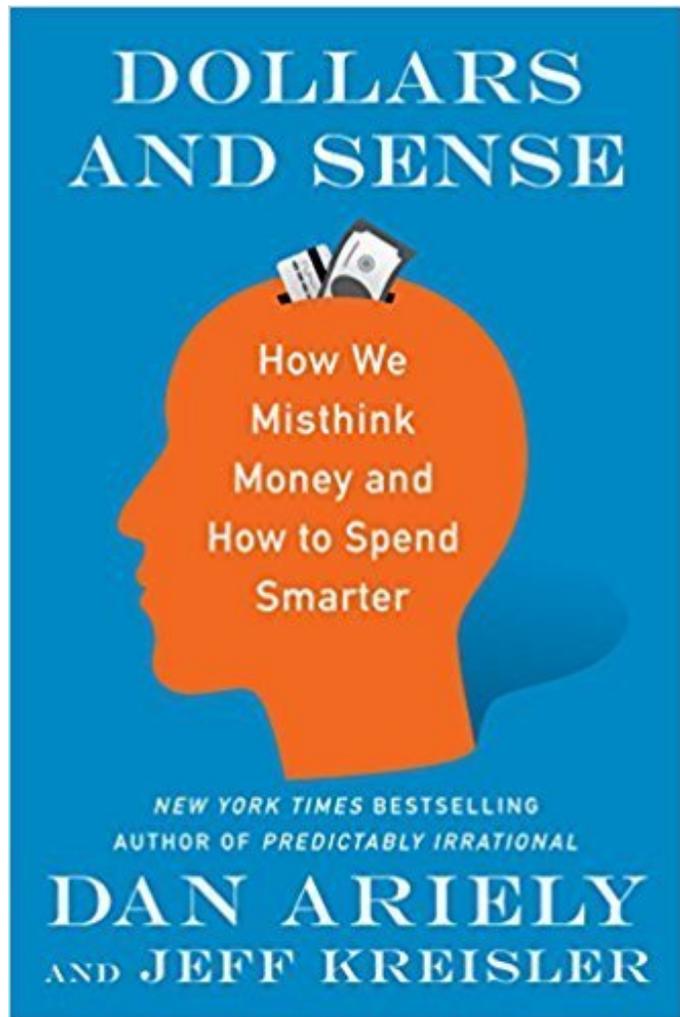


5. Dollars and Sense: How We Misthink Money and How to Spend Smarter

by Dan Ariely and Jeff Kreisler

Dan Ariely has made an enormously successful career out of studying how humans “misthink” and turning his discoveries into compelling stories. Jeff Kreisler is just another Princeton-educated lawyer turned award-winning comedian. Together, they’ve assembled an accessible journey through behavioral economics that leaves you feeling smarter about spending. Loved every page of this one and applied many of the principles to my own life and business immediately. I’m certain that you will too.

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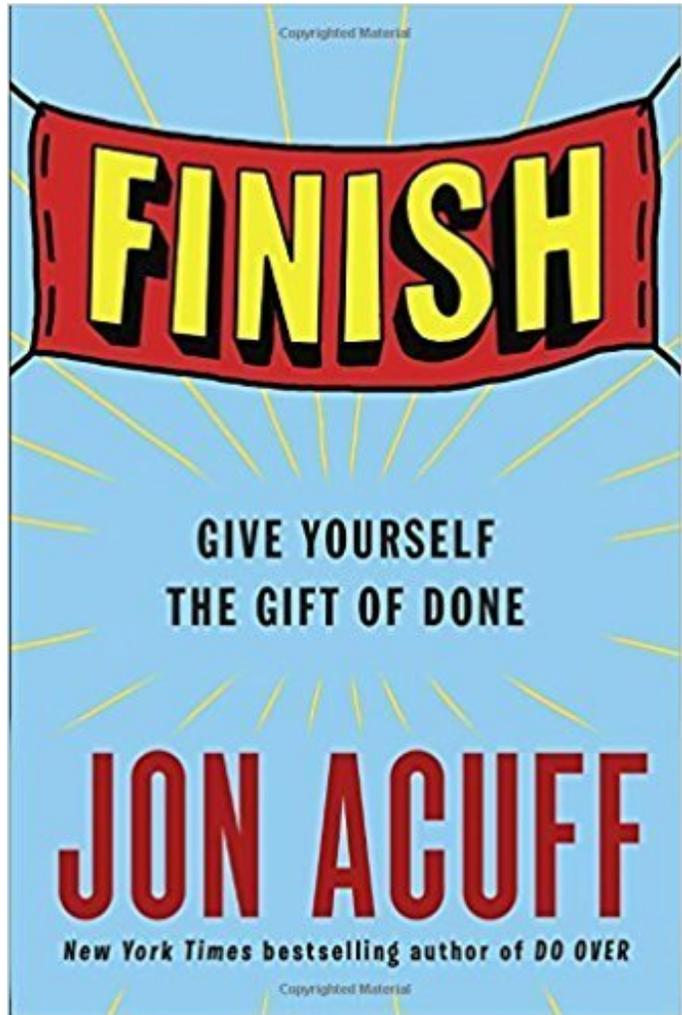


4. Finish: Give Yourself the Gift of Done

by Jon Acuff

Forget 2017, this might be the best non-goal-setting book I've ever read about goal-setting. (I suppose it's really about goal-accomplishing.) Unless you're a chronic over-achiever, you'll want to read this book. That's only because if you ARE a chronic over-achiever, then you've obviously already read it. Laugh-out-loud funny, motivational, and easy to apply, this book easily makes my Top 10 for 2017 in any category.

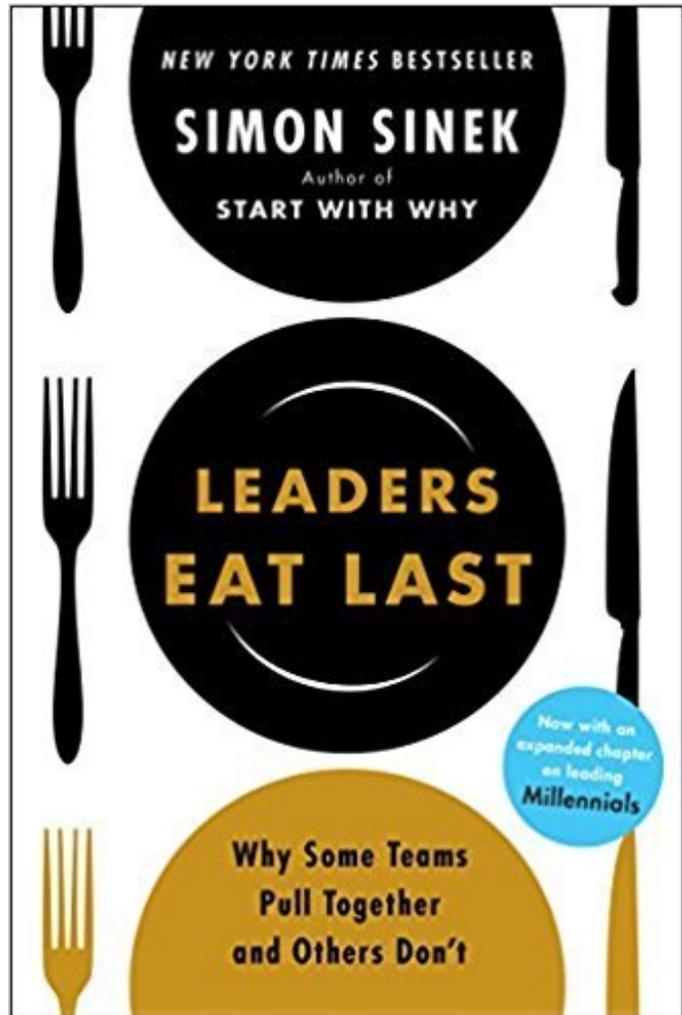
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3. Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't

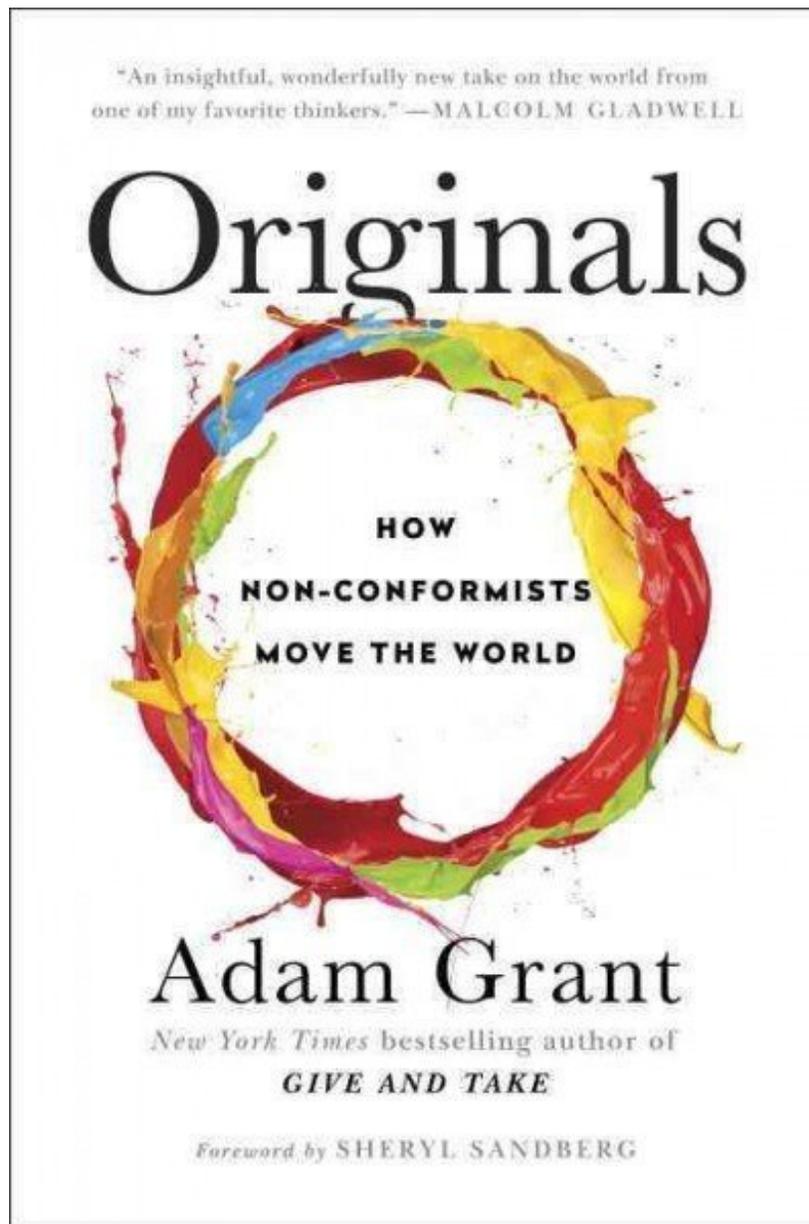
by Simon Sinek

Simon Sinek is at the top of his game and *Leaders Eat Last* solidifies him as one of the most important business thought-leaders of our time. Especially helpful were his discussions on neurotransmitters, the leadership lessons contained in Part 6, and the chapter on leading millennials. It was a tough decision dropping this to the bronze podium because it could have easily taken either of the top two spots on this list. The other two winners were just that good. And the covers were prettier. Seriously, it was that close.



2. *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World*

by Adam Grant



Adam Grant's Ph.D. from the University of Michigan is one of his more mundane achievements. He also used to be a magician and Junior Olympic springboard diver. I mean, come on. Half of his life stats would make you fall into a fit of envy if he wasn't also the nicest human being on planet Earth. And oh yeah, the man can *write*. *Originals* isn't just life-changing, it's a book that will inspire the kind of innovation that can change the whole world.

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1. Building a Story Brand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen

by Donald Miller

“Revolutionary” isn’t a word that I like to throw around unless I’m referring to a very specific American war. But Donald Miller is onto something special here. In fact, a lot of folks besides me are calling his Story Brand Framework revolutionary. What’s the big deal? Well, for what seems like centuries, the question, “What makes your company different?” has turned even the most concise business owners into babbling, incoherent wrecks. (You must have seen someone at a networking meeting go on and on when all they were supposed to do was introduce themselves.) Not anymore. Donald Miller has cracked the code, done the work, and teed you up for success with this phenomenal book.

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