

Creativity and Personal Mastery

Annotated Bibliography

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Background: I taught, for many years, a course called “Creativity and Personal Mastery” at Columbia Business School. It was designed to help MBA students discover their passion and show them how to live deeply fulfilling lives.

Description: This is a course on “creativity”, about the human mind and its immense potential and how you can harness it to achieve your own ends and whether those ends are worth achieving. To reach any major goal you will probably need the help of others, so we will study leadership and the qualities of a leader. Most of all, this course is designed to help you discover your unique purpose for existence. A particular focus is the understanding and resolving of conflicts between personal values and workplace actions.

Required reading: The following books are required reading. **It is strongly recommended that you finish ALL of the books BEFORE the start of the program.** This will serve to give you an early orientation and thus a headstart. Also it will give you more time to do some of the other readings that will enable you to get so much more from this program.

1) *FLOW: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
Harper & Row, 1990

FLOW is a state of intense absorption where the distinction between you and the work you are doing practically disappears. Time appears distorted with hours feeling like minutes or vice versa. Peak performers achieve this state regularly and it has been extensively studied in champion athletes and sports figures as well as performers in the arts. University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has researched the phenomenon in other occupations and explored the conditions under which FLOW can be achieved by practically anyone. Extraordinary creativity routinely occurs in the flow state. You may also wish to explore *The Evolving Self* by the same author.

Inamori, the legendary founder of Kyocera, puts it beautifully, “*I often tell a researcher who is lacking in dedication...unless he is motivated with determination to succeed, he will not be able to go past the obstacles...When his passion, his desire, becomes so strong as to rise out of his body like steam, and when the condensation of that which evaporated occurs...and drops back like raindrops, he will find his problem solved.*”

2) *Creativity in Business* by Michael Ray and Rochelle Myers
Doubleday, 1986

Michael is the Stanford Business School marketing professor who was a pioneer in teaching creativity in a business school. The book contains many business anecdotes - now somewhat dated - and is very entertaining, but reading it like a novel will not do you much good. Practice the exercises he suggests, particularly those relating to the VOJ (voice of judgment) and in chapters 4 and 6.

3) *Cracking Creativity* by Michael Michalko
Ten Speed Press, 2001

The subtitle of this book is “The secrets of creative genius” and it is exactly that. The author is a creativity consultant with many Fortune 500 clients and the business examples he gives are highly instructive. I particularly like the layout of the book and its excellent graphics. Use this as you would a recipe book, to search for ideas when you don’t know what to cook. Pay particular attention to the strategies of thinking fluently and making novel combinations.

4) *Leave it to Psmith* by P. G. Wodehouse
Many editions. Try the one by Overlook Hardcover 2003 but others also work.

Many, including myself, believe Wodehouse is one of the greatest humorists of all time. There are few persons who will leave you with such belly bursting gales of laughter. Do not read this book on trains or planes unless you are OK with fellow travelers looking askance at you and silently questioning your mental stability. On a more serious note, evaluate the mental models used by Psmith and his cheery insouciance when faced with the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. This is the spirit to cultivate and I cannot recommend this cultivation highly enough.

5) *A Search in Secret India* by Paul Brunton
Red Wheel/Weiser, 1990

Paul Brunton was a journalist on a quest and visited many parts of the globe. *A Search in Secret Egypt* is an earlier companion volume. The nature of his quest and the insistent questions that drove him may resonate with some of you. His observation is keen and his descriptions powerful. His matter of fact recital of some exceedingly strange experiences may leave some of you gasping. Suspend judgment and focus on the lessons he learned and would like to pass on.

6) *The Art of Possibility* by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander
Penguin Books, 2000

Benjamin Zander is a conductor, so passionate about music that he literally sways audiences into rapture. He is legendary for his pre-concert lectures where he educates his audience about the music about to be played. He also offers to refund the admission of any member who is not emotionally moved. This is the kind of conviction that permeates this book. You, too, can be equally passionate about what you do. This book shows you

how.

7) *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful* by Marshall Goldsmith, Hyperion, 2007

Marshall is perhaps the world's leading executive coach and he has distilled a lifetime's learning into this book. Successful persons tend to forget that there are many things they do which are dysfunctional and turn others off. They are successful despite this. Marshall points out the most common flaws of hugely successful persons and shows you how to identify and eliminate them from your persona. There is no question that you, too, have flaws such as attempting to "win too much". Read this book to find out what else you are guilty of.

Supplementary Reading:

The literature on creativity is vast. When you add to it the literature on how to figure out what you want to do and why and sundry other topics, the available resources are mind boggling. What follow are some of my highly personal and idiosyncratic recommendations. The books are organized in groups with a brief introduction to the group itself. Skim through many books in each of the groups. Read introductions, summaries and tables of content. Let your interests and inclination guide you. Follow your intuition. If you do not feel a sense of breathless excitement, drop the book and explore another.

I have - in most cases - given my rating of how the book reads. Reading level 1 is straightforward and easily understandable. Most gripping mystery thrillers and many trashy bestsellers are written at this level. I have a strong preference for level 1 material because I firmly believe that if an author cannot communicate clearly then he/she probably has little worth saying. Reading level 3 is tangled and obscure and blessed by manufacturers of analgesics. It includes language like, "Item equivalence is a more concrete and microlevel perspective, and presupposes both construct and operationalization equivalence". Most academic "research" - including, alas!, my own - is written at this level and I invite you to share with me a moment of silence in memory of so many trees that have been so foully murdered. Reading level 2 falls squarely in between. It will not give you a headache but neither is it a whiff of oxygen.

Creativity: These are some other books on creativity that you might like. It is unlikely that you will learn new "techniques" because most of these have been covered in the required reading, but you might think you have because you find a particular anecdote or mode of presentation to be powerful. Browse away.

Ackoff, Russell L. *The Art of Problem Solving*; John Wiley, 1978

Wharton School professor and father figure in operations research Russ Ackoff is brilliant and incisive. He has an uncanny ability to frame problems so the solutions pop out and is funny to boot. There are many parables in the text - a form of exposition to which I am partial - and these clarify some quite complicated analyses and lead to "morals" such as, "The less we understand something, the more variables we need to explain it".

Management in Small Doses; John Wiley, 1986

Pretty much the same comments as above.

Both books are at reading level 1.

Adams, James L. *Conceptual Blockbusting*; Addison-Wesley, 1987

The author has a background as an engineer and Stanford professor. He defines various “blocks” to creativity such as stereotyping, judging etc. and suggests strategies to overcome them. The best parts are the exercises peppered throughout the various chapters. Be sure to try these. (Sample: Imagine the sensation of a long attack of hiccups). Reading level 1.

DeBono, Edward *Lateral Thinking*; Harper & Row, 1970

Vertical thinking, according to DeBono, is digging the same hole deeper. Lateral thinking is digging someplace else. Junior is bothering his aunt who is knitting a sweater. He feels constricted by the playpen and howls. Solution: put the aunt in the playpen where she can knit undisturbed while junior romps outside. Several sets of exercises are included.

Reading level 1 with gusts of 2.

Six Thinking Hats; Little, Brown & Co., 1985

DeBono specifies hats of six colors, each associated with a different thinking mode. Putting on the white hat requires you to present facts and figures in a neutral, objective manner. The red hat requires you to present how you feel about “the proposal” emotionally, the black hat what your negative assessments are, and so on. The method is designed to switch thinking away from arguments into collaboration. Widely used techniques. Reading level 1.

Serious Creativity; Harper Collins, 1992

Prolific as he is it is easy to understand how DeBono can afford to live on his own private island. This book summarizes his other works and gives new anecdotes, business examples and exercises. Reading level 1.

Isakson, Scott G. and Donald J. Treffinger *Creative Problem Solving: The Basic Course*
Bearly Ltd., 1985

This is a workbook that comes in a three hole binder and provides detailed instructions on data finding, problem structuring, idea and solution finding etc. The checklists of questions are quite helpful though the text is somewhat boring. Reading level 1 but goes to 2 quite often.

Michalko, Michael *Thinkertoys*; 10 Speed Press, 2006

The original edition of this book was good and this one is better. The graphics are great and it has a friendly feel – you just want to flip through it and browse at length. Wonderful quotes from Sun Tzu at the start of each chapter. Michalko teaches you several techniques to challenge your assumptions. In “reversal” for example, you ask what happens if you change the order of things by say giving a onus to waiters before they start serving diners. Turns out that productivity actually increases. Reading level 1.

Miller, William *The Creative Edge*; Addison-Wesley, 1987

A consultant to major corporations, Miller does a fine job of showing how to enhance

creativity in individual and group settings. His discourse on intuitive methods is good, as is his discussion of human values. Methods of achieving “win-win” solutions in the workplace are neat. Reading level 1, very occasionally 2.

Parnes, Sidney J. *The Magic of Your Mind*; Creative Education Foundation, 1981
Another book that talks about the creative process, what blocks it and how we can overcome the blocks. Many standard exercises are presented. The sans-serif type is none too easy to read but, to compensate, there is a profusion of cartoons most of which are very, very funny. Reading level 1.

von Oech, Roger *A Whack on the Side of the Head*; Warner 1983
 A Kick in the Seat of the Pants; Harper & Row, 1986
Nobody would publish his first book so von Oech did it himself and created a blockbuster success that is still being touted by purveyors of manuals on self publishing. It also established his reputation as a creativity consultant and he picked up many prestigious Silicon Valley clients including Apple Computers. Oversize and easy to read. Good graphics and pictures. Fun exercises. Reading level 1.

The New Physics and readings from science: Quantum Physics has turned topsy turvy all of our cherished notions of how things work. In this world time can flow backwards with particles dying before they are born. Space is curved and exists in an infinite number of dimensions. Space and matter are inexplicably linked, neither can exist without the other. The type of our measuring instrument determines the nature of our observation, change one and so does the other. The act of observation alters that which is observed. A number of thinkers have raised the possibility that quantum phenomena have their counterparts in the “real” world, that too many of our assumptions are untested and probably false and have drawn strong parallels between the world views of Eastern philosophy and quantum mechanics. Be aware that others vociferously oppose the implications of such comparisons and there are scientists of Nobel Prize winning caliber on both sides of the argument. Leonard Shlain expresses it beautifully: *“The new physics presently rests like a pea under the collective mattress of humankind, disturbing tranquil sleep just enough to begin to change how people think about the world.”* What is indisputable is that there are few exercises more capable of stretching your mind than pondering the status of Schrodinger’s cat or the implications of the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen experiment. Welcome to the mysterious world of Physics!

And let us not forget other branches of science - pure mathematics, chemistry, biology and biochemistry, genetics and many more. All these fields are in ferment and the distinctions between functional areas are breaking down. Complex linear programming problems have been solved by DNA computers leading to speculation that organic computers, vastly more powerful than their silicon based counterparts, may soon be among us. Quantum computing is looming in the background. Even the merest exposure to what is happening “out there” in different fields will cause you to gape with wonder. Hold on to that feeling of awe, that amazement at where human thought has reached. You too will push the boundaries. That is what this course is all about.

world have led to new theories that completely overthrew old scientific paradigms. This is a book that will make you gasp with awe at the power of the human mind, and the wonder of the universe. Science, especially physics, has never been so enthralling. Reading Level 1, sometimes 2.

Gribbin, John and Martin Rees *Cosmic Coincidence: Dark Matter, Man and Anthropic Cosmology*; Bantam, 1989

A science writer and a physicist take you on an intriguing tour of some of the most revolutionary ideas to emerge from science: the particle zoo; black holes; cosmic strings; gravitational lenses; Copenhagen and Many Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics; and much more. Clear writing. Reading level 1 to 2.

Heisenberg, Werner *Physics and Beyond*; Harper & Row, 1971

The debate is raging again about whether Heisenberg, head of the Nazi equivalent of the Manhattan Project, was a courageous scientist who sabotaged the effort or an incompetent manager who fell on his face. There is no doubt that he was one of the greatest physicists of all time and his uncertainty principle is a cornerstone of our understanding of the universe. He muses on politics, history, religion and other topics and reports on his conversations with other scientific greats like Einstein, Bohr and Schrodinger. Reading level 2.

Jahn, Robert G. and Brenda J. Dunne *Margins of Reality*; HBJ 1987

A former Dean of the School of Engineering at Princeton University and a NASA consultant Jahn had a towering reputation which did not prevent vociferous attacks when he chose to investigate, using rigorous scientific methodology, subjects which were taboo then and are still largely so. The subtitle of the book is *The Role of Consciousness in the Physical World* and he documents the results of his experiments showing that consciousness and matter interact in measurable ways. Reading level 2 with gusts of 3.

Morowitz, H. *Cosmic Joy and Local Pain: Musing of a Mystic Scientist*
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1987

A Yale professor of biophysics muses on his field during a sabbatical and while on his sailboat in Hawaii. Many simple, and some quite complex, topics in science - the importance of water in organic life, energy flow and entropy - are made clear in simple language. Reading level 1.

Newberg, Andrew, Eugene D'Aquill and Vince Rause *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief* Ballantine, 2001

Mystics in many traditions speak of powerful experiences of unity, of merging with the universe, of becoming one with the cosmos. Most persons dismiss such descriptions as metaphorical. But what if they are not? Modern science has provided us with ever more powerful tools to map the brain's neuron activity. The authors report on studies that show that there is, indeed, such a state of merging and it is associated with a unique brain map. Neurotheology is a new discipline and it poses interesting questions such as "Did God create the Brain or did the Brain create God?" Reading level 1, sometimes 2.

Pagels, Heinz R. *The Cosmic Code: Quantum Physics as the Language of Nature*
Simon And Schuster, 1982

Pagels, former president of the New York Academy of Sciences, does a pretty good job of explaining how quantum physics evolved from Newtonian physics. He clearly explains the experimental anomalies of the latter, which forced the “creation” of the former. He also does an excellent job of describing the individual contributions of the great physicists who flourished in the 1920s and how the theoretical work of each tied in with that of others and cumulatively evolved a fundamental shift in physics. Reading level 1, frequently 2.

Penrose, Roger *The Road to Reality: A Complete Guide to the Laws of the Universe*
Alfred A. Knopf, 2004

A great physicist and professor of mathematics at Oxford, Penrose provides a panoramic view of the evolution of physics and mathematics. He shows you the subtle interplays between the disciplines and puts historic rivalries between scientists into context. It encompasses everything from quantum particles to multiple universes. The author does make heavy use of mathematics and his language is not always lucid. The book is more than a thousand pages long. Much of it is reading level 3.

Randall, Lisa *Warped Passages: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Universe's Hidden Dimensions*; Harper Collins, 2005

Because she is good looking Randall has been referred to as the “hottie” of physics which makes light of the fact that she is the first tenured woman theoretical physicist at both MIT and Harvard. She provides an excellent description of the state of physics and describes Einstein’s contribution in clear detail. She does a great job of explaining concepts like super-symmetry and Higgs mechanisms and the excitement is clear when she talks about her own work on string theory. And I love the fables that begin some chapters. Reading level 1 but frequently 2. Very occasionally 3 as well.

Schrodinger, E. *What is Life? And Mind, and Matter?*
Cambridge University Press, 1969

A Nobel Prize winning physicist ponders on the implications of his discoveries. Fate and free will; science and religion; the physical basis of consciousness; subject-object differentiation; and more. Reading level 2, sometimes 3.

Schwartz, Jeffrey M. and Sharon Begley *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity And the Power of Mental Force* HarperCollins 2002

The mind can shape the brain. What you intensely, deeply visualize can leave a permanent imprint on your brain. Many traditions say this, but until now you had to take it on faith. Now there is proof. Brain maps reveal that thinking does indeed create changes in brain waves. Also, the brain can rewire itself. The implications are profound and provide scientific rationale for the mental exercises propounded by religious teachers, sports coaches and many, many others. Reading level 1.

Talbot, Michael *Beyond the Quantum: God, Reality, Consciousness in the New Scientific Revolution*; Macmillan, 1986

Well written book that explains recent scientific experiments and why they are important. True, he selects only experiments that further his point of view, but they are fascinating anyway. His thesis is that science will one day explain, or at least accept, mysticism and the paranormal and explores why so many scientists oppose them viscerally. Reading level 1 to 2.

Wilbur, K (editor) *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the Worlds Great Physicists*; New Science Library, 1984

Collection of writings from a pantheon of Nobel Prize winners: Heisenberg, Schrodinger, Einstein, de Broglie, Pauli, Planck and others. The book makes the case that, contrary to New Age thinking, contemporary physics does not “prove” mysticism. Nevertheless, every one of these giants was a mystic. It attempts to explore why. Fascinating reading as the towering figures of modern science reveal their personal beliefs and world views. Reading level varies from 1 to 3.

Zukav, Gary *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*; William Morrow, 1979

Wu Li is supposedly the Chinese word for physics. This is in the same tradition as Capra’s *Tao of Physics* and is very readable. The discussions of philosophical quandaries like whether Schrodinger’s cat is alive and the implications of the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen experiment are well done. The last chapter, which deals with the limits of science, is fascinating. Reading level 1 to 2.

Business and Management: The business world we live in is changing and the pace of this change is accelerating. The multi-layered corporation with its autocratic hierarchy is unsuited to the new information era spawned by cheap computing power. People, and not machines or structures, are the key to an organization’s long-run prosperity. Jack Welch, former chairman of General Electric, puts it as well as anyone, “*The only way I see to get more productivity is by getting people involved and excited about their jobs. You can’t afford to have anyone walk through a gate of a factory, or into an office, who’s not giving 120%.*” His particular solution, which involves relentlessly raising the bar and subjecting employees to sometimes brutal treatment, may or may not be the best one, but it certainly has gained widespread attention and approbation. There are other companies that are also changing their organizational structures and processes to take account of the new reality. They are grappling with the problems of how, exactly, do you empower workers and what should you do to get them to take ownership of problems. Consultants and academics are documenting the physical and psychic costs of continuing with “old” ways. Just emerging is the recognition that there are physical and psychic costs of doing things in “new” ways. Herewith a small sampling of business and management books that you might find worthwhile. If you find any book particularly appealing, be sure to look up others by the same author. You will notice that I have an expansive notion of what constitutes a business or management book.

Albrecht, Karl *The Only Thing That Matters*; HarperBusiness 1992

Albrecht has written or co-authored many books on customer service and this is one of his

better ones. The consumer seeks the best “value” not quality or low price. He explains how to ensure that you get and remain close to the customer. Illuminating anecdotes that make points very clearly. Reading level 1.

Alexander, Col. John B., Maj. Richard Groller and Janet Morris; *The Warrior’s Edge*
Avon, 1990

Alexander is a former Special Forces commander who led hundreds of search-and-destroy missions in Southeast Asia. He also studied meditation at Buddhist monasteries and helped bring visualization and mental techniques into the training programs of the US Armed Forces. He is now a consultant to the Army and a leading proponent of non-destructive warfare. The book teaches you how to get a mental edge and trust your intuition. Reading level 1.

Alsop, Ronald J. *The 18 Immutable Laws of Corporate Reputation;* Free Press 2004

Alsop is a veteran *Wall Street Journal* reporter who begins with the unarguable premise that an impeccable reputation is an invaluable corporate asset. He then talks about how to establish and sustain such a reputation. There is a lot of usual stuff such as great customer service, fixing problems right the first time and so on. What makes it valuable are the innumerable anecdotes that come from Alsop’s day job. The examples make his points come alive and are useful guides to both what you should do and should not do. Reading level 1.

Argyris, Chris *Flawed Advice and the Management Trap*
Oxford University Press, 2000

The subtitle of this book is *How managers can know when they’re getting good advice and when they’re not* and that is what the book is about. Argyris always has penetrating insight – if you have not read his other books, do so now – and he is superb at uncovering hidden agendas. He clearly demonstrates the true feelings behind what is said and done and how the discrepancy affects organizational effectiveness. He also points out that there is more chaff than wheat in most consultant recommendations. Reading level 1.

Autry, James A. and Stephen Mitchell *Real Power: Business Lessons from the Tao Te Ching;* Riverhead Books, 1998

Autry was the CEO of the magazine division of the Meredith Corporation which consisted of several powerhouses such as the Ladies Home Journal. Since retiring, he has become a thoughtful exponent of the softer side of management focusing on such themes as fulfillment, creation of a healthy work environment and spiritual development. He writes simply on important topics such as what is “control” and do you really need to do it. Good stuff, good quotes. Reading level 1.

Badaracco, Joseph L., Jr. *Defining Moments: When Managers Must Choose between Right and Right;* Harvard Business School, 1997

Ethical dilemmas in business do not always involve clearly right and wrong paths. They are frequently choices between principles, which are both “right”. A single mother with an ailing child is forced to leave work early on numerous occasions. Is it “right” to cut her some slack? Is it also “right” to fire her because her already overworked team mates are

having to pick up that slack? Badaracco gives a framework to analyze such conflicts and talks you through its implications. Reading level 1.

Baker, Wayne E. *Networking Smart*; McGraw-Hill, 1994

I have already described my views on networking earlier in this syllabus. This said, this is one of the better books on the subject. Baker analyzes and categories the types of networks that exist in organizations, their usefulness in different situations from providing support to members in trying times like downsizing to promoting team work and shared responsibility. He also has excellent tips on how you fit into networks and how to create personal ones at your place of work. Reading level 1.

Bennis, Warren *On Becoming a Leader*; Addison-Wesley 1989

A professor of management and a former university president Bennis has written many books on leadership and I am not sure that this is the best one. He asserts that leaders are made, not born and that leadership cannot be taught, it has to be learned. He dissects the modern business environment and lists the essential qualities a leader has to have (integrity is one of them). Reading level 1 to 2.

Bianco, Anthony *Rainmaker: The Saga of Jeff Beck, Wall Street's Mad Dog*
Random House, 1991

Investment bankers, of course, have been known to stretch the facts. In fact, I am amazed that no 'fairness opinion' has yet won an award for creative fiction. Even in this milieu, Jeff Beck stood out by fabricating everything from educational credentials to an exemplary, if totally fictional, war record. Bianco is a *Business Week* writer who does a superb job chronicling Beck's rise and fall. The bigger value is in the peek this book gives into what life is really like in big prestigious banks. Dated but still accurate and very well written. Reading level 1.

Block, Peter *Stewardship*; Berrett-Koehler, 1993

Consultant and author, Block espouses the notion of stewardship to replace the policing attitude of our institutions. He defines a patriarchy as an organization that is focused on control, consistency and predictability. Responsibility for strategy lies with top management. He suggests partnership as an alternative where there is the right to say "no", joint accountability and absolute honesty. Interesting ideas. Reading level 2.

Byeham, William C. and Jeff Cox *Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment*
DDI Press, 1988

A self-published book that became a million copy best-seller, this book helped propel Byeham's firm to great consulting success. Written as a fable it talks of managerial behaviors that squelch initiatives (Sapp!) and how to change them so that workers feel empowered (Zapp!). Amusing and well-written but still has substance. Lot more difficult to do than it indicates. Reading level 1.

Byrne, John A. *Chainsaw: The Notorious Career of Al Dunlap in the Era of Profit At Any Price*; HarperBusiness, 1999

A very well researched book into Al Dunlap and his history of turning companies around.

Most of the book focuses on Sunbeam – a public fiasco of the first magnitude – but the author also casts serious doubt on Dunlap’s other “accomplishments” pointing out, for example, that it was luck – and inept due diligence by Kimberly Clark – that prevented Scott Paper from being an equal failure. Many lawyers, accountants, consultants, investment bankers and other service professionals conspired with Dunlap to keep his balloon from deflating due to complex factors ranging from greed to fear. The wonder is not that the debacle happened, but why it took so long to happen. There are no heroes in this book and the author does an admirable job of probing the weakness of our business culture. Reading Level 1.

Champy, James *Reengineering Management*; HarperBusiness, 1995

Half of the team that gave you *Reengineering the Corporation*, Champy took time off to ponder the consequences of what he helped unleash. This book is the result. It is a thoughtful examination of the “soft” side of business, of traits that managers must possess if their companies are to thrive as wholesome entities, not as cancerous growths. It encourages questions like “What kind of culture do we want?” and “What is this business for, anyway?” Lots of examples. Reading level 1.

Champy, James and Nitin Nohria *The Arc of Ambition*; Perseus Books, 2000

Ambition can create prodigious achievement. The authors trace the accomplishments of a plethora of individuals from Garibaldi to Jack Welch and link it to how a persistent vision would not let them be. They examine the roots of ambition and explain how you can use it to your advantage. They also caution against letting it wax into hubris – Al Dunlap is a classic, unbeloved, example. Excellent examples from history, business, science, fiction, military and other places. Reading level 1.

Chappell, Tom *The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and the Common Good*; Bantam, 1993

He founded Tom’s of Maine, built it up into a thriving company and then was wracked by questions like does success in business automatically mean giving up personal values? He searched many places including Harvard Divinity School. What is trust and how do you build it? How will workers handle autonomy and how can you help them? Refreshingly candid discussions of how the authors views on such topics evolved. Reading level 1.

Charan, Ram and Noel M. Tichy *Every Business is a Growth Business*
Times Business, 1998

Two noted consultants and academics make the point that attitude and mind set, and not environment or circumstances, determine growth and success. They stress the importance of organizational continuity - does the “leader” have a succession plan in place? - and constant redefining of the market from the customer’s perspective. Great anecdotes. Reading level 1.

Cialdini, Robert B. *Influence: Science and Practice*; Allyn and Bacon, 2001

Cialdini is a psychologist, but he has written what may be one of the very best marketing books around. His research interest is how persuasion happens, how one person or entity can get another to do something he/it wants. He has isolated six powerful principles by

which this happens and there is much variety in each. Many business examples and lots of pointers for further research. Reading level 1.

Cleary, Thomas *Thunder in the Sky: On the Acquisition and Exercise of Power*
Shambala, 1993
Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership
Shambala, 1989

Cleary, who holds a Harvard doctorate in East Asian languages, is best known for his translation of *The Art of War*, and has also translated dozens of other ancient Chinese works. Both of these books provide fascinating insights into leadership and the exercise of power from ancient practitioners well versed in the subject. Reading level 1.

Cohan, William D. *The Last Tycoons: The Secret History of Lazard Freres & Co;*
Doubleday, 2007
House of Cards: A Tale of Hubris and Wretched Excess on Wall Street; Doubleday, 2009

The first book is about the impossible machinations of the French family that owned Lazard and the role played by prominent Americans like Felix Rohatyn and how Bruce Wasserstein finally won a bitter battle. The second is about history and final days of bear Stearns and was very hastily brought out. Neither book is anywhere near being a classic but both do a good job of giving you a feel for the men who are titans of finance at the apex of social and political power. You are left wondering why the press – and we – revere these persons instead of crossing the road when we see them coming on our side. Reading level 1.

Conley, Chip *Peak: How Great Companies Get Their Mojo from Maslow*
Jossey-Bass, 2007

Conley is an entrepreneur who took a run down hotel in a seedy part of San Francisco and turned it into the must-go destination for rock stars. Then he built Joie de Vivre Hospitality into the largest chain of boutique hotels – each has a different theme – in San Francisco. But his vision is to use business to make the world a better place. The book has three parts and the focus of one is on employees, the next on customers and the last on shareholders. For each, he shows how to raise the level of consciousness. Simple, but very powerful and he walks his talk. He took no salary for years when the travel industry fell off the cliff after 9/11. Reading level 1.

Covey, Stephen R. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People;* Simon & Schuster, 1989
It was on the paperback bestseller list for more than three years. Makes very good points such as “Every public victory is preceded by a private victory” and that you generally succeed when you “begin with the end in mind”. Unfortunately the language is labored and you have to plow through it. It would benefit greatly from the attention of a Reader’s Digest book editor. Reading level 2.

Cowan, John *Small Decencies;* HarperBusiness 1992
The Common Table; HarperBusiness 1993

Musings on life and work by a businessman, consultant and a parish priest. In the

tradition of Robert Fulghum, as noted in the publisher's blurbs, but true nevertheless. There are personal anecdotes cleverly turned into lessons for corporations in a warm and non-patronizing way. Take a small dose a day. Reading level 1.

DePree, Max *Leadership is an Art*; Dell, 1989

The retired chairman of furniture maker Herman Miller, Max has long been noted for innovative management practices. For example, he instituted a silver parachute for employees at his company so that they would be protected if they lost their jobs as a result of a hostile takeover. He outlines his philosophy of the covenant between a company and its workers. Most companies are nowhere near it and not headed in that direction either. Reading level 1.

Farson, Richard *Management of the Absurd: Paradoxes in Leadership*
Simon & Schuster, 1996

Psychologist, educator and businessman, Farson has a penetrating insight into what is happening in today's business world. He illustrates his points with pithy sayings such as "The opposite of a profound truth is also true", "People we think need changing are pretty good the way they are" and "Organizations that need help most will benefit from it least". He is humorous but deadly serious and illustrates his point of view well. Reading level 1.

Feiner, Michael *The Feiner Points of Leadership*; Warner Business Books, 2004

Feiner was the head Human Resources honcho at Pepsi Cola and now teaches one of the most popular courses at Columbia Business School. He presents fifty "laws" of great leadership distilled from his observations over decades in the corporate world. Makes a strong case for integrity and remaining true to your values in the context of success in the executive suite. Reading level 1.

Fox, Justin *The Myth of the Rational Market: A History of Risk, Reward and
Delusion on Wall Street*; Harper Collins, 2009

Wall Street is driven by unbridled greed, it is true, but underneath that is a theoretical underpinning that many titans cite as justification for their actions. Foremost among these is the efficient market hypothesis that holds the market is always right. The actions of millions of "rational" investors trying to outsmart each other will ensure that the stock market will always value shares fairly. That myth has taken a drubbing. Fox provides a history of modern finance, describes with rich personal details the figures who came up with the powerful ideas that dominate markets and points out the flaws of both person and idea. Reading level 1.

Goldsmith, Marshall, Beverly Kaye and Ken Shelton *Learning Journeys*
Davies-Black Publishing, Palo Alto, CA, 2000

A bevy of best selling authors, consultants and trainers share personal stories about the event in their lives that was most significant and the lessons they learned from it. Warren Bennis, Stephen Covey, Jim Collins and Goldsmith himself are some of the contributors. Some accounts are absolute gems and reveal wisdom, compassion and the way to growth. Reading level 1.

Hammer, Michael and James Champy *Re-engineering the Corporation*;
HarperBusiness, 1993

Another long time dweller on the bestseller lists which made the authors highly successful consultants. They advocate a fundamental redesign of work processes that will produce quantum leaps of productivity with an actual decline in resources used, and give several case studies. Unfortunately, “re-engineering” has become a buzzword and a cloak for massive, frequently indiscriminate, layoffs. Reading level 1 to 2.

Hammer, Michael *The Agenda*; Crown Business, 2001

The sequel to *Re-engineering the Corporation* in which the author admits that it was no silver bullet. This time he talks a great deal about “process”. You have to put systems in place that make it easy for a customer to do business with you and deliver overwhelming value. He also advocates breaking the boundaries between you, your suppliers and your customers. Others – Jack Welch comes to mind – have said this earlier but Hammer says it particularly well. Not quite as good in terms of showing exactly how to do what is prescribed. Still, it does make good points. Reading level 1.

Handy, Charles *The Hungry Spirit*; Broadway Books, 1998

A British consultant with a blue chip client list, Handy has a take on business that exposes its pompous self-contradictions. He muses on technology, the excesses of capitalism and the growing evidence that markets do not always produce optimum allocations. His ruminations on the ethics of compromise and the purpose of profits are thought provoking. You might also wish to look up his other books, such as *The Age of Paradox*. Reading level 1.

Hanson, Marlys and Merle Hanson *Passion and Purpose: How to Identify and Shape the Powerful Patterns that Shape Your Work/Life*
Pathfinder Press, Alameda, CA. 2002

Hanson’s thesis is that we all have inherent motivational patterns that show up early in life and are dependably persistent. The trick to living a life of fulfilled potential is to understand our unique motivations and work so that they are used. There is a multi-step process recommended that involves identifying occurrences that gave you a sense of accomplishment from the earliest memories you have, analyzing them to detect patterns and then reshaping your life to make use of what you have discovered. Reading level 1.

Harvey, Jerry *The Abilene paradox and other Meditations on Reality*;
Lexington Books, 1988

Despite being a management professor Jerry Harvey writes clearly and with wit. His essays examine the fundamental assumptions on which many management practices are based, and find them faulty. He is particularly good at exposing hypocrisy and the euphemisms used to cover them up. Read the first essay and at least some of the others. *The Abilene Paradox* is also available as a video and you should watch it if you get a chance. Reading level 1.

Hawken, Paul *Growing a Business*; Simon & Schuster 1987

Co-founder of the very successful mail-order gardening firm Smith & Hawken he has an

unusual take on business. He clearly emphasizes that a successful business is an expression of a deep feeling welling up from the founder(s). This guiding principle is what shapes the business and makes it grow. Lucid discussions and some quite contrary assertions such as money is secondary when starting a business. The author has since become a speaking celebrity. Reading level 1.

Heider, John *The Tao of Leadership: Leadership Strategies for a New Age*;
Bantam, 1986

A clinical psychologist, Heider is a long time student of the *Tao Te Ching* and has translated the spirit very well into modern management dilemmas. For example: “The wise leader knows that there are natural consequences for every act. The task is to shed light on these natural consequences, not to attack the behavior itself. If the leader tries to take the place of nature and act as judge and jury, the best you can expect is a crude imitation of a very subtle process. At the very least, the leader will discover that the instrument of justice cuts both ways. Punishing others is punishing work.” Reading level 1.

Heifetz, Ronald A. and Marty Linsky *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* Harvard Business School Press, 2002

One of the better books on leadership. The authors are faculty members at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and have many decades of experience with major companies, government agencies and senior executives. They point out that true leaders do not find solutions as much as they create and hold the space in which others feel comfortable functioning and seeking and coming up with alternatives. With luck one or more of these alternatives will work better than what is already in place. Reading level 1.

Johnston, David Cay *Perfectly Legal* Portfolio, Penguin Group, 2003

The subtitle of this book is *The covert campaign to rig our tax system to benefit the super-rich and cheat everybody else*. That says it all. The author is a Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist for the New York Times and makes extensive use of stories that he has filed. If you are poor you pay taxes. If you are middle class you pay more taxes. If you are wealthy, you hire a good tax attorney and pay proportionately much less. If you are super rich, you frequently pay nothing at all. Not to the government that is. You do pay the legion of accountants, attorneys and financial advisors who dream up convoluted mechanisms to disguise income so that it does not have to be declared. Works for corporations and for individuals. Johnston explains in highly readable prose exactly how this is done. You will weep for our democracy. Reading level 1.

Komisar, Randy with Kent Lineback *The Monk and the Riddle*
Harvard Business School Press, 2000, 2001

Software executive, angel and iconoclastic thinker, Komisar is a firm proponent of the “big idea” that should permeate the very being of a company. This big idea springs from the values and vision of the founder(s) and he stresses that the company should define its business in terms of where it is going and what it is becoming, not merely in terms of what it is. Written in the form of a fable where a young would be entrepreneur – Lenny – has an idea for a business to alleviate the pain of persons who have lost a loved one. In the

pressure to raise funding for his venture he jettisons the original idea in favor of what – in his opinion – will make a quicker profit. His partner finally takes steps that bring him back to the original idea and this gets him the funding he needs. Reading level 1.

Langley, Monica *Tearing Down the Walls: How Sandy Weill fought his Way to the Top of the Financial Pyramid and then Nearly Lost it All*
Free Press, 2002

A wonderful account of how Sandy Weill rose, fell and rose again and came to almost J. P. Morgan like prominence in the financial world. Really good glimpse into what happens in the world of high-level mergers and corporate governance as well as how human foibles play themselves out in a larger arena. I cannot decide if Langley is being hagiographic or tongue-in-cheek when she describes Weill's characteristics. Gluttony, for example, becomes love of fine food and drink. He slashes benefits for employees while treating himself to top of the line Gulfstream private jets. Would you want to be him? Reading level 1.

Lucht, John *Rites of Passage at \$100,000+; Viceroy Press, 1997*

This book is a gem. Lucht is a headhunter, or in polite parlance an executive recruiter, and there is little about the business that he does not know. He shares this knowledge generously with wit and passion. There is an excellent exposition on the similarities and differences between contingency and retainer recruiters. There are many, many useful tips on how, if unemployed, you can become speedily employed. He also provides revealing glimpses into the mores of large corporations. Reading level 1.

McDonald, Lawrence G and Patrick Robinson *A Colossal Failure of Common Sense: The Inside Story of the Collapse of Lehman Brothers*
Crown Business, Random House 2009

Written by a relatively junior trader, this book gives an account of the frenzied, step on the gas and the devil take the hindmost atmosphere that let Lehman to stuff itself with sub-prime mortgages up to the gills. It tells of the saner heads that warned of the coming apocalypse and how they were ignored and forced to leave. Does not give the views of CEO Fuld and president Gregory and why they did what they did but does excoriate them, perhaps justifiably. Somewhat disjointed but a good read. Reading level 1.

Mintzberg, Henry *Managers not MBAs; Berret-Koehler, 2004*

At last, someone who points out that the emperor has no clothes and, indeed, never had any. Mintzberg is a management professor at McGill university and makes the case that our business schools are churning out technically overqualified, cerebrally gifted and morally deficient automatons who know nothing about how a business really works and also do not know that they know nothing. Others have made the same point but Mintzberg is an 'insider' so his data is stronger and his anecdotes more telling. Reading level 1.

O'Boyle, Thomas F. *At Any Cost: Jack Welch, General Electric and the Pursuit of Profit; Vintage Books, Random House 1998*

A former Wall Street Journal reporter chronicles the many ways in which GE under Jack Welch systematically used hard-nosed tactics to achieve its extraordinary stock market

success. There is a seamy side to this success including possibly illegal and certainly unethical corporate actions – verbal commitments disavowed, pension funds raided, customers given kickbacks and competitive price collusion. GE wins court battles using overwhelming legal firepower but the questions remain. Well written and well documented. GE pulled out all the stops to squelch this and largely succeeded. The points made about GE culture are very relevant and coming to light in the wake of the company's declining share price and Welch's own well publicized marital problems. Reading level 1.

O'Neil, John. R. *The Paradox of Success*; Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1993
The subtitle of this book is *When Winning at Work Means Losing at Life*. A distinguished psychologist and consultant O'Neil has run across more than his share of dysfunctional overachievers. He relates their tales along with analyses of why they became that way. There are descriptions of warning signs and suggestions to prevent you from traveling the same route. Serious issues treated sensitively. Reading level 1.

O'Shea, James and Charles Madigan *Dangerous Company*; Times Business, 1997
The authors look at all of the major consulting firms and their individual legacies. There have been some spectacular success stories and quite a few fiascos, and the authors cover them all with engaging openness. Particularly useful is their insider's description of the culture of major firms such as Bain, Boston Consulting and McKinsey. Since these firms, between them, boast a majority of large companies as clients you learn a great deal about how decisions are made at upper echelons. Reading level 1.

Owen, Harrison *Riding the Tiger: Doing Business in a Transforming World*
Abbot Publishing, 1991
A consultant who practices his trade on six continents, Owen pioneered Open Space Technology, a method of holding meetings that calls for little preparation and no preset agenda and is nevertheless fearsomely productive. An astute observer of the business scene he has some penetrating comments on the change now racking that scene. Like it or not we are in this turmoil together and "...he who rides the tiger does not always choose when to get off." Reading level 1 to 2.

Partnoy, Frank *Infectious Greed: How Deceit and Risk Corrupted the Financial Markets*; Times Books, 2003
The author is a Law School professor and has a keen insight into how the evolution of trading instruments combined with human foibles and lack of regulation to give us spectacular fiascos such as Long Term Capital Management, Enron and WorldCom. If changes are not made now, much worse could follow. Reading level 2.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*; Harvard Business School Press, 1998
A Stanford Business School professor makes the case that financial success is best assured by treating people as a valuable asset instead of merely paying lip service to the notion as most companies do. Excellent case studies of such companies as SAS which flourish by creating nurturing environment for their workers. Reading Level 1.

Ray, Michael *The Highest Goal*; Berrett-Koehler, 2004

The subtitle of this book is the “Secret that Sustains You Every Moment” and it is very appropriate. The author states that each of us has a goal, one that can give every action and every moment of every day a deep meaning and all of life is a quest to find this goal and work towards it. It is a powerful concept, and the author gives you methods to find your goal. Good exercises. Reading level 1.

Ray, Michael and Alan Rinzler(editors) *The New Paradigm of Business*
Jeremy Tarcher, 1993

Sponsored by the World Business Academy, an organization devoted to fostering responsible change in business, the book is a selection of articles and readings by businesspersons, consultants, academics and journalists. The themes are cooperation, ethical responsibilities of business and business as a vehicle for social transformation. Reading level 1 to 2.

Reichheld, Frederick F. *The Loyalty Effect*; Harvard Business School Press, 1996

A Bain & Company consultant, Reichheld makes a persuasive case for loyalty-based management. He explicitly considers the lifetime value of customers and methods of increasing it. He extends the notion to employees, vendors and other relevant stakeholders and even further to consider loyalty to values and principles. Excellent case studies. Reading level 1, very occasionally 2.

Rolfe, John and Peter Troob *Monkey Business: Swinging Through the Wall Street*
Jungle; Warner Books, 2000

Both authors are MBAs from top schools and joined well-known investment banks in pursuit of fame and fortune. The scales fell from their eyes and they figured that a tell all book could lead to the same outcome. Our financial powerhouses are not pretty places and this book tells you why. Both authors have a good eye for the illustrative anecdote. Be warned that the language is sometimes risqué. Reading level 1.

Rosen, Robert H. and Paul Brown *Leading People*; Viking, 1996

The authors identify eight principles of leadership such as vision, trust, creativity and integrity and give case studies of leaders - mostly group executives of companies with an occasional government or not-for-profit thrown in - who are exemplars of each. Some of these cases are pretty good but the few pages devoted to each precludes depth. You don't quite get to know how a company lauded for its creativity does on integrity. However, it does get you thinking. Reading level 1.

Schaffer, Robert H. *High-Impact Consulting: How Clients and Consultants can work*
Together to Achieve Extraordinary Results; Jossey-Bass 2002

This is one extraordinarily worthwhile book and I also like its predecessor, *The Break Through Strategy*. The author's thesis is that most consulting projects fail because the consultant focuses on what needs to be done. The consultant almost never looks at what the client is able or willing to do. The correct way to proceed is to match what should be done with what the client can realistically do given human and organizational constraints.

Lots of tips and a strategy for how this can be done. It is written from the viewpoint of a consultant but is equally – or even more – useful for an executive trying to change things from the inside. Reading level 1.

Schwartz, Peter and Blair Gibb *When Good Companies Do Bad Things*
John Wiley, 1999

Legions of well-known companies - Union Carbide, Shell, Nike and Nestle for example - have been guilty of actions that have aroused broad public ire. Why do these ethical lapses occur, and is there any way of putting in place mechanisms to prevent them from happening? The authors take a remarkably balanced approach, neither castigating business as evil nor waxing rhapsodic over the benefits brought to third world countries by their practices. They believe that the serious negotiations of the future will be between NGOs and multinational companies as the only two entities that have truly global perspectives. Reading level 1 to 2.

Semler, Ricardo *The Seven-Day Weekend: Changing the Way Work Works*
Portfolio, Penguin Books, 2004

This is the guy who wrote *Maverick*, also a best seller. Semler runs a company called Semco in Brazil and it has sales of more than \$200 million. It is also highly profitable and follows such totally unconventional practices as letting employees set their own working hours. Semler believes that in hypercompetitive markets the only way to win is to *give up* control to well nurtured employees. He also believes that an important function of a company is to help employees grow in diverse ways. When, oh when, will the rest of the world catch up with him? Reading level 1.

Senge, Peter M *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*; Doubleday, 1990

An MIT professor of organizational theory, Senge has also enjoyed a long tenure on the bestseller list and has just co-authored a fieldbook which shows you how to turn your moribund organization into a learning one. He plugs a systems approach to solving problems so that today's solution does not become tomorrow's problem. Erudite and thoughtful, he has many important points to make including the explicit recognition of how our mental models influence "reality" and the importance of gaining personal mastery. The writing is somewhat verbose, but stick with it. Reading level 2 to 3.

The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook; Doubleday, 1994

This book is co-authored with Richard Ross, Bryan Smith, Charlotte Roberts and Art Kleiner and tells you how to actually apply the theories propounded in the earlier book. It is simply written and chock-full of useful exercises, case histories and practical tools. It is a thick tome so take your time going through it and selecting what will be of most use to you. This is an excellent reference manual and lists great resources. Reading level 1.

The Dance of Change; Doubleday 1999

Same co-authors as the Fieldbook with George Roth as an addition. Same comments as for the Fieldbook. More recent examples of companies in the middle of change and more thoughts on the change management process. Reading level 1.

Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future
Society for Organizational Learning, 2004

This book is co-authored with C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski and Betty Sue Flowers. The authors interviewed more than a hundred leading figures involved in organizational change and present a synthesis with many quotes. The focus is not just on how to make change happen, but on making sure that it is a nurturing change that benefits both the individual and the organization. Respect for the Universe is a strong subtext throughout. Reading level 1.

Sheth, Jagdish and Andrew Sobel *Clients for Life: How Great Professionals Develop Breakthrough Relationships;*
Simon & Schuster, 2000

The authors posit that the best consultants have ongoing – perhaps lifelong – relationships with clients and are consulted on a wide range of issues, even issues that are outside their expertise. Their advice is always valued and frequently heeded. Examples are Aristotle for Alexander, Cardinal Richelieu for King Louis XIII, Harry Hopkins for Franklin D. Roosevelt and Thomas More for King Henry VIII. There are also more recent business examples. The advisor needs a special blend of empathy, depth of understanding and integrity and the authors define the qualities and how to develop them. Reading level 1.

Sisodia, Rajendra S., David B. Wolfe and Jagdish N. Sheth *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose;* Wharton School Publishing, 2007

Sisodia et al identify some 30 companies that customers love passionately and their performance blows away stock market averages. These are the Firms of Endearment and include names like Timberland, trader Joe's and Toyota. Sisodia is not afraid to use the Love word. The companies care about more their employees and have a mission that is larger than the bottom line. Think of other companies that should be on such a list and invest in them for the long haul. Reading level 1.

Stewart, James B *Disney War;* Simon & Schuster, 2005

An excellent book about executive shenanigans at the company that Walt built. Painstakingly researched by a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter the book makes you a fly on the wall in conference rooms where momentous decisions are taken. The pettiness, greed and sheer obtuseness of some of our corporate titans is laid bare with a scalpel. You will wonder how supposedly intelligent directors, charged with looking out for shareholder interests, ever permitted such antics. Reading level 1.

Stoll, Clifford *Silicon Snake Oil*
Anchor Books, 1995

The author is one of the pioneers of the Internet and plenty computer literate. He makes a searing case that computerization has gone too far and now detracts from the quality of life. He points out the many deficiencies of cyberspace and documents how the push to computerize schools is likely to produce even more illiterate and innumerate graduates than today's schools do, but at greatly increased cost. His arguments are compelling but he pushes some of them a little too far. Judge for yourself. Reading level 1.

Sugarman, Joseph *Advertising Secrets of the Written Word*

Marketing Secrets of a Mail Order Maverick
Television Secrets for Marketing Success
DelStar Books, Las Vegas, NV 1998

Joe Sugarman is the copywriting wizard who wrote those incredibly entertaining full-page advertisements for high-technology gizmos. The company he founded, JS&A, was wildly successful and the precursor to others such as The Sharper Image and DAK Industries. He is also the guy behind the BluBlocker sunglasses. These books are a distillation of the marketing lessons he learnt in a lifetime of entrepreneurship and he is incredibly candid. He tells you what worked and why and what didn't work and why. Lots of real examples. Reading level 1.

Templeton, Sir John *Discovering the Laws of Life*; Continuum Press, 1994

Templeton is the mutual fund czar who founded the mutual fund family that bears his name and retained his honor while building an enormous fortune. Not an easy task. In this book he reveals the deeper principles by which he steered his business career and invites you to do the same. They apply to your personal life as well. Do not be fooled by its simplicity and apparent naivete, there is much wisdom here. Reading level 1.

Tichy, Noel M. with Eli Cohen *The Leadership Engine*; HarperBusiness 1997

Noel is a professor at the University of Michigan business school and director of its Global Leadership Program. He takes you through the guts of many major organizations such as General Electric and Ameritech and dissects their culture. The chapter on values is particularly good and the appendix, a handbook on how you can create leaders in your turn, has much food for thought. Tichy's thing is that you should have your own "teachable point of view". I concur. Reading level 1.

Tichy, Noel M. and Stratford Sherman *Control Your Destiny or Someone Else Will*
Doubleday, 1993

Both authors are intimately familiar with General Electric and its charismatic leader, Jack Welch. They take you behind the scenes and show you what happened when Welch took over the reins from Reginald Jones, and why. What was the reason that one of America's biggest and most profitable companies was literally turned upside down and inside out, the human cost of such turmoil and how the spectacular and well-documented productivity increases came about. You may like or abominate Welch, but it is indisputable that he set a trend in motion and many, many companies are doing likewise with varying degrees of success. Read this book to find out what and why. Reading level 1 to 2.

Wessel, David *In Fed We Trust: Ben Bernanke's War on the Great Panic*;
Crown Business, Random House, 2009

Wessel gives a brief history of how the Federal Reserve was founded in 1913 and the political maneuvering that gave it its present structure. Most of the book deals with the financial meltdown of 2008 and the frantic efforts of Bernanke, Paulson, Geithner and Wall Street titans to "save" the world. You get the sense of the urgency, the late night phone calls, the desperate meetings as domino after domino threatened to fall bringing down the entire edifice of modern economies. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, AIG,

IndyMac, CitiGroup, the list is endless. Why was Bear Stearns rescued while Lehman was allowed to go down the tubes? This book tells you who knew what, when but we may never know why they did what they did. Reading level 1.

Zohar, Danah and Ian Marshall

Spiritual Capital: Wealth We Can Live By
Berrett-Koeller, 2004

A husband and wife team make the case that big business and capitalism, as currently practiced, are creating soul-deadening environments for millions and are unsustainable systems. She defines Spiritual Capital as the amount of spiritual knowledge and expertise available to an individual or culture. Examples make this clearer: When Merck decided to proceed with development of a drug to combat river-blindness and give it away to impoverished sufferers; when Coca-Cola, in India, offered its distribution system to the government to distribute polio vaccine to remote rural areas, they are accumulating Spiritual Capital. The final chapter is a vision of how the world can be transformed if this concept was widely used. Good concept. Writing could be livelier. Reading level 1, frequently 2.

Mind over matter: There is an entire genre of books that basically postulates that you can create whatever you want by thinking about it. You can also change yourself, eradicating undesirable traits and inculcating positive ones. This genre is growing at an exponential pace, perhaps as a result of increasing frustration and inability to cope with the rapid changes taking place in the world today in all dimensions from social mores to business practices. Many, but not all, of these books have a religious/spiritual underpinning and are deliberately inspirational. A few would lodge in the ‘self-help’ section of giant bookstores. Do not look down your nose or scoff at them. I know chief executive officers of NYSE companies who swear by some and the exercises they suggest. You may well find something here that is highly relevant either in itself, or as a springboard for further growth. Many of these books have been reprinted several times by different publishers. The publishers listed are either the original, or very early, ones.

Dyer, Wayne W.

Manifest Your Destiny: The Nine Spiritual Principles for Getting Everything You Want; HarperCollins, 1997

A popular speaker and author, Dyer has other books you may wish to explore including *Real Magic* and *Wisdom of the Ages*. This book is a good manual on how you can use mental forces to create a physical reality. Good tips on how to harness the power of the subconscious mind and the whole has an explicitly spiritual underpinning which is quite common in this entire genre. Reading level 1.

The Power of Intention: Learning to Co-create Your World Your Way; Hay House, 2004

This book is an excellent summary of all that the author has been saying for years, but the exposition is more lucid. He explains how each of us creates our world through our inner dialog and how we can change this dialog to produce better results. Many chapters have a “Five ideas for implementing the suggestions of this chapter” section at the end and this is valuable. Definitely one of his better books. Perhaps even his best. Reading level 1.

Fisher, Mark *The Instant Millionaire*; New World Library, 1990

It is a slim volume and written as a fable in which a young man seeks the secret of wealth from an elderly millionaire mentor. It discusses the power of focused thought how to master your subconscious and many similar topics in an easy, convincing style. Many homilies such as, “Always remember that at a certain height there are no clouds. If there are clouds in your life, it’s because your soul has not soared high enough. Many people make the mistake of fighting against their problems. What you must do is raise yourself above those problems once and for all. The heart of the rose will lead you above the clouds, where the sky is forever clear. Don’t waste your time chasing the clouds, They will unceasingly reappear...” Reading level 1.

Gawain, Shakti *Creative Visualization*; Bantam, 1982

An introduction and workbook for using mental energy to transform your life. There are many powerful affirmations and visualizations along with tips on meditation. The startling success of this book catapulted the author to New Age cult status and she promptly started giving workshops and lectures to large audiences. If you do explore this work be sure to do the exercise on establishing your own sanctuary. Reading level 1.

Hill, Napoleon *Think and Grow Rich*; Many publishers; try to get the Original Version, Restored and Revised, Aventine Press, 2004

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie, who may have been the world’s richest man at the turn of the century, commissioned Hill to study the lives of the worlds richest and most successful men and come with a “success formula” that others could apply in their lives. He surveyed dozens of the top leaders of his time including Theodore Roosevelt, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, Clarence Darrow and Thomas A. Edison and published his findings in a series of articles and papers. This particular volume has become a cult classic and is one of the all-time bestsellers. A better book is the thicker tome *The Law of Success*. Reading level 1.

Katie, Byron *I Need Your Love – Is That True?* Harmony Books, 2005

Katie is one of the many authors who report having a sudden awakening experience that literally changed her life. She was deeply unhappy before and wonderfully fulfilled after. Her first book – *Loving What Is* – was a best seller. In this book she focuses on relationships and points out that many of them become toxic because of the heavy demands we place on them to satisfy our own desperate needs. Reading level 1.

Maltz, Maxwell *Psycho-cybernetics*; Prentice-Hall 1960

A plastic surgeon, Maltz was amazed at the psychological complications that were tied up with physical imperfections whether real or imagined. He found that his scalpel did not merely change persons’ faces, they changed their psyches as well and transformed many run down hacks into spirited chargers. He elaborates on what you can do to take charge of your life using well-tested psychological principles that make heavy use of autosuggestion. Reading level 1.

Peale, Norman Vincent *The Power of Positive Thinking*; Prentice-Hall, 1952

For half a century Peale was the beloved pastor of New York's Marble Collegiate Church and an inspiration to generations of his congregation. Still selling briskly after more than forty years this book catapulted the author to preeminence as the confidant of presidents and the spiritual mentor of many movers-and-shakers. Simply and powerfully written it calls for enlisting the help of Jesus Christ to solve a variety of human problems. Reading level 1.

Ponder, Catherine *The Dynamic Laws of Prosperity*; Prentice-Hall, 1962

Another book very much along the lines of *The Power of Positive Thinking*. In fact the author has been referred to as "the Norman Vincent Peale among lady ministers." It also talks about "prosperity laws" and how to apply them in your own life. Good sections on goal-setting and how to develop an attitude of abundance. Strong Christian religious undertone. Reading level 1.

Roman, Sanaya and Duane Packer *Creating Money*; H. J. Kramer, 1988

This book was supposedly transmitted to the authors by a pair of "beings of light" who dwell in the higher dimensions. I have a problem with this but that is my hang-up. It need not be yours. It is simple to read, well written and contains many exercises that absolutely do work to help you on the stated goal of achieving wealth. There are two catches: 1) You must have an underlying world view that is compatible with the exercises prescribed, and 2) The time frame can sometimes be a very long one. Read the introduction and the first three chapters. If you are not strongly attracted to it, drop the book. It will not work for you. Reading level 1.

Vitale, Joe *Spiritual Marketing: A proven 5-step Formula for Easily Creating Wealth from the Inside Out*; 1stBooks, 2002

A slim, self-published volume, this book is shot through with typographical errors, grammatical excess and sophomoric bromides. There are frequent references to the authors' friends who are miracle-workers, one and all. Despite its faults – and they are legion – the author makes some very good points on wealth consciousness and how to achieve it. You may well find benefit in his simple, sincere style. This book became an unheralded and underground best seller and was picked up by Amazon.com and other mainstream distributors. Reading level 1.

Wattles, Wallace D. *The Science of Getting Rich Or Financial Success Through Creative Thought*; Reprinted Icen Books, 2002

One of the early classics, this book is still highly relevant. First published in 1910, it is one of the clearest expositions of the Law of Wealth that I have come across. It is a powerful law and it works. And I will not say what it is because the purpose of this introduction is to inspire you to get the book and find out for yourself. Reading level 1.

Life changing books: This is a loaded title for a section, and I have chosen it deliberately. What, exactly, is a life-changing book anyway? If a precocious high-school student reads a textbook on aerodynamics and, being inspired, subsequently becomes an aeronautical engineer, does that make it a life-changing book? If a young social misfit reads *Mein Kampf* and rises to head a supremacist group, does that make it a life-changing

book? Whether the answer is yes or no depends on the perspective from which the question is asked. Life-changing books come in many flavors.

The books in this section are life-changing in the sense that they help you find answers to life's deeper questions: Why are we here at all? Where are we going? etc. This section will be particularly relevant to you if you have been gnawed by a question that won't go away "Is this all there is to life?" There is a substratum to life on earth, a moral and spiritual bedrock as it were, that gives stability, direction and purpose. You have to discover it on your own and learn how to use its power. Some of these books may help you on your journey of self-discovery.

The principal texts of the world's great religions, such as the *Bible*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Koran* and the *Dhammapada* are certainly sources of succor and strength. They have not been included here because they are already well known enough in their own right. The books listed, while they may spring from a particular tradition, have a broad appeal and a powerful message. Read many of them but be warned that mere reading, even careful reading, is fruitless. You will only benefit if you "grok" them.

For those of you not familiar with Heinlein's delightful work *Stranger in a Strange Land* here is how one of the characters explains the term: "... 'Grok' means to understand so thoroughly that the observer becomes part of the observed - to merge, blend, intermarry, lose identity in group experience....If I chopped you up and made a stew, you and the stew, whatever was in it, would grok - and when I ate you, we would grok together and nothing would be lost and it would not matter which one of us did the eating." The concept itself is quite difficult to grok! Helpful hint: do not rely too much on your analytical mind. The deeper, life-altering, meaning is always revealed intuitively.

Be humble when you read any of these books because there is deep wisdom there. If you find feelings of incredulity or disdain rising, stop immediately. There are two reasons for this: First, if such emotions arise you will assuredly not be able to grasp what the book has to offer so you might as well not waste any time. Second, at some later time in your life the message in that book may be precisely what you need. Why preclude yourself from such help by forming a negative impression now? Happy grokking!

No readability scores have been assigned to any of these books. They are generally simply written but have to be understood at many deep levels. Some books have been translated by more than one person and published by more than one firm. Some of these editions differ quite markedly from each other. Feel free to select the one that suits you best.

Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal (Deliverance From Error)*

In W. Montgomery Watt's (tr.) *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*;
Kazi Publications, Chicago, 1982

Born in eleventh century Persia, Al-Ghazali gave up a career as a distinguished academic to become a wandering ascetic. Widely acclaimed as the greatest Muslim after Muhammad he makes a case for higher forms of human apprehension than the cognitive

levels of normal functioning. He absorbed the philosophical texts and trod the way of the mystics. He presents his synthesis in simple language and deep conviction.

Augustine of Hippo, St. *Confessions*; Tr. R. S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin 1961

One of the early great leaders of Christianity, Augustine was a libertine deeply wedded to physical pleasure till his conversion at age thirty two. This is a personal account of his search for truth, his wrestling with his libido and other passions, his repentance of his early ways and the consecration of his life to Jesus.

Dass, Ram *Be Here Now*; Lama Foundation, 1971

Formerly known as Richard Alpert, Ram Dass was a professor of psychology who was fired from Harvard because of his highly public experiments with psychedelic drugs. His subsequent peregrinations took him to India where he found his master and settled down to drug-free spiritual practice. The first part of the book is a brief autobiography. The guy has a Ph. D. from Stanford and is well aware of the mental games we all play, particularly academics. The third part consists of plain language essays on a variety of topics such as money and right livelihood, getting straight, the rational mind, etc. There are some great quotes in this section. The middle part is the kernel of the walnut - a series of cryptic statements about how life's odyssey really works, all richly illustrated with new age graphics. This will either make immediate and profound sense to you, or it won't. If it does, stick with it. If not, move on and don't worry about it.

de Mello, Anthony *Contact With God*; Loyola University Press, 1991

A Jesuit priest, who passed away unexpectedly in 1987, de Mello achieved international renown for the workshops he conducted for both priests and laypersons. This book was published posthumously from his retreat notes and deals with how to use prayer as a powerful and effective means of bringing a spiritual presence into your life at all times, and also why you should strive to do this. You may also wish to explore *A Call to Love*, which is a series of meditations, and *Awareness*, which was compiled, from workshop lectures.

French, R. M. *The Way of the Pilgrim, The Pilgrim Continues His Way*
Ballantine, 1974

Nobody knows who the Pilgrim was or much about his antecedents. Written in Russian, the manuscript was discovered years after his death and first published in 1884. The first English edition came in 1930. He was not only unknown but also uneducated. He was crippled in one arm. He was dirt poor all his life and frequently destitute. Yet his touching account of his unrelenting search for enlightenment has raw power that has inspired countless others. And, despite his penurious outward circumstances, he found the "peace which passeth all understanding" by using a simple device. Read it to find out what and how and try to do likewise.

Goldsmith, Joel *The Art of Meditation*; George, Allen and Unwin, 1957

A mystic himself, Goldsmith takes you by the hand and shows you how to meditate in simple, uncomplicated steps. Note that I said "simple", not "easy". Whether you find it

easy or impossibly difficult depends on the strength of your intent. Goldsmith is unambiguous about the process, the experience and the fruits.

Hahn, Thich Nhat *The Miracle of Mindfulness*; Beacon Press, 1975

A Vietnamese Zen master, who now lives in exile in France, Thich Nhat Hahn's writing is both gentle and insistent. He well knows human foibles and the spirit of compassion is palpable. The book contains anecdotes and exercises designed to help you practice mindfulness, the eastern skill of being awake and fully aware. As common in Buddhist traditions, breath is the vehicle used to bring you to mindfulness. The exercises will bring you relaxation, peace and eventually self-awareness.

Ignatius of Loyola, St. *Spiritual Exercises*

Tr. Thomas Corbishley, P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1963

A Spanish nobleman, Ignatius of Loyola left court life to enter the army. Recovering from severe wounds suffered at the battle of Pamplona he read several books by and about the early saints and underwent a remarkable conversion that led to his hanging up his sword at the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat. He entered priesthood, founded the Jesuit order and was its first superior-general. While practicing austerities and meditation he underwent mystical experiences which formed the basis for this book. These are powerful contemplative exercises.

Kempis, Thomas A. *The Imitation of Christ*

Tr. by Betty I. Knott, Fontana, 1963

A German-born Dutch religious in the fourteenth century, relatively little is known about Thomas of Kempis. Even the attribution of this work to him has been contested. It is a powerful and simple interpretation of the teachings of Jesus and the attitude needed to benefit from them in daily life. Immensely practical, it does not dwell on theological points. It goes instantly to the heart of man's predicament: How to gain happiness and freedom from suffering by learning the Truth.

Lawrence, Brother *The Practice of the Presence of God*

H. R. Allenson, Ltd., London

Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, a footman and soldier, uneducated and lowborn, entered a Carmelite monastery in seventeenth century France. By the time he died at age eighty he was known as Brother Lawrence and deeply revered for his saintliness. The latter trait shows through in this book, particularly in the spiritual maxims and gathered thoughts. Practical, devotional and inspirational.

Maimonides, Moses *The Guide for the Perplexed*

Tr. by M. Freidlander, Dover, 1956

Born in Cordova in the twelfth century Maimonides became a physician in the court of Saladin as well as one of the most influential philosophers of his day. The Guide reconciles scriptural texts with the findings of the science of its time. There are lucid expositions of topics such as the impossibility of ascribing any positive attributes to God. While this is quite worthwhile, it is heavy reading.

Nikhilananda, Swami *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*

Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, NY, 1942

Ramakrishna was the untutored nineteenth century mystic and sage who proclaimed, through personal experience, that the endpoints of the world's major religions were identical. The best western account of his life and times is Christopher Isherwood's *Ramakrishna and his Disciples*. This book is a translation of a Bengali work that recounts details of his conversations with his disciples and visitors. Much of Ramakrishna's teachings were through parables.

Osborne, Arthur, Ed. *The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*

Messrs. Rider & Co., London

Ramana Maharshi was the Indian saint introduced to the West by Paul Brunton in *Search in Secret India*. An exponent of the philosophical system of Advaita Vedanta, he espoused the short, direct solution to the human predicament - self enquiry. Steady and continuous investigation into the nature of the mind transforms the mind and resolves it into its source. Read *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by the same author first. If that makes a deep intuitive appeal to you, follow up with this book.

Palmer, G.E.H., Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware, Tr. And Ed. *Philokalia*

Faber and Faber, 5 volumes

These are the writings of the early church fathers compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth. They were men of deep spirituality who found simple powerful ways to bring the presence of God into everyday life. Springing as they do from personal experience, their writings are deeply moving. The *Philokalia* was the only book the Pilgrim carried apart from the *Bible*.

Teresa of Avila, St. *Autobiography*

Tr. and Ed. by E. Allison Peers, Image Books, Doubleday 1959

She was in her late teens when she entered a Carmelite convent in Spain in 1533. A series of visions helped her find her life's work helping reform the movement and bringing it back to austere ways and its spiritual roots. The book is a moving description of her trials and tribulations, early doubts and how she always found strength when she needed it most.

Paradigm busters: Thomas Kuhn is the person who popularized the notion of a paradigm, an internally consistent framework in which we function whether in science, medicine, politics or any other field. Out-of-the-box thinking, the kind that produces truly revolutionary solutions to intractable problems, is simply the breaking of these powerful mental models. Sometimes, very rarely, the unsuitability of a particular paradigm is realized in an instant. Recollect the scene in the movie *Gandhi* when communal tensions were running high and bereaved victims were set to engage in retaliatory violence. Gandhi's quiet admonition, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind," effected an instant transformation. In the West, notions of justice are inextricably linked with retribution. The truth councils of South Africa turned this concept on its head and helped large numbers of people, of all races, come to terms with the horrific occurrences of the

recent past. It was an imperfect and incomplete process, but it, too, represents a paradigm shift. This section lists several books which defy conventional thinking in mainstream circles. Some of them have excellent ideas that have perhaps been extrapolated too far. Others have not gone far enough. Many of the books in other categories, particularly “Life Changing books” and “the New Physics,” are also paradigm busters.

Abraham, Jay *Getting Everything You Can Out of All You’ve Got: 21 Ways You Can Out-Think, Out-Perform and Out-Earn the Competition;*
St. Martin’s Press, 2000

Jay Abraham is a marketing genius. This genius is not as well-recognized as it deserves to be. In part this is because he loudly and frequently proclaims his expertise and is thus discounted by the discriminating. He has incredibly profound and useful marketing insights and has published them in many reports that are not commercially available. See a sample of his stuff at www.abraham.com. He also has a finely nuanced understanding of how spiritual principles affect wealth and how it is built. This book is not the best he has to offer, but it is still well worth your while, especially the last chapter. Reading level 1.

Gallwey, Timothy W. *The Inner Game of Tennis;* Bantam Books, 1974

There is the tennis that you play on the court. And then there is the tennis you play in your head. The latter is much more important and greatly influences the former. Excellent tips on how to break out of bad habits in strokes of all kinds. Break out of them effortlessly by substituting new good habits. The same techniques work as well in life. A classic and it is easy to understand why it became a bestseller. Reading level 1.

Jaworski, Joseph *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership;* Berrett-Koehler,
1996

Jaworski is a successful lawyer from a distinguished family in the profession. His father was the Watergate Special Prosecutor. This book is a chronicle of his journey from hard charging, high living attorney to a thoughtful exponent of the principles of relationships and interconnectedness. He gives interesting accounts of how he came to realize that we create the world in which we live and how there is an underlying unity in the universe, which embraces animate and inanimate matter. Reading level 1.

Kauffman, Stuart *At Home in the Universe;* Oxford University, 1995

A MacArthur Fellow and a Santa Fe Institute professor, Kauffman is a renaissance scientist, flitting easily between physics, biology and the history of science. He makes a powerful case that evolution by natural selection, the essence of Darwinism, is only a part of reality. Complex entities, from megalopolises to mega corporations, “self organize” according to rules of complexity theory that are only beginning to be understood. There is profound hope for solving many of humankind’s most intractable problems if this is true. In any event, the book is fascinating reading. Reading level 2.

Kennedy, Dan *The Ultimate Success Secret*
Kimble and Kennedy Publishing, Austin, TX, 1999

This is a slim self-published book. The binding is poor, the pages aslant, the font varies

from page to page and the general production is of very poor quality. There are also typos galore, grammatical mistakes and virtually every other fault you can find in a book. Despite this the book is a gem. The author has had little formal education but has both keen observation and penetrating insight. He bootstrapped his way to financial success and has an impeccable reputation as a marketing wizard. This book is part “how-to” and part personal philosophy and well worth your while. Reading level 1.

Kohn, Alfie *Punished by Rewards*; Houghton-Mifflin, 1993

Our entire society is based on the concept of rewards and incentives. Teachers hand out stickers to kindergartners. Human Resources vice presidents agonize over merit pay raises. Best sellers advise managers to catch employees doing something right and then praise them. Kohn argues that this is a fundamentally flawed approach because punishment and reward are two sides of the same coin. In his view rewards rupture relationships, discourage risk-taking and actually reduce intrinsic motivation. He also propounds alternatives. Lots of footnotes and references. Reading level 1, frequently 2.

Korten, David C. *When Corporations Rule the World*; Berrett-Koehler, 1995

We operate under the assumption that liberal democracy, as we understand it, is the “best” form of government and the prescription to salvation for third world countries as well as fallen communists like the many countries released by the fall of the USSR. Korten, a former Harvard Business School professor, asserts that the market system spawned by this form of government is actually responsible for much of what ails humanity. Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are captives of the system and perpetuate it to the detriment of entire countries and peoples. Corporate colonialism has replaced the other kind and is greatly exacerbating inequality of all kinds. Many footnotes and references. Reading level 1.

Lakoff, George *Don't Think of an Elephant!*; Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004

Be warned that Lakoff is highly partisan and his Republican bashing could greatly irritate supporters of that US political party. He is a professor of linguistics and illustrates, in a wonderfully lucid way, how the language in which we describe a problem shapes our views of it. Though he never uses the term, this is a book about mental models and how they are formed and how they can be foisted on a gullible public by shrewd manipulators. Entertaining and revelatory. Reading level 1.

Morehouse, David *Psychic Warrior*; St. Martin's Press, 1996

In the cold war era the CIA funded a top secret psychic espionage program. Morehouse was one of the small number of trained psychics who were part of that program and he recounts his tales of the rigorous training and double blind tests of validity. His story is that he broke philosophically with the CIA because something as miraculous as remote viewing was a gift to humankind and he did not like it being used solely as an espionage tool. Facing court martial for improper disclosure of classified material, he was discharged from the army and generally harassed. Researchers at other institutions, such as the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Laboratory, have independently corroborated much of what he says - in terms of results obtainable. Morehouse's account is self-serving in some ways and you might want to look up Jim Schnabel's *Remote Viewers* for a

journalist's perspective of the same events. Reading level 1.

Phillips, Michael *The Seven Laws of Money*; Shambala, 1993

Phillips has had a checkered career in and out of corporate life. He was a bank executive and one of the persons who helped set up what is now Master Card. Takes a hard, candid look at some of our dilemmas regarding money and also posits some unusual rules that govern the money in our lives. See if you can relate to this: "The treadmill is a common example. People work hard to provide themselves and their families with worldly goods, new and better toys, better appliances. Its something we joke about so often – keeping up with the Joneses. Yet the process of working for more money so consumes our time and is considered so valid by our peers that we never stop to consider our values, our priorities." If this strikes a chord, read the book. Reading level 1.

Postman, Neil *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*; Penguin, 1985

Postman, like McLuhan before him, makes the case that the media is the message and that television, by its very nature, has eliminated reason and logic in our political debate. Attention spans are short and the types of involved debates that took place between Lincoln and Douglas – great examples here! – cannot even be conceived of today. Nor, when so much stress is on physical attractiveness, can someone like William Howard Taft, the many chinned, 300 pound 27th President of the USA even hope to be a serious contender regardless of the power of his ideas. Unfortunately the writing is dense, though Postman will probably say that this is precisely his point – we are incapable of using language with the facility of a literate 19th century citizen, the kind who would spend hours listening to the Lincoln-Douglas encounters. Reading level 2, frequently 3.

Robbins, John *The Food Revolution: How **Your Diet** Can Help Save Your Life And Our World*; Conari Press, 2001

The author is the son of the co-founder of Baskin Robbins and thus heir to one of the Great American Fortunes. The book is a searing indictment of factory farming as well as the treatment of animals generally. Factual and fact-based, the book makes the case that our food industry, especially the meat-poultry part of it, is destructive of your health and well-being. Throw in the moral dimension as well and the boat is truly foundering. He also lays out economic and environmental reasons for a change in our diet away from animals as food. Compelling presentation. Reading level 1.

Shroder, Tom *Old Souls: The Scientific Evidence for Past Lives*;
Simon & Schuster, 1999

Shroder, a *Washington Post* journalist, reports on the work of Dr. Ian Stevenson, professor at the University of Virginia, who has documented more than two thousand cases of reincarnation. Quite a skeptic when he began Shroder traipsed behind the good doctor in remote parts of the world and personally witnessed his research procedures and fieldwork. He found the evidence overwhelming and there were cases on many continents. Now he too echoes Dr. Stevenson's refrain, "Why?" Why will the scientific community still not accept such findings? Why is there reluctance to even study the subject more closely given the immense amount of groundwork that has already been

done? Scientists have open minds, right? Or do they? Reading level 1.

Singer, Peter *Writings on and Ethical Life*; HarperCollins 2000

A collection of essays from many of his previous works, this book will make you think. Singer is the poster child for animal rights and he decries 'speciesism' or the unthinking assumption that human life is more sacred than any other. He also has unconventional views on abortion, poverty and how to alleviate it and a host of similar topics. When Princeton offered him a professorship, wealthy donors like Steve Forbes threatened to withhold support. He certainly arouses strong feelings. His logic is unassailable and he lays his arguments on clearly articulated assumptions. Reading level 1.

Thought provokers: These are books that pose questions and provide solutions that can have very deep meaning. Quite possibly some of these belong in the life-changing or paradigm buster categories. In any case they will force you to confront the inner life that most of us tend to shy away from contemplating.

Allen, James *As a Man Thinketh*; Grosset & Dunlap, 1980

It will take you less than an hour to go through this slim volume, but it may well take a lifetime to implement the simple methods he suggests and reap their full harvest. *The Path to Prosperity* and *The Way of Peace* are companion volumes and equally good. It shows you how the inner world you create with your thoughts eventually manifests as the outer world that you experience. Reading level 1.

Barian, Mark *The Roar of the Ganges*; Eshwar, India, 1999

Available from the bookstore at www.arshabodha.com

Barian was a successful computer entrepreneur with a big house and all the trappings of the American Dream. He became a monk in a classic Indian tradition with a lifelong vow of poverty. This book is recounting of how this transformation occurred, but it is much more than that. It is also a lucid explanation of concepts such as the true nature of happiness and how it can be achieved. He has a wry sense of humor and makes his points with pithy stories. This book is a real gem.

Bettger, Frank *How I raised Myself From Failure to Success in Selling*
Prentice-Hall 1947

This book is a classic and has been reprinted many times. Reveals how the author, from modest beginnings, became hugely successful in a competitive field. There are many life lessons here about building confidence, how to approach life and how to craft your own future instead of being a pawn of fate. Wonderfully inspiring. Reading level 1.

Boldt, Laurence G. *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*; Arkana, 1993

The subtitle of this book is A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design and it is that and more. The best book, by far, that I have come across on how to identify what your strengths are, how to visualize your ideal job and how to go about bringing it into existence. Hundreds of inspiring quotes and dozens of thoughtful checklists. If you go through this book with care, it will assuredly be life changing in addition to thought

provoking. Reading level 1.

Bornstein, David *How to Change the World*; Oxford University Press, 2004

This is a book about social entrepreneurs and, in particular, about Bill Drayton and Ashoka. In the Ashoka model, a rigorous screening process identifies persons who have come up with innovative solutions to some pressing social problem. Overwhelmingly these persons arise from those affected, deeply and personally, by the problem. If the solutions are scalable and the social entrepreneur exceeds high bars for personal dedication and ethical behavior, he becomes an Ashoka Fellow and receives a three year stipend that frees him from earning a living while he further develops his idea. More than a thousand Ashoka Fellows of both sexes are quietly improving the lots of millions of persons around the world. Reading level 1.

Coelho, Paulo *The Alchemist*; HarperCollins, 1993

This is easy reading, but it is profound and has more layers than an onion. It is written like a parable – a form of exposition to which I am addicted – and talks about a shepherd boy who sets out to discover a great treasure and the strange personages who help him along the way. I hope that this book will inspire you to reach for your Personal Legend. You will understand when you read it. Reading level 1.

Fleischman, Paul R. *Cultivating Inner Peace*; Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam, 1997

The author tries to deliver on the title by defining “inner peace” and outlining simple steps that can be taken to reach the state where the noise and violence is all outside you. He makes reference to powerful role models such as John Muir, Walt Whitman, Gandhi, Thoreau and Tagore and draws lessons from their privations and methods of dealing with them. Reading level 1.

Fox, Matthew *The Reinvention of Work*; Harper, San Francisco, 1994

A defrocked Dominican priest, Fox is a cult-figure in his own right. He has written a thoughtful treatise on the meaning of work as opposed to jobs. Here is a quote: “...jobs are to work as leaves are to a tree. If a tree is ailing the leaves will fall. Fiddling with leaves is not going to cure an ailing tree; just as one cures an ailing tree by treating its roots, so we cure the crisis in work by treating the root meaning and purpose of work.” Drawing on the experience of mystics from all parts of the globe and tying it to a modern framework he offers an alternative vision of the definition of work, the compensation of work and its infusion with ritual and healing. Reading level 1.

Frankl, Victor E *Man’s Search for Meaning*; Pocket Books, 1984

There are many editions of this book. Just pick one that is revised and updated. Frankl lost most of his family in Nazi concentration camps and wondered why, in such horrific conditions, some persons blossomed beyond belief while others sank into a morass of depression and self-pity. Deeply compassionate he recognizes that guards, too, could be victims and details the risks some took to be kind to their charges. How many concentration camp inmates would be capable of saying: “It is apparent that the mere knowledge that a man was either a camp guard or a prisoner tells us almost nothing. Human kindness can be found in all groups, even those which as a whole it would be easy

to condemn.” And what is it that gives meaning to life? Read the book to find out.
Reading level 1.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon *Wherever you go, There you are;* Hyperion, 1994
A beautiful title, and the statement is indisputable. Kabat-Zinn is a stress reduction specialist with the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and talks about action, patience, simplicity, trust, generosity and similar topics. Chapters are brief and there are exercises at the end of many. Reading level 1.

Kapleau, Philip *Zen: Dawn in the West;* Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1980
Founder of the famous Zen center at Rochester, Roshi Kapleau made Zen accessible to Americans by stripping away the cultural outgrowths while retaining the essence. This book contains discourses, dialogues, answers to questions, letters and commentaries on texts. He gives practical instructions on such matters as what are unwholesome thoughts and how should one get rid of them. His earlier book, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, is a classic and also worth perusing. Reading level 1.

Kornfeld, Jack *A Path with Heart;* Bantam, 1993
Trained as a psychologist, Kornfeld has a deep appreciation of the human predicament. He talks about spiritual practice, the difficulties inherent in the path and methods of coping with them. The language is simple and the meditation exercises quite powerful. Good explanations of such phenomena as the “dark night” mentioned by St. John and descriptions of altered states. Reading level 1.

Krishnamurti, J. *Think on these things;* Harper & Row, 1964
An excellent compilation from public talks given by Krishnamurti in many settings. He fields questions on ambition, attention, simplicity of life, self discipline and like topics. He is penetratingly lucid and rather sharp at times but always unconventional. His goal is to break you out of mental stupor and his discourses on the nature of mind and thinking do a fine job of this. Reading level 1.

Lavenia, George *What You Think is What You Get: Realizing Your Creative Power and true Potential;* Earth Foundation, 1997
Another of those books that tell you that you create your world and everything in it. That you are responsible for anything in your life that is not working well and can change it at will. What makes it different is the simplicity of exposition and the power of the examples and the quotes, sayings and meditations. Savor it like a fine wine and spend hours following each train of thought it opens up. It will be time well spent. Reading level 1.

Millman, Dan *Way of the Peaceful Warrior: A Book that Changes Lives*
H J Kramer/New World Library, 2009
A reprint of the 1984 classic, this is an account of a gifted gymnast who came across a shadowy mystic called Socrates who ran a gas station close to the University of California at Berkeley. Millman was on the gymnastics team there and an Olympic contender but was quite far from personal mastery. The book is about how Socrates led him on a

journey of inner discovery. Absolutely fascinating and there is much wisdom here. Reading level 1.

Needleman, Jacob *Money and the Meaning of Life*; Doubleday Currency, 1991
Money is the great taboo in our society. We scramble after it and animatedly discuss what ballplayers, celebrities and chief executives make. We do not ever discuss what money means to us, what compromises we make in life in our own quest for it and how big a place it occupies in our thinking and actions. Needleman, a philosophy professor, discusses such topics as the limits of material happiness and whether money can buy love. This book will help you accept and come to terms with money in your own life. Reading level 1.

Sennet, Richard *The Corrosion of Character*; W. W. Norton, 1998
This is a series of essays and reports on interviews with bakers, barmaids and advertising executives. There are ruminations on the nature of work and time in our new post-industrial economy and how the advantage of flexibility may perhaps be more than overshadowed by the loss of a sense of purpose. Many questions, few answers, but then the author does not believe that there are any easy answers. Reading level 1.

Shore, Bill *The Cathedral Within*; Random House, 1999
A social entrepreneur himself, Shore talks about the need to give back, to do something that benefits society, to find meaning in one's life. Great cathedrals, such as the one in Milan, survive for centuries. This is because "Somehow, it had been both communicated and understood that it wasn't just that building a truly great cathedral would require everyone to share their strength, but rather that everyone sharing their strength would result in a truly great cathedral." Many stories of remarkable individuals who have inspired such effort and a great list of others. Reading level 1.

Thurman, Robert *Inner Revolution*; Riverhead Books, 1998
A one time buddhist monk, personally ordained by the Dalai lama, Thurman is now a professor at Columbia University and a mini celebrity in his own right. He has done as much as anyone to focus attention on the plight of Tibet and the atrocities it has been subjected to. In this book he argues that the "cool revolution" launched by the Buddha, as opposed to revolutions that involve violence and bloodshed, is a model worth emulating and a phenomenon that is still far from having run its course. He tellingly makes the point that military prowess cannot be equated with greater civilization and presents an alternate vision of how governments and citizens can relate to each other. Reading level 1.

Tolle, Eckhart *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*
New World Library, 1999
The story goes that Tolle, at age 29, underwent a profound spiritual experience that destroyed his previous identity and plunged him into an inward journey that led to enlightenment. There are certainly well documented instances of something similar in spiritual literature, but don't waste your time trying to figure out if this is 'true'. Focus on whether what he says is helpful to your journey. He has much to offer and the discussions of psychological time and the havoc it can wreak are profound. It has become a best seller

and well deserves to. Reading level 1.

Ullman, Robert and Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman *Moments of Enlightenment*

MJF Books, Fine communications, NY, 2001

This book was previously published as *Mystics, Masters, Saints and Sages*.

Enlightenment is a goal in many traditions and many are the travelers who have arrived there. Each serves as a unique beacon that appeals to still others. This book is a collection of the enlightenment experiences of several masters ranging from the supremely well known such as the Buddha, St. John of the Cross and Ramana Maharshi to the relatively unknown such as Suzanne Segal and A. H. Almaas. In most cases the accounts are in their own words and the cultural contexts come across clearly. Reading level 1.

Walsch, Neale Donald *Conversations with God: Book 1;* Putnam 1996

It purports to be a conversation with the Big Cheese - the author poses the questions and transcribes answers, which appear automatically. It has been on the New York Times bestseller list for nigh on two years. Despite these two strikes against it, it has profound insights into the nature of human suffering, life and liberation. Particularly good explanation of how thought leads to manifestation. Reading level 1.