



The Must-Have Books

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Do you have topic ideas? Comments or questions?

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Within my most recently completed writings (now before the publishers) “*How Humans Fight the Laws of Nature – and Lose*”, twenty three books were identified which I believed should adorn every thinking person’s bookshelf. However, this newsletter’s format will allow us to accommodate only eight book descriptions. Therefore, here are the top eight – one person’s list of la crème de la crème.

Buckingham, M. and Coffman, C., *First, Break all the Rules* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999)

Many business books are written by academic observers forming conclusions and hypotheses about a wide collection of information – often never having worked in the trenches themselves. Here is a pleasant and most useful exception. The sheer magnitude of data and the clever conclusions are mind boggling, taken as they are from thousands of ordinary workers. 20 years of observations lead to logical and practical descriptions for running any business well.

Wilkinson, Richard and Pickett, Kate, *The Spirit Level* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Books, 2009)

I have gone to great lengths to describe to others Wilkinson’s marvellous reading because of *The Spirit Level’s* profound impact on understanding human societies values and humankind, itself. The book’s message will take 10 or 20 years to sink in to the rest of human observers, if, in fact, it ever does. But you can take a lead by absorbing every word of it today.

Dawkins, Richard, *The Blind Watchmaker* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988)

Charles Darwin is one of science’s most significant individuals, but it is Richard Dawkins who explains evolution in a way we can readily understand. While the *Origin of Species* sits in my library, I would choose Dawkins first as a credible explanation of what evolution is all about. An equal alternative by the same author is: *Climbing Mount Improbable*.

Gleick, James, *Chaos--Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987)

The world runs on chaos and the sooner you know about it the better. Suddenly in this volume a whole host of world mysteries are answered in unexpected but totally coherent ways. Wait till you see the beauty of the natural images that chaos and its subset of fractals create. Everyone should know and understand chaos if they want to truly comprehend the science that drives our universe.

Diamond, J., *Guns, Germs and Steel*

(New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997)

The history of the modern world is put in perspective by explaining factors beyond any human’s control as outlined by Jared Diamond. How we got to where we are, is clearly defined as we get to understand how we all arrived at our various world locations.

Pinker, Steven, *The Language Instinct* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994)

A scientist who can write with clarity and humour, Pinker transports us into the evolution picture with his case that language, while for the most part learned, is in fact hard-wired into our brain long before we can utter a word. This is something we must understand if we are going to appreciate one of human’s key attributes, the ability to communicate.

Kohn, Alfie, *Punished by Rewards* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1999)

Alfie joins the ranks of saying what nobody wants to hear. And despite his persuasive arguments and support material, humans keep on pressing along the road of rewards when Mr. Kohn clearly demonstrates why it fails. My own sales staff sat in wonderment at the accuracy of Alfie’s pitch. But despite the covered ears in this world, all is not lost; if you have children, you will thrill at the alternative reference by Mr. Kohn: *Unconditional Parenting*.

Casanova, Giacomo Chevalier de Seingalt, *The History of my Life* (Paris: F. A. Brockhaus, 1821), Translated by Willard R. Trask, *The Adventures of Casanova*, (London: Folio Society, 2007)

We have all heard of this great lover. But the image most of us have is wrong. He enjoyed life and women, yes. But for the most part he made his mistakes in life – and many women used him. Yet he was an accomplished businessman and advisor to key politicians and governments in his time. Not only do you get the truth from the horse’s mouth of the world’s most famous lover, you get to see him as he really was – a hard-working, earnest, extremely intelligent individual, a person I think many clever people today, who dare to be different, can identify with.

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