Innovation Leadership Suggested Reading List

Favorite Books Regardless of Sub-Category:

1. ***"Only the Paranoid Survive"*** by Andy Grove
2. ***"Team of Teams"*** by Stan McChrystal
3. **"*Crossing the Chasm*"** by Geoffrey Moore
4. **"*Thinking Fast and Slow*"** by Daniel Kahneman

Books on Leadership and Leadership Related Topics:

- ***"Only the Paranoid Survive"*** by Andy Grove. This is my all-time favorite book about leadership, strategy, and innovation. It is a book that demonstrates the importance of (a) making hard decisions when hard decisions are required, and (b) recognizing when approaches that led to past successes must be abandoned in favor of new strategies. This is the book I find myself rereading most often - a book everyone involved with leading a technical organization should read at least once.

- **"*Team of Teams*"** by Stanley McChrystal. Exceptional insights about how to foster collaboration, accountability, and empowerment. If you're faced with a situation where there is a need to improve collaboration across organizational boundaries to deliver better results, this book is a "must read". It also provides many useful insights for how senior leaders can deliver exceptional results by creating the right conditions for empowered decision making up and down their chain of command.

- **"Aware – The Power of Seeing Yourself Clearly"** by Les Csorba. A book that demonstrates that the most successful leaders display a heightened awareness of their blind spots, as well as the courage to confront their opportunities for continued growth as a leader. This book will especially resonate with those working for energy producers since most of the examples are drawn from this industry.

- **"*Give and Take*"** by Adam Grant. In this book Adam Grant presents compelling evidence that "givers" – those who help others succeed – not only increase the well-being of those they help but also are more likely to achieve personal and organizational success (as long as they know how to identify and effectively deal with "takers" or if they work for an organization that does not tolerate "taker-type" behaviors).

- ***"The Art of Possibility"*** by Zander and Zander. A terrific book describing techniques for unlocking your potential and the potential of those around you.

- ***"The One Minute Manager"*** by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. This book tells a simplified yet effective story about the power of leaders setting goals, tracking results, and providing feedback. It is a story that emphasizes that when done well, this approach empowers followers to use their initiative to take the actions required to achieve the goals they've been tasked to deliver, which is a winning formula.

- ***"The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth"*** by Amy Edmondson. A book full of compelling observations and suggestions that can help leaders create a work environment that encourages employees to share not only their successes and mainstream ideas, but also their mistakes, concerns, and minority opinions. This book is an absolute "must read" for anyone involved with leading an organization grappling with complex challenges.

- **"The Wisdom of the Bullfrog – Leadership Made Simple (But Not Easy)**" by Admiral William McRaven. A book full of common-sense observations about behavioral aspects of leadership. The book's eighteen chapters are packed with stories that demonstrate why each highlighted behavior is crucial for success, either in specific situations or leadership in general, with a one-page summary of the attributes of a great leader being available online in a pdf file (LINK).

- **"*Leaders – Myth & Reality*"** by Stanley McChrystal, Jeff Eggers, and Jason Mangone. A book that explores the leadership practices of thirteen individuals who had a significant impact in their chosen field. The authors observe in the book's final chapters that it is often a "leadership team" that deserves credit for the accomplishments that society attributes to "great leaders", which is in my opinion a crucial observation – an observation that explains why leaders who can attract, develop, empower, and retain effective leaders and weed out "bad apples" are far more likely to be successful than leaders who believe nobody is as smart or effective as they are. If you have limited time, I'd suggest reading the last few chapters of this book first, after which you can cherry-pick which leaders to read about. And if, like me, the importance of "leadership teams" resonates with you, I suggest you read the books about Eisenhower and Lincoln recommended further on this document – both of whom were "great leaders" who built "great teams".

Books about Innovation (including both Invention and Adoption):

- "*Crossing the Chasm*" by Geoffrey Moore. A must read for anyone responsible for technology development and/or adoption, be that within a major company or as an entrepreneur starting up a technically based business. The "chasm" that Moore describes is the graveyard of many promising "technical successes" that never achieved broad-scale adoption. Moore's book thankfully contains excellent guidance on how to focus efforts to maximize the probability of successfully crossing the proverbial adoption chasm.

- **"*Diffusion of Innovation*"** by Everett Rogers. Seminal study of how technical innovations are adopted within industries, communities, and societies. This book contains many useful insights regarding barriers that slow or cause adoption to fail. It is also the original source for technology adoption related models that segment human populations into innovators, early adopters, etc.

- **"*Technological Revolutions and Financial Capital*"** by Carlotta Perez. A book filled with fascinating observations regarding the interaction between technological revolutions and financial capital, with flows of capital being seen as both facilitating rapid technological advancements, but also creating bubbles that are bound to burst. This book helps one understand why hype and overvaluation are endemic when new technologies create industry or economy-wide disruptions, and why disruption is critical for moving the world forward.

- **"*Range*"** by David Epstein. A book that dispels the myth that one must deeply specialize to deliver value through innovation. I recommend this book for anyone working with specialists. FYI - I especially loved the idea that it is "polymaths" – people with at least one deep specialty but also a broad interest in learning about all things – who are most likely to deliver breakthroughs.

- **"*The Man from the Future – the Visionary Ideas of John von Neumann*"** by Ananyo Bhattacharya. A riveting exploration of the personal traits and historical circumstances that enabled John von Neumann to make amazing contributions across a wide range of disciplines, from computers to game theory, nuclear weapons to quantitative economics, evolutionary biology to artificial intelligence, and quantum mechanics to human brain function. This book pairs well with David Epstein's book "*Range*" in that von Neumann was a polymath who was constantly adding to his knowledge, diving into new areas of research, and by doing so, finding connections that led to breakthroughs that amazed his colleagues and transformed our world. Interestingly, the book also provides evidence supportive of Adam Grant's observation in his book "*Give and Take*" that "givers" – those who help others succeed – not only increase the well-being of those they help but also are more likely to achieve personal and organizational success since von Neumann epitomized Grant's giver archetype.

- **"The Silo Effect – The Peril of Expertise and the Promise of Breaking Down Barriers"** by Gillian Tett. This book presents compelling evidence of how brilliant people can make horrible decisions and perform poorly if specialization leads to fragmentation in terms of how people organize themselves, interact with others, and understand the world. It also presents examples of how collaboration across discipline boundaries often leads to innovative outcomes – outcomes that none of the disciplines involved could have achieved on their own. This book complements and reenforces ideas presented in several other books on this list, including but not limited to "*Team of Teams*", "*Range*", "*Thinking Fast and Slow*", "*A Whole New Mind*", and "*The Tipping Point*". In fact, if you can commit the time, I'd strongly recommend reading this entire collection of books – the observations they contain enormously impacted my thinking about leadership and innovation.

- "*Digital Transformation*" by Thomas Siebel. A book that describes how the intersection of four digital technologies – the Internet of Things (IOT), Big Data, Cloud Computing, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) – is transforming businesses and the world at large. If you only have time to read one book to understand why digital transformation is a "big deal", this is the one I recommend since it stresses the importance of being able to build digital systems from multiple technologies rather than focusing on the impact of a single "technology", such as AI, which, unfortunately, is not something that is widely appreciated or commonly discussed in technical literature.

- "*Chip Wars*" by Chris Miller. In this book Miller covers the history of semiconductors, from conception shortly after the end of World War II to the present, where in Miller's estimation, semiconductors have become "the world's most critical technology". This book nicely compliments Thomas Siebel's book "*Digital Transformation*" and Andy Grove's book "*Only the Paranoid Survive*". It contains both sweeping overviews of technological trends and interesting details about specific chip design and manufacturing breakthroughs. I read it over a weekend. Suspect you'll be similarly engrossed.

- **"*The Innovator's Dilemma*"** by Clayton Christensen. A fascinating book that describes why large companies tend to do well with generating and profiting from incremental or sustaining innovation, but often stumble when disruptive technologies sweep through an industry. This book is complimentary to "*Only the Paranoid Survive*" and "*The Strategy Paradox*".

- **"*The Illusion of Innovation*"** by Elliott Parker. I loved this book, which builds on Clayton Christensen's groundbreaking observations in *The Innovator's Dilemma*. In his book, Parker succinctly describes why well-run, big organizations tend to be extremely good at delivering outstanding results by focusing on what they know how to do well, but struggle to deliver innovative results other than incremental improvements. This causes them to dramatically underperform during periods of disruptive change. To combat this, organizations need to avoid shackling innovation efforts with efficiency goals that make sense for their core business and rather focus on experimenting broadly and quickly.

- ***"The Tipping Point"*** by Malcolm Gladwell. A book containing many powerful insights about how big things happen because of small events or actions, including the importance of "connectors" within an organization or society. Gladwell's insights demonstrate the value of developing an extensive personal network such that you become a "connector" across organizational boundaries. Gladwell also demonstrates the need for "salesmanship" if new ideas are to flourish (i.e., reach a tipping point).

- **"The Idea Factory"** by Jon Gertner. A fascinating exploration of the factors that made Bell Labs one of the most innovative enterprises of the 20th century. This book is packed with profound insights about innovation – both with regards to elements that tend to accelerate innovation (e.g., a focus on finding "good problems" to work on) and why innovation requires more than creativity (i.e., from a technology perspective, an effort should only be labelled as being innovative once a viable product or process has been developed and adopted at scale). It also provides vivid details about the many preeminent scientists and engineers who worked at Bell Labs, individuals who collectively laid the groundwork for almost all the digital advancements achieved over the past one hundred years.

- **"The Code Breaker"** by Walter Isaacson. A well told story about how a series of technological advancements led to the development of transformational gene editing capabilities – capabilities that are likely to have a profound impact on our world during the remainder of the twenty-first century. And while this is a fabulous example of how innovation works, with multiple modest-scale advancements leading to a breakthrough of enormous importance, it is also a story worth reading simply to learn how easily and cheaply mankind can now edit life's genetic code.

- **"*Where Good Ideas Come From*"** by Steven Johnson. A book that presents a historical look at innovation through the ages that is loaded with useful observations and practical advice. This is a must read for anyone charged with leading a technology organization or fostering innovation within an organization.

- **"*The Act of Creation*"** by Arthur Koestler. Insights into the conscious and unconscious processes underlying scientific discovery, artistic originality, and comic inspiration. Koestler demonstrates patterns of thinking that underlie all creative activities. Excellent read through page 409. Pages 410 to 708 can be skipped without losing value.

- **"*The Nature of Technology: What it is and how it Evolves*"** by W. Brian Arthur. A book that presents a comprehensive theory of innovation, written by an individual who has delivered innovative results and spent most of his life thinking about innovation.

- **"*Serious Creativity: Using the Power of Lateral Thinking to Create New ideas*"** by Edward de Bono. This book summarizes much of de Bono's life work about creativity. It contains both insights into the mechanics of creativity as well as practical techniques for enhancing one's personal creativity and the creativity of a group.

- **"*Originals*"** by Adam Grant. A book that describes methods to generate innovative ideas and improve the odds that when you or your organization challenges conventional wisdom, you will secure a "good outcome".

- **"*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*"** by Thomas Kuhn. Kuhn's work deeply influenced thinking about how breakthroughs are achieved in science and technology. It also popularized the term "paradigm shift". A must read for anyone interested in the evolution of scientific thought or identifying paradigms that exist in the world that are ripe for being toppled (such as the paradigm that it was impossible to extract hydrocarbons from shales at commercial rates, which was a paradigm strongly held within the oil & gas industry for almost 150 years, but was disproven by the unconventional reservoir revolution).

- **"*A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers will Rule the Future*"** by Daniel Pink. Insights into how the "wiring" of our minds impacts creativity, with emphasis on the importance of being able to link ideas and create compelling "stories". These traits seemingly are becoming more and more important as artificial intelligence supplants the need for humans in "left-brain" focused activities, so "right-brain thinking is definitely a topic worth exploring.

- **"The Information"** by James Gleick. A masterful history of how mankind's ever-increasing ability to manipulate information/data has enabled enormous progress but has also created challenges. Well worth reading to gain an appreciation for how many technologies that today seem antiquated (e.g., telegraphs) caused disruptive change when introduced – change that created enormous opportunity but also required humans to adapt economic, political, and other systems.

- **"*Leading Digital*"** by George Westerman, Didier Bonnet and Andrew McAfee. A book that provides guidance on how digital technology can be used to improve performance of companies in "traditional industries" (i.e., industries that are not "high-tech" in the sense that this term is applied to purely digital industries).

- **"Invention and Innovation – A Brief History of Hype and Failure"** by Vaclav Smil. A book that cautions the reader to remember that not all "inventions" result in commercially useful products, and that "techno-optimism" can create blind spots that lead to unrealistic expectations. A must read for leaders managing technology development programs, especially leaders (like me) who have an optimistic outlook and are prone to seeing more of the "pros" associated with a new idea than the "cons". This book is full of examples of how inventors often overlook critical challenges and promoters overhype ideas. It also points out that the process of turning a "good idea" into a workable product is fraught with difficulties, usually requiring far more time and dollars than originally perceived, and not infrequently ending in the idea failing to fulfill its promise.

Books about Strategy:

- ***"The Strategy Paradox"*** by Michael Raynor. A book describing an approach for building strategies that accounts for the fact that the future is unknowable, and therefore uncertain; Raynor's greatest contribution is that he shows how strategies that are likely to maximize the profit of a company can also lead to horrifically bad outcomes if the world turns out differently than expected.

- ***"Competitive Strategy"*** by Michael Porter. Much has been written over the past three decades about strategy formulation best practices and methods for securing competitive advantage; this book is the text that forms the foundation for most modern theory and observations about these topics.

- **"*Playing to Win – How Strategy Really Works*"** by A.G. Lafley and Roger L. Martin. Clear and concise description of why developing strategies is relatively easy, but executing a winning strategy is hard. The book also describes the importance of making choices even if it is unclear what is the "best choice". Appendix B of this book is a must read for people in the E&P industry – being one of the best descriptions of why low cost of supply is crucial for long-term success in a commodity business.

- **"*Good Strategy Bad Strategy*"** by Richard Rumelt. Many excellent insights regarding what makes a strategy either effective or not; Rumelt suggests that the kernel of good strategy is: i) a *diagnosis* that defines or explains the nature of the challenge; ii) a *guiding policy* for dealing with the challenge; and iii) a set of *coherent actions* designed to carry out the guiding policy.

- **"The Crux"** by Richard Rumelt. This is Rumelt's latest book about strategy (published in 2022). In the book Rumelt emphasizes that strategies should not be built in service of achieving a high-minded goal, vision, or mission statement (e.g., double the size of the company within 10 years), but rather be based upon a detailed diagnosis of challenges and opportunities facing an organization, with the most effective strategies being ones that focus upon a single important challenge or opportunity ("the crux") that the organization has a reasonable chance of succeeding at in a relatively short period of time (a few years at most). The book is full of examples of what constitutes effective and ineffective strategies, which is useful for strategy practitioners to digest. It also provides recommendations for who should be involved in building a strategy and a list of tools that can help a team charged with building a strategy be successful.

- **"*The Outsiders*"** by William Thorndike. This book chronicles the investment prowess of eight exceptional CEOs, who by defying Wall Street conventional wisdom, created enormous value for their shareholders. The CEOs profiled tended to: 1) concentrate on cash flow, not earnings or other measures, 2) were disciplined capital investors, being willing to sit on the sideline if there were no good choices available, and 3) focused on Total Shareholder Return as the primary metric to judge performance.

Books About Framing, Decision Making, and Planning:

- **"*Thinking Fast and Slow*"** by Daniel Kahneman, a past winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics. One of the best collections of insights that I have ever read into how our minds work. The book is packed with stories and observations that will help make you a better decision maker; and also help you better understand "thinking processes", thereby improving your ability to assess situations and develop robust options and recommendations. A must read for anyone interested in leadership.

- **"Quit – The Power of Knowing When to Walk Away"** by Annie Duke. A book that blows up the idea that "winners never quit, and quitters never win". This is a must read for decision analysis practitioners, leaders of exploration and technology development programs, and anyone else involved with making choices involving high degrees of uncertainty. The book emphasizes the importance of pre-identifying "offramps" so as to avoid "escalation of commitment" to a losing proposition and makes clear that often making a decision to quit is as or more important than making good choices around what to start (which was certainly the case for ConocoPhillips with regards to portfolio management during the 2000s and 2010s, since although the investments that built the company's strong positions in the Eagle Ford, Bakken, and Permian Basin during that period tend to be the portfolio decisions most easily recalled and spoken about, the concurrent disposition tens of billions of dollars' worth of high cost of supply assets was equally important to the company's success).

- **"*Being Wrong*"** by Kathryn Schulz. A book that contains many excellent insights about decision traps created by people's desire to avoid being wrong as well as observations about how to benefit from making mistakes. Complimentary to Annie Duke's book "Quit".

- ***"The Signal and The Noise"*** by Nate Silver. A book about decision making that explores why humans tend to do a poor job of understanding risk and uncertainty, and therefore make many poor decisions. Silver suggests that the use of Bayesian analysis is the single most important action we can take to improve predictive capabilities and demonstrates why this is so.

- ***"The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable"*** by Nassim Taleb. A book that will convince you – if you are not already convinced - that human beings are horribly bad at assessing the probability of uncertain events, which explains much of the challenge associated with formulating strategies and assessing the value of potential investments.

- **"Antifragile"** by Nassim Taleb. A book full of powerful observations and useful insights about probabilities, decision making, estimation errors, fragility of complex systems, and how progress is (most often) made via trial and error. This book contains much original (and unconventional thinking). And while there are parts of it that are in my opinion "too extreme" (e.g., not everyone who works for a corporation is an "empty suit"), there are innumerable treasures to be found between its covers, which makes this book a must read for those involved with high stakes decision making.

- ***"A Man for All Markets"*** by Edward Thorp. An autobiography by an exceptional decision maker who used his deep understanding of mathematics to turn the odds in his favor in Las Vegas and on Wall Street. This book drives home the point that one should avoid "investments" that have negative Expected Monetary Values (EMVs) and demonstrates the importance of quantifying risks and uncertainties rather than relying on "gut feel".

- "Risk" by Stanley McChrystal and Anna Butrico. While Nassim Taleb's book stresses the importance of understanding antifragility – that is, situations or positions that benefit from uncertainty and disorder – this book describes how to make systems and individual decisions more robust by taking actions that allow one to manage risks, even risks that are poorly understood or unknown. It is therefore complementary to Taleb's book, and if read in parallel with "Antifragility", provides a playbook for how to maximize chances of success, avoid negative outcomes, and minimize negative impacts.

- **"*Managing the Unexpected*"** by Karl Weick and Karen Sutcliffe. Fascinating observations about how certain high reliability organizations develop the capacity to manage unexpected threats. This book is complementary to Nassim Taleb's book "Antifragile" and Stanley McChrystal's book "Risk".

- ***"Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction"*** by Philip Tetlock. A book that demonstrates that prediction accuracy does not require complicated formulas or massive amounts of computing power, but rather is more likely to be achieved when individuals have the discipline to think probabilistically, seek out disconfirming information, collaborate with others – especially those with different backgrounds or skills – frequently update hypotheses, and learn from failure.

- **"The Myth of the Rational Market"** by Justin Fox. A book that demonstrates markets are seldom efficient and are more prone to bubbles and panics than most economists are willing to admit. This book compliments both Nassim Taleb's observations in "Black Swan" and those of Daniel Kahneman in "Thinking Fast and Slow". It is a must read for anyone whose job involves forecasting the future and/or building resilient strategies.

- "**The Hour Between Dog and Wolf – How Risk Taking Transforms Us, Body and Mind**" by John Coates. A book that describes why human physiology tends to make people irrationally exuberant when times are good and unduly pessimistic during bad times. The author uses stories from his time as a Wall Street trader to highlight how these swings happen even to people who are skilled investors. His training as a medical doctor allows him to tie behaviors back to changes in the body's chemistry and human evolution. A useful read for decision makers and anyone else who needs to make high stake decisions through a series of up and down cycles.

- **"Framers"** by Kenneth Cukier, Victor Mayer-Schonberger, and Francis de Vericourt. A book that emphasizes the importance of effective framing (and reframing) when dealing with complex decisions or intractable problems. The book emphasizes human's innate advantage over computers (including AI) at this critical function, and suggests ways in which individuals, organizations, and societies can improve their framing abilities. If read along with Adam Grant's book "Think Again", one will have a good grounding in this important topic. Strongly recommended for decision analysis professionals.

- **"Think Again – The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know"** by Adam Grant. A book that demonstrates that in today's complex and fast-moving world, one needs to seek out new information and be prepared to change one's mind to improve one's decisions, effectiveness, knowledge, and relationships. A book packed with tips and tools to help you update your own views, open other people's minds to new ideas, and build learning organizations.

- ***"Decision Analysis for Petroleum Exploration"*** by Paul Newendorp. Classic reference book about oil and gas drilling investment decisions and decision analysis techniques; covers virtually everything from basic probability theory to how to calculate financial measures of merit.

- ***"How to Lie with Statistics"*** by Darrell Huff. While the examples in this book are out of date – because the book was written in the 1950's – the underlying observations it contains about how it is possible to misinterpret statistics are critical lessons all leaders need to learn. Importantly, the section about "tricks" utilized to construct graphs, charts, and tables in such a way as to support a particular point of view will help you spot lies and misrepresentations that might otherwise be overlooked.

- ***"Asking is Better than Telling"*** by Katherine Rosback. Exceptional description of how facilitative questioning can lead to improved outcomes. This is a good reference book for leaders grappling with complex issues and/or challenging team dynamics.

- **"The Math of Life and Death – 7 Mathematical Principles that Shape our Lives"** by Kit Yates. Much as "Thinking Fast and Slow" provides insights into how the workings of the human mind can cause people to make poor decisions and judgements, and the book "How to Lie with Statistics" supplies background for spotting statistics-based errors, misrepresentations and lies, this book demonstrates how mathematical principles, including some statistical ones, are often misunderstood or misused. If you don't have time to read the entire book, chapters 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are likely to be of greatest value.

Books about Maximizing Your Individual Effectiveness:

- **"*Learned Optimism – How to Change Your Mind and Your Life*"** by Martin Seligman. Seligman was a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania when he wrote this book. It contains an exceptional set of observations regarding how to ensure your "conversations with yourself" help rather than hinder achieving what you want in life. Interestingly, Seligman was Angela Duckworth's thesis advisor in university, with many of the observations she makes in the book "*Grit*" having ties back to Seligman's teachings.

- **"*Mindset*"** by Carol Dweck. Superb description of how fundamental beliefs about one's ability to learn new skills impacts performance; Dweck was a professor at Stanford at the time she wrote this book; it contains exceptional insights and is well written; in the book Dweck suggests that building an organization containing people with a "growth mindset" should be a priority for leaders.

- **"*Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*"** by Angela Duckworth. In this book, the author makes a persuasive case that "grit" is far more important than talent in determining long-term success. Interestingly, this concept is consistent with and complementary to those contained in the books "*Mindset*", "*Learned Optimism*" and "*Power of Habit*". It is therefore well worth taking the time to read all four books.

- ***"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People"*** by Stephen Covey. A good description of personal habits that most highly effective individuals learn to master during their lifetime; Covey's observations are not unique – many date back to Roman times – but the concepts are presented clearly and are supported with memorable stories.

- "**Peak Mind**" by Amishi Jha. A fascinating book that describes the "science of attention", including results derived from brain-imaging studies in the lab and "field-testing" of soldiers, firefighters, athletes, healthcare and business professionals, and students. The book explains how one can more fully harness the full power of one's attention, debunks common assumptions about how our minds work, and provides easy to adapt mental exercises designed to improve performance. In a world in which there are ever increasing sources of distraction, investing time to learn how to focus on what's important is invaluable. This book helped me, and I believe you may find it helpful as well.

- ***"Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ"*** by Daniel Goleman. This book makes the case for emotional intelligence being the strongest determinant of human success, with emotional intelligence defined in terms of self-awareness, altruism, and empathy; all are skills important for leaders to possess.

- ***"Don't Do. Delegate!"*** by James Jenks & John M. Kelly. A book about how to develop your staff through delegation; and avoid micromanaging them. This is a must read for those new to managing people. It will not only help you avoid traps many new managers fall into, but also help you free up time to work on those tasks that can't or shouldn't be delegated, thereby increasing your effectiveness.

- **"*The Power of Habit"*** by Charles Duhigg. A fascinating study of how willpower can be developed and harnessed to achieve incredible outcomes by creating positive habits.

- **"*That's Not What I Meant*"** by Deborah Tannen. Exceptional insights regarding how differences between people's backgrounds impact the quality of communication that occurs between them. Tannen's book explores how cultural, regional, ethnic and gender differences contribute to different conversational styles that can cause misunderstandings to arise and relationships to be strained or broken. Tannen went on to write several books about how communication impacts relationships between men and women. This first book of hers is in my opinion the best since it looks at communication challenges from a much broader perspective.

- **"*Lean In*"** by Sheryl Sandberg. Insights regarding how "leaning in" can make a difference regarding career progression and achieving good outcomes. Written from the perspective of encouraging under-represented groups to fully engage. However, it contains useful insights for everyone. And the book will also help those in the "majority" understand challenges those in minority groups face.

Books about Great Leaders:

- ***"Lincoln"*** by David Herbert Donald. Exceptionally well researched description of Lincoln's life and the events that created one of our nation's most capable leaders – a man who dealt with enormous complexity, showed tremendous resolve in the face of much negative news, and utilized his words and actions to unite a strongly divided nation to achieve an exceptional outcome.

- ***"Team of Rivals"*** by Doris Kearns Goodwin. A wonderful description of how Lincoln was self-confident enough to surround himself with strong advisors, many of whom were his political rivals and had opinions that differed from his own, and how he effectively utilized each individual's strengths to deliver difficult to achieve results.

- ***"Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words"*** by Douglas Wilson. A book that demonstrates how Lincoln utilized written and spoken words to great advantage; with emphasis on how he developed written and oral communication skills during childhood and his time as a lawyer and local politician in Illinois, and applied these capabilities with tremendous success while president.

- **"Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom"** by David W. Blight. An extraordinary book about an extraordinary man – Frederick Douglass – one of America's great orators and advocates for equal rights for all people regardless of race or gender (although surprisingly, he saw Native Americans as being subhuman).

- ***"Churchill: A Biography"*** by Roy Jenkins. The best description that I have read of the experiences that shaped Winston Churchill, with special emphasis on the characteristics that made him a great leader.

- ***"Never Give In: The Best of Winston Churchill's Speeches"*** A compilation of Churchill's classic speeches; Churchill was a master of utilizing words to both cause action to occur and to shape how people viewed events; well worth reading – and reading again, for Churchill, like Lincoln, did not utilize speech writers, but rather personally crafted the words he used to influence the course of history.

- ***"The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower"*** by Stephen Ambrose. This is my favorite book about "Ike". It not only tells the story of his impact on the course of World War II, but also superbly summarizes the leadership skills that made Eisenhower one of our country's greatest generals and enabled him to lead a highly diverse coalition in defeating Nazi Germany. For those of you who don't have time to read this book in full, I have generated a summary using excerpts from the book that highlight Eisenhower's leadership practices. Please feel to reach out to me if you'd like me to send you a digital copy (but please also buy the book!).

- ***"Eisenhower: Soldier and President"*** by Stephen Ambrose. A one volume description of Eisenhower's life, from boyhood, through World War II, to the presidency and into retirement.

- **"*Leadership: In Turbulent Times*"** by Doris Kearns Goodwin. This book describes the qualities that differentiated four of America's greatest political leaders – Abraham Lincoln, Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson. After reading the book you will appreciate that leadership is a learnable skill, one that can be acquired if one learns from experience and is willing to persevere when setbacks arise.

Books about Organizations Achieving Amazing Results:

- **"Reentry: SpaceX, Elon Musk, and the Reusable Rockets that Launched a Second Space Age"** by Eric Berger. The story of SpaceX told from the perspective of the engineers and scientists who designed, built, tested, and launched the rockets. A recurring theme throughout the book is how important low cost, rapid experimentation was for enabling the breakthroughs that SpaceX achieved. Interestingly, while Musk's vision, drive, risk tolerance, and showmanship clearly were important, this book demonstrates that great accomplishments generally result from the assembly of a great team rather than relying on the genius of one person (which is a theme Stan McChrystal emphasizes in his book "Leaders – Myth & Reality").

- ***"Failure Is Not an Option: Mission Control from Mercury to Apollo 13 and Beyond"*** by Gene Kranz. A wonderful first-person description of the early days of NASA, with special emphasis on the power of commitment for achieving exceptional results. This book contains the best description that I have read of how an engineering focused endeavor of enormous scale and complexity overcame significant challenges to achieve extraordinary results.

- ***"Flight: My Life in Mission Control"*** by Chris Kraft. Details about decision making processes and the organizational capabilities required for America to win the race to land a man on the moon.

- **"*The Man Who Ran the Moon: James E. Webb, NASA, and the Secret History of Project Apollo*"** by Piers Bizony. The story about the man who steered the expansion of NASA from a minor collection of research labs to one of the grandest enterprises the world has ever known.

Books to Help Improve One's Communication Skills:

- **"*Lend me your Ears*"** by William Safire. A collection of great speeches, with observations about what made each speech particularly powerful by William Safire, who is one of America's most influential political columnists and most elegant explicators of the English language.

- **"*Story*"** by Robert McKee. A classic book that provides guidance on how to construct stories, with the guidance contained in this book being invaluable for crafting communications about complex topics in the business world given that stories are an extremely memorable and effective form of communication.

- **“*There’s No Such Thing as Public Speaking*”** by Jeanette and Roy Henderson. Loads of tips about how to improve the effectiveness of speeches and presentations. Useful for both beginners and seasoned public speakers.

Greg Leveille
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Recently Added: Aware – The Power of Seeing Yourself Clearly