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QUESTION TOPICS

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Please also add some details on the book and why you think it's mind-expanding.

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ANSWER WIKI

Last updated: 31 July 2013 from answers with 100+ upvotes

History

[From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life 1500 to the Present: Jacques Barzun](#)

[The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires: Tim Wu](#)

[The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic--and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World: Steven Johnson](#)

[Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond](#)

[Why the West Rules--for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future by Ian Morris \(thanks to Quora User for recommendation\)](#)

[A Farewell to Alms by Gregory Clark](#)

Design

[A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction: Christopher Alexander](#)

Politics

[The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion: Jonathan Haidt](#)

Evolution

[Evolution for Everyone: How Darwin's Theory Can Change the Way We Think About Our Lives: David Sloan Wilson](#)

Philosophy and Psychology

[The Beginning of Infinity by David Deutsch](#)

[Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman](#)

[Ecological Rationality by Gerd Gigerenzer](#)

[The Stuff of Thought by Steven Pinker](#)

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[The Truth About Everything by Matthew Stewart](#)

[Everything Must Go by James Ladyman and Don Ross](#)

[Antifragile by Nassim Taleb](#)

[Metamagical Themas by Douglas Hofstadter.](#)

[Games People Play: The Basic Handbook of Transactional Analysis: Eric Berne](#)

[Metaphors We Live By: George Lakoff, Mark Johnson](#)

[The Hero with a Thousand Faces: Joseph Campbell](#)

[Influence - The Psychology of Persuasion by Robert B. Cialdini](#)

[Education and Significance of Life by Jiddu Krishnamurti](#)

Problem Solving

[How to Solve It: G. Polya](#)

Puzzle Books

[What Is the Name of This Book?: The Riddle of Dracula and Other Logical Puzzles: Raymond M. Smullyan](#)

Sexuality

[Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means for Modern](#)

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- ★ [What should a self-taught programmer read and learn?](#)
- ★ [What is the one book you have read that changed your life? Why or how did it change it?](#)
- ★ [Which books are like *A Short History of Nearly Everything*?](#)
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[Relationships: Christopher Ryan, Cacilda Jetha](#) .

[For balance: Sex at Dusk: Lifting the Shiny Wrapping from Sex at Dawn: Lynn Saxon: 9781477697283: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Education

[How Children Fail: John Holt](#) .

[Wounded by School: Recapturing the Joy in Learning and Standing Up to Old School Culture: Kirsten Olson](#) .

[Summerhill School: A New View of Childhood: A. S. Neill, Albert Lamb](#) .

[Mindstorms: Children, Computers, And Powerful Ideas: Seymour A. Papert](#) .

Writing

[Hat Box: The Collected Lyrics of Stephen Sondheim: Stephen Sondheim](#) .

[Clear and Simple as the Truth: Francis-Noël Thomas, Mark Turner](#) .

Theatre

[A Practical Handbook for the Actor: Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nathaniel Pollack, Robert Previtio, Scott Zigler, David Mamet](#) .

[The Actor and the Target: Declan Donnellan](#) .

[How to Stop Acting: Harold Guskin](#) .

[Different Every Night: Putting the play on stage and keeping it fresh: Mike Alfreds](#) .

[Notes on Directing: 130 Lessons in Leadership from the Director's Chair: Frank Hauser, Russell Reich](#) .

[Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre: Keith Johnstone](#) .

Shakespeare

[Thinking Shakespeare: A How-to Guide for Student Actors, Directors, and Anyone Else Who Wants to Feel More Comfortable With the Bard: Barry Edelstein](#) .

[Hamlet in Purgatory: Stephen Greenblatt](#) .

[Hamlet and Revenge: Eleanor Prosser](#) .

[Shakespeare's Metrical Art: George T. Wright](#) .

Fiction

[If on a winter's night, a traveller by Italo Calvino](#)

[Sense and Sensibility](#)

[The Brothers Karamazov](#)

[Pride and Prejudice](#)

[Emma](#)

[Wuthering Heights](#)

[House of Mirth](#)

[One Hundred Years of Solitude](#)

[One flew over the Cuckoo's Nest](#)

[Watership Down](#)

[Cat's Eye](#)

[Bleak House](#)

[Lonesome Dove](#)

[Catcher in the Rye](#)

[The Queen's Gambit](#)

[1Q84: Haruki Murakami, Jay Rubin, Philip Gabriel](#) .

[War and Peace: Leo Tolstoy](#) .

[The Great Gatsby: F. Scott Fitzgerald](#) .

Technical

[How to Find a Habitable Planet by James Kasting \(more technical\)](#)

[Scientific Genius by Dean Simonton \(more technical\)](#)

[The Extended Phenotype by Richard Dawkins \(more technical\)](#)

Other / Not Yet Categorized

[Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence: Hans Moravec](#) .

[In the Blink of an Eye Revised 2nd Edition: Walter Murch](#) .

[The Age of Insight: The Quest to Understand the Unconscious in Art, Mind, and Brain, from Vienna 1900 to the Present: Eric Kandel](#) .

[Gödel, Escher, Bach](#) ;

[Thinking, Fast and Slow](#)

[Predictably Irrational](#)

[Darwin's Dangerous Idea](#)

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[Amazon.com: The Selfish Gene](#)
[The Black Swan](#)
[Antifragile](#)
[The Symbolic Species](#)
[The User Illusion](#)
[You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation: Deborah Tannen](#)
[The Little Schemer - 4th Edition: Daniel P. Friedman, Matthias Felleisen, Duane Bibby, Gerald J. Sussman](#)
Steppenwolf, and *The Glass Bead Game* by Hermann Hesse
The Wall, by Jean-Paul Sartre
The Bone People, by Keri Hulme
A Brief History of Time, by Stephen Hawking
Godel, Escher, Bach, by Douglas Hofstadter
Confessions of a Mask, by Yukio Mishima
The City and The City, by China Mieville
Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems and the Economic World by Kevin Kelly
Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies by Jared Diamond
The Symbolic Species: The Co-Evolution of Language and the Brain by Terrence W. Deacon
At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity by Stuart Kauffman
The Discoverers by Daniel J. Boorstin
Letters from the Earth: Uncensored Writings by Mark Twain
Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy by William Barrett
Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid by Douglas R. Hofstadter
The Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau
 Personal favorite: *Born to Run* - Christopher McDougall
 Best quick read: *E-Myth* Michael Gerber
 Best core idea: *The Black Swan* - Nassim Taleb
 Best fiction story: *Deception Point* Dan Brown
 Most inspiring (entrepreneurial): *Losing My Virginity* - Richard Branson;
Zappos Delivering Happiness - Tony Hsieh
 Most interesting (behavioral): *Why We Make Mistakes* - Joseph Hallinan
 Most interesting (business): *Founders at work* - Jess Livingston
 Most interesting (psychological): *Mindstorms* - Seymour Papert
 Most dense with information: *Economic Facts and Fallacies* - Thomas Sowell;
Short History of Nearly Everything Bill Bryson
 Most valuable (entrepreneurial): *Rework* Jason Fried; *Four Steps to Epiphany* Steve Blank;
 Most valuable (growth stage business): *Good To Great* - Jim Collins
 Most empowering: *48 laws of Power* Robert Greene; *The art of war* Tsu
 Most sexual: *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell* - Tucker Max
 Most disappointing: *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health* Andrew Weil
 Most useless: *How I Made My First Million on the Internet* EWEN CHIA
 Most overrated: *Super Freakonomics* Levitt & Dubner; *The Knack* Norm Brodsky
48 Laws of Power Robert Greene
The Black Swan Nassim Nicholas Taleb
The Power of Full Engagement Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz
The Strategy and Tactics of Pricing (5th Edition) Thomas Nagle
Leaving Microsoft to Change the World John Wood
Losing My Virginity Richard Branson
E-Myth Michael Gerber
Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind Shunryu Suzuki
22 Immutable Laws of Marketing Al Ries & Jack Trout
How I Made My First Million on the Internet EWEN CHIA
Strategy for Sustainability Adam Werbach
Rich Dad, Poor Dad Robert Kiyosaki
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 Economic Facts and Fallacies Thomas Sowell
 Game Change James Heilemann
 Getting Things Done David Allen
 How to Win Friends and Influence People Dale Carnegie
 Linchpin Seth Godin
 Born to Run - Christopher McDougall
 Outliers Malcolm Gladwell
 Rework Jason Fried
 4 hour work week Tim Ferriss
 The Knack Norm Brodsky
 Success Principles Jack Canfield
 The Talent Code Daniel Coyle
 10 Faces of Innovation Tom Kelly
 The Tipping Point Malcolm Gladwell
 Too Big To Fail Andrew Sorkin
 What the Dog Saw Malcolm Gladwell
 4 steps to epiphany Steve Blank
 48 laws of Power Robert Greene
 The art of war Tsu
 Innovators Dilemma
 Paypal wars Eric Jackson
 Who Says elephants can't dance Louis Gerstener
 Founders at work Jess Livingston
 The Big Short (2010 Book) by Michael Lewis (author)
 Cognitive Surplus: Creativity & Generosity in a Connected Age - Clay Shirky
 The Score Takes Care of Itself by Bill Walsh
 The Upside of Irrationality by Dan Ariely (author)
 The Checklist Manifesto by Atul Gawande
 The Curse of the Mogul by Jonathan Knee, et. al.
 100 Startup Chris Guillebeau
 The Thank You Economy Gary Vaynerchuk
 Mindstorms - Seymour Papert
 Outsmarting IQ: The Emerging Science of Learnable Intelligence by David Perkins
 Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge by Edward O. Wilson
 The Selfish Gene: 30th Anniversary Edition--with a new Introduction by the Author by Richard Dawkins
 Heaven in a Chip: Fuzzy Visions of Society and Science in the Digital Age by Bart Kosko
 The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature by Steven Pinker
 The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom by Yochai Benkler
 DARWIN'S DANGEROUS IDEA: EVOLUTION AND THE MEANINGS OF LIFE by Daniel C. Dennett
 The Executive Brain: Frontal Lobes and the Civilized Mind by Elkhonon Goldberg
 Curious Minds: How a Child Becomes a Scientist by John Brockman
 Why Smart People Can Be So Stupid by Robert J. Sternberg
 The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex by Murray Gell-Man
 Origin of Wealth: Evolution, Complexity, and the Radical Remaking of Economics by Eric D. Beinhocker
 The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies by Bryan Douglas Caplan
 The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature by Steven Pinker
 The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable by Nassim Nicholas Taleb
 Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human by Richard W. Wrangham
 Create Your Own Economy: The Path to Prosperity in a Disordered World by Tyler Cowen
 Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe by Peter Douglas Ward
 Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd Is Driving the Future of Business by Jeff Howe

Super Crunchers: Why Thinking-by-Numbers Is the New Way to Be Smart by Ian Ayres
 Predictably Irrational, Revised and Expanded Edition: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions by Dan Ariely
 The Upside of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic by Dan Ariely
 Teaching As a Subversive Activity by Neil Postman
 Origins of Genius by Dean Simonton
 Mind wars: brain research and national defense by Jonathan Moreno
 Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior by Geoffrey Miller
 Rapt: Attention and the Focused Life by Winifred Gallagher
 Snoop: What Your Stuff Says About You by Sam Gosling
 Figments of reality: the evolution of the curious mind by Ian Stewart
 The Structure of Scientific Revolutions by Thomas Kuhn
 The 10,000 Year Explosion by Gregory Cochran
 The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman

531 ANSWERS

[ASK TO ANSWER](#)**Quora User**

770 upvotes by Jimmy Chen, Quora User, Jay Best, (more)

A must read for everyone: **The Beginning of Infinity** by **David Deutsch**, which solves the question of all questions, how we can know what we know. The book draws out the implications of this idea for ethics, politics, and aesthetics, while also discussing maths, physics, and AI. All of this is written so clearly that you will find yourself understanding things which you can't believe you ever failed to understand.

Thinking, Fast and Slow by **Daniel Kahneman** has been mentioned a few times and is definitely worth reading to realise that we humans aren't as rational as we think we are. For the opposing viewpoint, you may want to check out **Ecological Rationality** by **Gerd Gigerenzer**, which contains papers discussing the importance and even comparative advantage of fast and frugal heuristics.

While we're on psychology, **The Stuff of Thought** by **Steven Pinker** is a great read as well. It explains how the way we use language sheds light on the workings of our minds, and consequently our social relations as well.

This Will Make You Smarter by **John Brockman** contains short essays from top intellectuals around the world on important concepts. They are all available to read online here: [WHAT SCIENTIFIC CONCEPT WOULD IMPROVE EVERYBODY'S COGNITIVE TOOLKIT?](#)

In the same vein is **Daniel Dennett's** latest, **Intuition Pumps And Other Tools for Thinking**, where Uncle Dan outlines some general thinking tools, and then a guided tour through his philosophical career with tools for thinking about meaning, evolution, consciousness, and free will.

For a quick survey of philosophical problems, check out **Just the Arguments** by **Michael Bruce and Steven Barbone**, which contains 100 arguments in the areas of religion, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, mind, science, and language. Of course, it helps to have a good foundation in logical thinking, so if you're unsure check out some introductory guides to logic. A good catalogue of fallacies is **How to Win Every Argument** by **Madsen Pirie**, although you could just as well plough through the Wikipedia [List of fallacies](#) .

If you would like to further explore the development of Western philosophical thought, **Bertrand Russell's** classic **History of Western Philosophy** is not a bad place to begin. For the other side of the story, check out **The Truth About Everything** by **Matthew Stewart**, appropriately subtitled An Irreverent History of Philosophy, in which pretty much every philosopher in history is cast as a villain because they were seduced by metaphysical speculation. If that leads you to wonder what role metaphysics can play in our thought, read **Everything Must Go** by **James Ladyman and Don Ross**, which deals with the appropriate metaphysics for a scientific, naturalistic worldview.

So what are the things that reason can never tell us about? Check out **The**

Outer Limits of Reason by **Noson Yanofsky** for a guided tour through paradoxes and insoluble problems in logic, mathematics, and science.

Quite a few books by **Nassim Taleb** have already been mentioned, and I would just like to add his latest work **Antifragile** to the list, as it gives us a new way of thinking about and acting in the face of uncertainty in a whole range of domains. And if you want to know what can and cannot be forecasted and how to go about it, read **The Signal and the Noise** by **Nate Silver**.

A classic that is still relevant today is **Metamagical Themas** by **Douglas Hofstadter**. The book discusses almost everything, including alphabets, sentences, language, nonsense, art, mathematics, Rubik's cubes, programming, cognitive science, law, and game theory. Everything is tied together by the theme of self-reference and reflexivity, making this a great book for learning to see the connections between seemingly unrelated things in the world.

If on a winter's night, a traveller by **Italo Calvino** is a truly mind-expanding work of fiction. The protagonist's reading is interrupted after the first chapter by a printing mistake, and attempting to replace the book at the bookstore leaves him with another book. But he will not get past the first chapter of that either... This book is a work of genius examining the processes of reading and writing, and the people involved in both. The prose is beautiful and perfectly suited to the task, reading at times almost like a conversation with the author. But the true conversation when reading this book will be with yourself, within your own head. If mind-expanding is what you're looking for in your fiction, you will find no better.

Updated 27 Dec, 2013.

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Marcus Geduld, Published author, lifelong reader.

885 upvotes by Ushpal Thind, Mike Bourgojn, Sean Yu, (more)

Already Mentioned

[Gödel, Escher, Bach](#) ; [Thinking, Fast and Slow](#) ; [Predictably Irrational](#) ; [Darwin's Dangerous Idea](#) ; [Intuition Pumps And Other Tools for Thinking](#) ; [Amazon.com: The Selfish Gene](#) ; [The Black Swan](#) ; [Antifragile](#) ; [The Symbolic Species](#) ; [The User Illusion](#) ; [The Beginning of Infinity](#) ;

My Top Picks For General Readers

[Moral Tribes: Emotion, Reason, and the Gap Between Us and Them: Joshua Greene](#)

This is the best book about morality I've ever read. The first half is a tour of the current science (social science, anthropology, animal studies, brain-imaging, evolutionary theory, etc) that is connected with morality. The second half is a philosophical (and psychological) defense of the moral theory called Utilitarianism. Even if you're wind up rejecting that theory, you'll find huge value in this book. The writing is crystal clear, provocative, and laced with humor.

"After two and a half millennia, it's rare to come across a genuinely new idea on the nature of morality, but in this book Joshua Greene advances not one but several. Greene combines neuroscience with philosophy not as a dilettante but

as an expert in both fields, and his synthesis is interdisciplinary in the best sense of using all available conceptual tools to understand a deep phenomenon. Moral Tribes is a landmark in our understanding of morality and the moral sense.” -- Stephen Pinker

 BrillianceAudio

Unabridged

MORAL TRIBES

Emotion, Reason, and the Gap
Between Us and Them

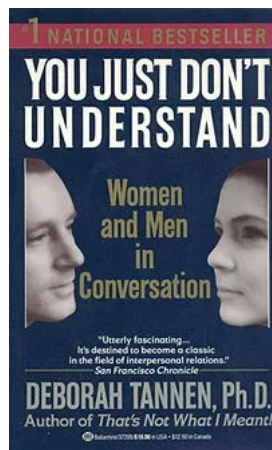


Joshua Greene

Performed by Mel Foster

[You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation: Deborah Tannen](#)

Tannon, a linguist, had the clever idea of framing women and men are two different cultures—and to study their "languages" the way one would study English and French. The book made me think beyond "the battle of the sexes" to the many ways words can both clarify our ideas and befuddle our listeners. This is a great books for couples, writers, actors, and students of human nature.



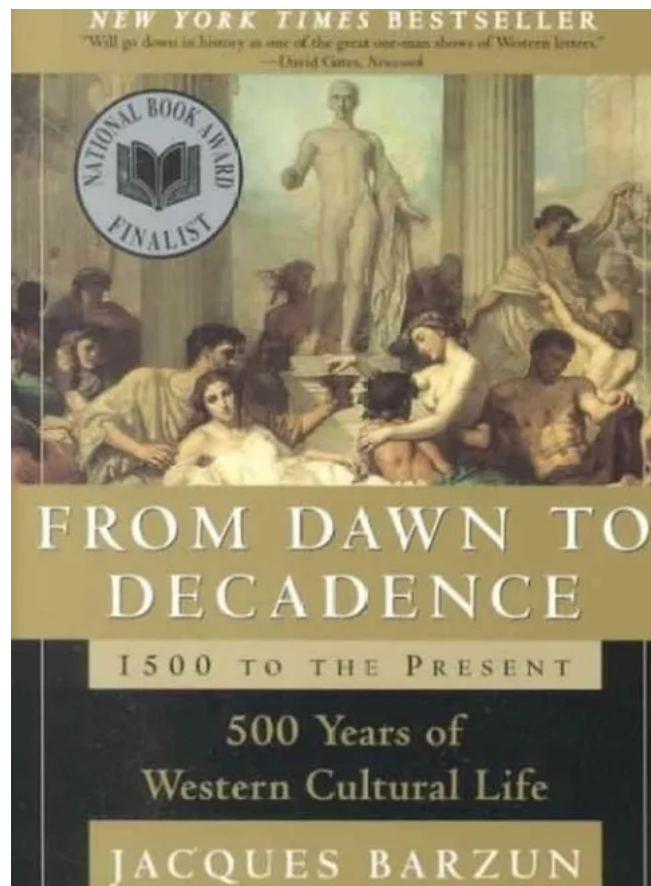
[The Little Schemer - 4th Edition: Daniel P. Friedman, Matthias Felleisen, Duane Bibby, Gerald J. Sussman](#)

The authors use a Socratic approach to teach a difficult subject: recursion. This is a book you work through with pencil and paper, and, if you work through it, the way it stretches your mind will be more meaningful to you than the subject it teaches. It begins with the simplest of ideas and very gradually ramps up the complexity, until, by the end, your understanding is at a high level. This book is takes teaching and elevates it to a work of art. It's sort of a computer-programming book, but you don't need any programming experience to work through it.

Is it true that this is an atom? atom ¹	Yes, because atom is a string of characters beginning with the letter a.
<small>¹ L, S: (quote atom) or 'atom -L- and %' are described in the preface.</small>	
Is it true that this is an atom? turkey	Yes, because turkey is a string of characters beginning with a letter.
Is it true that this is an atom? 1492	Yes, because 1492 is a string of digits.
Is it true that this is an atom? u	Yes, because u is a string of one character, which is a letter.
Is it true that this is an atom? *abc\$	Yes, because *abc\$ is a string of characters beginning with a letter or special character other than a left "(" or right ")" parenthesis.
Is it true that this is a list? (atom) ¹	Yes, because (atom) is an atom enclosed by parentheses.

[From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life 1500 to the Present: Jacques Barzun](#)

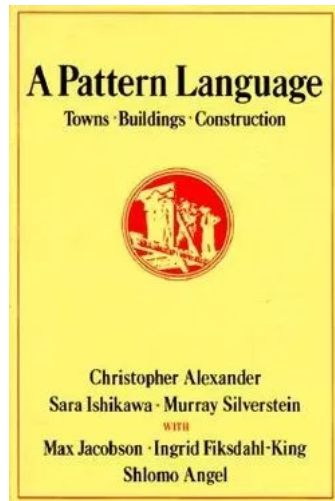
Barzun tells the entire story of Modern Western History, making a brilliant case that there really is such a thing: that, in a sense, our culture began on its current (and future) course 500 years ago, at the birth of the Reformation. As with the best of this sort of book, it doesn't matter if you agree or disagree with its premise. It's value is that it makes a clear statement, one that will prompt you towards a sharp reaction.



[A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction: Christopher Alexander](#)

"Brilliant....Here's how to design or redesign *any* space you're living or working in--from metropolis to room. Consider what you want to happen in the space, and then page through this book. Its radically conservative observations will spark, enhance, organize your best ideas, and a wondrous home, workplace, town will result."--*San Francisco Chronicle*

This book's influence has leaked into other fields, notably Computer Science.



[The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion: Jonathan Haidt](#)

Why are Conservatives and Liberals the way they are? Why are they so often at odds? Is it due to Nature or Nurture? This book delves into why we so often argue each other. It explores the core values we live by, both consciously and unconsciously. Check out th... [\(more\)](#)

Upvote 885 Downvote Comments 12+



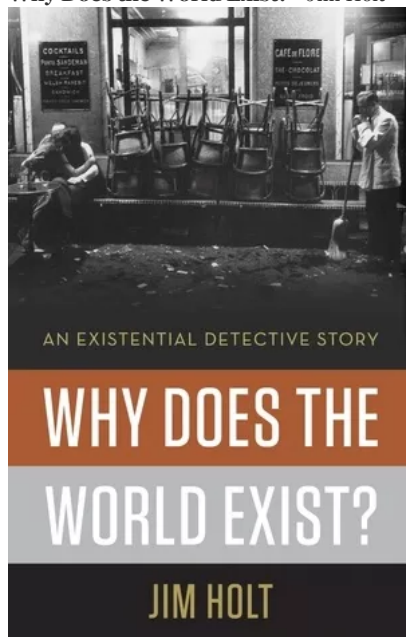
Rohit Shinde, Swimmer, Avid Reader, Computer... [\(more\)](#)

725 upvotes by Parag Kulkarni, Quora User, Karthik Vvrs, [\(more\)](#)

Here are some books which I feel are mind expanding.

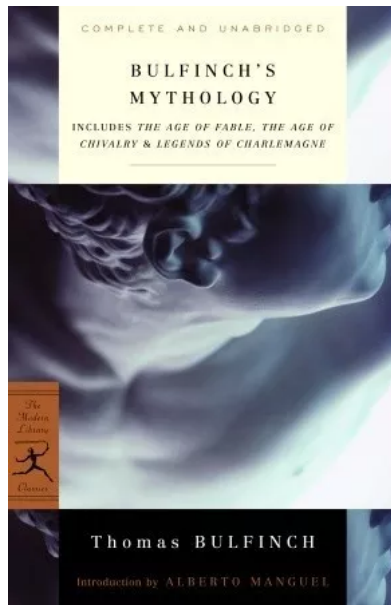
Note: Some of them may already have been mentioned in answers below, but I hope there is at least one new book you found out through this list.

1. **Why Does the World Exist?** - Jim Holt



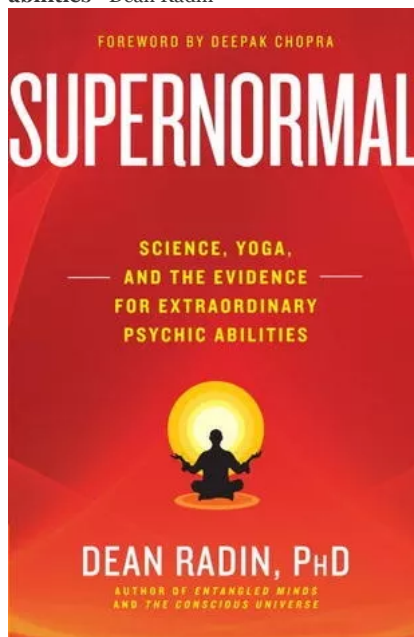
It asks the question "Why is there a world when there should be nothing?" It is related to metaphysics. It is also tinged with philosophy and is quite a good read.

2. **Bulfinch's Mythology** - Thomas Bulfinch



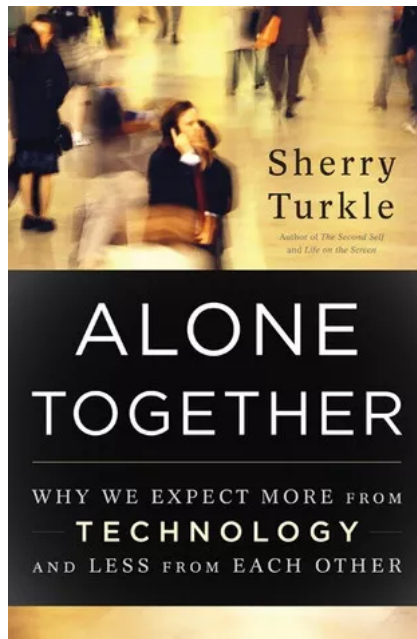
This book retells the Greek Myths in all their glory. Learn about Zeus, Venus, Hera and other Olympian Gods. These gods are fallible too. After reading this book, you will have a greater understanding of the Greek mythology. It is also interspersed with Roman Mythology.

3. **Supernormal: Science, Yoga and the Evidence for Extraordinary abilities** - Dean Radin



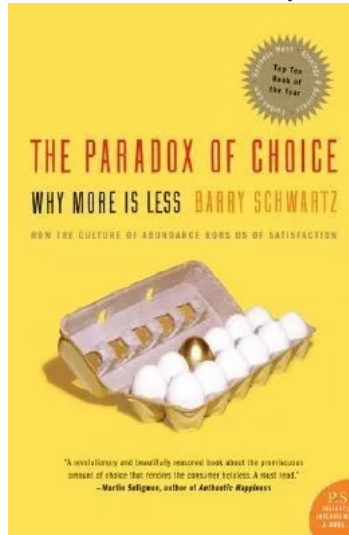
Can yoga and meditation unleash our inherent supernormal mental powers, such as telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition? Is it really possible to perceive another person's thoughts and intentions? Influence objects with our minds? Envision future events? And is it possible that some of the superpowers described in ancient legends, science fiction, and comic books are actually real, and patiently waiting for us behind the scenes? Are we now poised for an evolutionary trigger to pull the switch and release our full potentials? These and many more questions are answered in this book. It is certainly a very engrossing read.

4. **Alone Together** - Sherry Turkle



In *Alone Together*, MIT technology and society professor Sherry Turkle explores the power of our new tools and toys to dramatically alter our social lives. It's a nuanced exploration of what we are looking for—and sacrificing—in a world of electronic companions and social networking tools, and an argument that, despite the hand-waving of today's self-described prophets of the future, it will be the next generation who will chart the path between isolation and connectivity.

5. **The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less** - Barry Schwartz

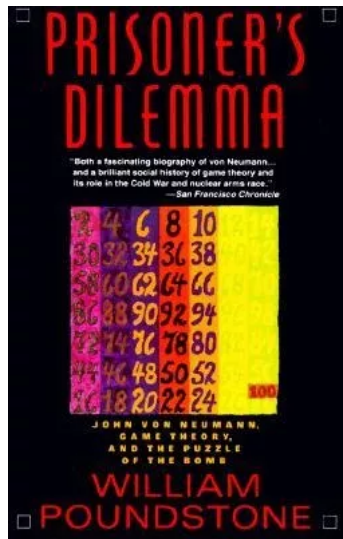


In *The Paradox of Choice*, Barry Schwartz explains at what point choice--the hallmark of individual freedom and self-determination that we so cherish--becomes detrimental to our psychological and emotional well-being. In accessible, engaging, and anecdotal prose, Schwartz shows how the dramatic explosion in choice--from the mundane to the profound challenges of balancing career, family, and individual needs--has paradoxically become a problem instead of a solution. Schwartz also shows how our obsession with choice encourages us to seek that which makes us feel worse.

6. **The Purity Myth: How America's Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women** - Jessica Valent

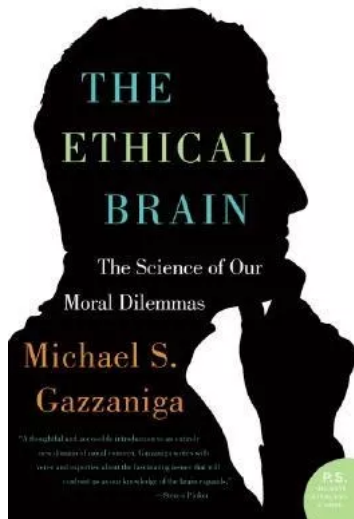
The Purity Myth presents a revolutionary argument that girls and women are overly valued for their sexuality, as well as solutions for a future without a damaging emphasis on virginity.

7. **Prisoner's Dilemma** - William Poundstone



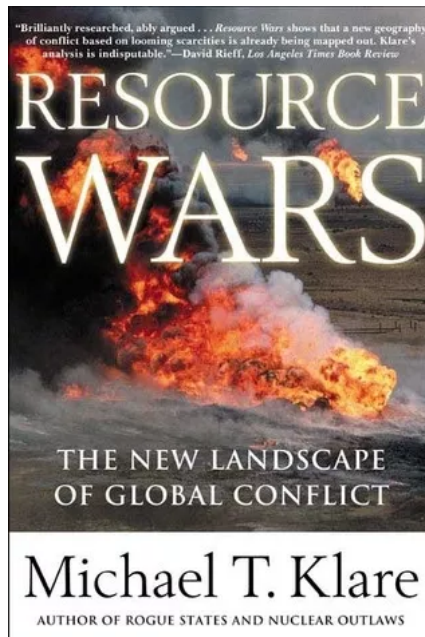
A layman's introduction to Game Theory. It is based on the work by Von Neumann. And its thoroughly interesting.

8. **The Ethical Brain: The Science of our Moral Dilemmas** - Michael S. Gazzaniga



In *The Ethical Brain*, preeminent neuroscientist Michael S. Gazzaniga presents the emerging social and ethical issues arising out of modern-day brain science and challenges the way we look at them. Courageous and thought-provoking -- a work of enormous intelligence, insight, and importance -- this book explores the hitherto uncharted landscape where science and society intersect

9. **Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict** - Michael Klare



International security expert Michael T. Klare argues that in the early decades of the new millennium, wars will be fought not over ideology but over access to dwindling supplies of precious natural commodities. The political divisions of the Cold War, Klare asserts, have given way to a global scramble for oil, natural gas, minerals, and water. And as armies throug...

(more)

Upvote 725 Downvote Comments 13+



Lee Coursey, Business Intelligence IT Guy, ... (more)

39 upvotes by Nenad Stevanovic, Roland Kofler, Alexandra Liptsey-Rahe, (more)

- **Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems and the Economic World** by Kevin Kelly
- **Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies** by Jared Diamond
- **The Symbolic Species: The Co-Evolution of Language and the Brain** by Terrence W. Deacon
- **At Home in the Universe: The Search for Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity** by Stuart Kauffman
- **The Discoverers** by Daniel J. Boorstin
- **Letters from the Earth: Uncensored Writings** by Mark Twain
- **Irrational Man : A Study in Existential Philosophy** by William Barrett
- **Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid** by Douglas R. Hofstadter
- **The Social Contract** by Jean-Jacques Rousseau

To find out why I like these books so much and think of them as mind-expanding, read the explanations over at my blog: <http://mistercrayfish.wordpress.com>

Written 27 Jan, 2011.

Upvote 39 Downvote Comments 3

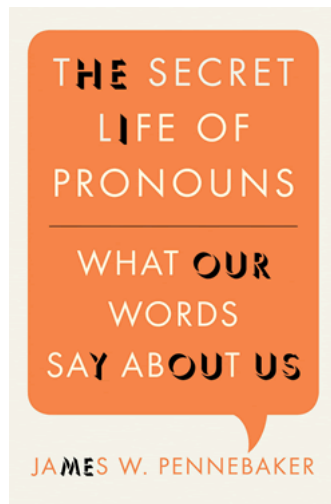


Jill Uchiyama, Evolutionary

30 upvotes by Avinash Behera, Robert J. Kolker, Ed Camara, (more)

The Secret Life of Pronouns by James W. Pennebaker

This book is especially interesting if **you** are fascinated by the use of language and how the little words can tell so much about **our** personalities, leadership style, gender differences, and state of mind and much more. **I** think someone should do a case study of Quora personalities! That would be interesting!



According to Pennebaker:

At the heart of this book is the idea that our words leave indelible fingerprints of personality, our relationships and backgrounds, and even our plans for the future. Once you see the power of pronouns, articles, and other function words, you will better understand:

- *How Tweets and Facebook posts can tell us about the personality of their authors.*
- *Why lying to others and to ourselves causes us to talk differently.*
- *How it's possible to predict if two people will fall in love by counting the function words the two people use in their first conversation with one another.*
- *When we can predict a person's age, sex, where they live, and what their background is by analyzing their conversations or emails.*
- *Why self-confident leaders rarely use the word "I" and insecure and depressed people do.*
- *How writing about an emotional upheaval using particular linguistic styles can help you get past it.*
- *Why analyzing your own emails, letters, and natural conversations can tell you about yourself and the relationships you cherish most.*

If you visit this link, you can try out some exercises for yourself and compare your compatibility with a loved one or a friend based on the language you use!

[The Secret Life of Pronouns](#)

Written 5 Oct, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 30 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 3



Luis Gabriel Montalvan Aleman, Human...most of the time.

44 upvotes by Quora User, Rick Stevens, Quora User, (more)

Mind expanding books...a good book changes the way you perceive things so with that definition at hand here I go.

"Siddharta" by Herman Hesse

It taught me about how letting go and experiencing new things is one of the hardest but most basic things a human being must learn to do.

"Thus Spoke Zarathustra" by Friedrich Nietzsche

It taught me how ideas are shared only with those who are willing to hear and take the time to have their beliefs challenge and shattered, the only true sign of a mind looking for spiritual evolution.

"The Rebel" by Albert Camus

An essay on the different aspects that lead to rebellion, An excellent way to understand how and why our own ideas surpass our humanity and lead to violence.

"Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience" by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly

It deepened the understanding that by being focused and challenging yourself continually we will live a more fulfilling life. (A pretty straightforward concept but i guess that due to our own human nature we just take in consideration our ideas when someone else repeats it to us, an idea present in this other book **"The Alchemist" by Paulo Coehlo**

"The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde

My first introduction to addictive literature...witty, egotistical, young, and vicious. In overall it was my first experience with narcotic literature and helped understand that human nature is creative yet in its destruction.

"Diary of a Drug Fiend" by Aleister Crowley

A total ego death experience through the pen of one of the most self-centered and vicious figures known in modern history, an in-depth look into the rituals and habits that form our human nature and the introduction to yet another basic concept "of doing what you really ought to do" in your life and not be enslaved by modernity but use it to your benefit...but be careful, no one plays by the rules when the prize is their fulfilled destiny (or at least their conception of it),

Those books have change me as a person, they have expanded my mind in positive and negative ways....a neutral expansion at best but they remain definitely as passengers on my constant train of thought,

Updated 26 Aug, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 44 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Stephen Forero

38 upvotes by Kavita Rao, Daniël Kortekaas, Tarun Kuckian, (more)

Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse

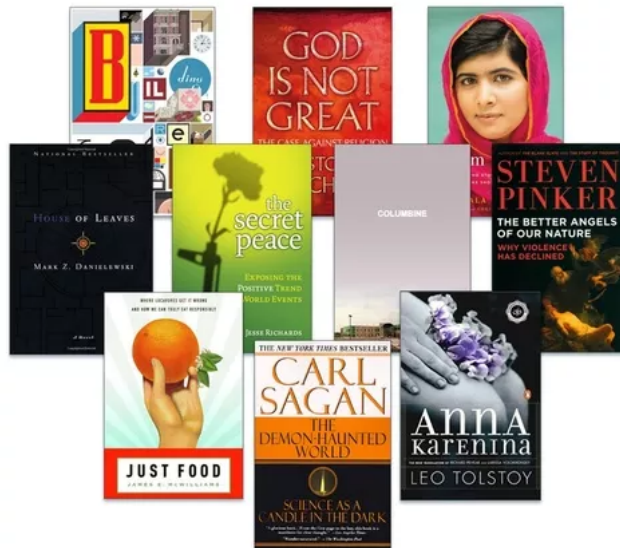
Written 28 Feb, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 38 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Jesse Richards, artist, author, Director of UX

57 upvotes by Kshitiz Mishra, Quora User, Karem Gh, (more)



Here are some of my favorite mind-expanding books.

Nonfiction

1. Carl Sagan's **Demon-Haunted World** is my #1 favorite nonfiction book and one I always recommend. It changed the course of my interests and

eventually led to me writing my own book. I think this is the book that would most change the world for the better if every human were to read it.

2. Along similar lines, but much less polite and pointed specifically at religion, Christopher Hitchens's **God is Not Great** is an astounding piece of polemic. Any religious person who can not come up with their own rebuttals to this book is living a lie. I just finished listening to this audiobook today, actually, and though I was already an atheist, it feels like I had been in an earthquake or prize fight and now need to recover.

3. **Columbine** is a fascinating work of reporting, the largest takeaway from which may be just how distorted everything we hear from the media is. If they got EVERY aspect of this story wrong, which is what the book puts forth, what else do we think we know that is wrong?

4. **Just Food** challenges every food trend today. It makes the compelling case that local food is bad, organic food is bad, and GMO foods are good. (Don't worry, it's actually a little more nuanced than that.) I wholeheartedly agree with this, and after reading this book you may too, but good luck convincing anyone else.

5. I added **I Am Malala** because this list wasn't heart-breaking enough yet. Read the book and then look at the photo of her and her father on the back cover and try not to get tears in your eyes. Every line of this book brings to mind the very best and very worst of humanity simultaneously.

6. **The Secret Peace** is my own book, published in 2010. It posits progress: the world is getting inevitably better. The book references thousands of sources to make this difficult-to-swallow claim. You can read the first chapter for free on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/The-Secret...>

7. Steven Pinker's **The Better Angels of Our Nature** is like the Violence chapter from my book, expanded to 700 in-depth but riveting pages. Yes, violence is declining: surprisingly, right now is the most peaceful the world has ever been, by far.

Fiction

8. I debated whether I preferred **Anna Karenina** or War & Peace, but Anna left me with more insight into the human condition and more joy while reading it (maybe because I read it first). If the point of novels is to place you into the mind of other people and help you realize we are all the same, this is the epitome of that lofty goal.

9. **House of Leaves** is the scariest thing I have ever read (or for that matter seen in a movie either). A wonderfully haunting story that is also one of the most creative books I've ever seen.

10. I love graphic novels and have hundreds, but "mind-expanding" doesn't apply to most of them. Chris Ware's **Building Stories**, though, gives equal insight into both the human condition and artistic creativity.

Written 22 Jan.

Upvote 57 Downvote Comment 1



Quora User

29 upvotes by Shreyas Panduranga, Quora User, Leopold Haller, (more)

Phantoms in the Brain, by V.S. Ramachandran. It's Oliver Sacks-esque, but (to my recollection) a little more readable, and delves into some interesting philosophy of consciousness at the end.

<http://www.amazon.com/Phantoms-B...>

Written 4 Jan, 2013.

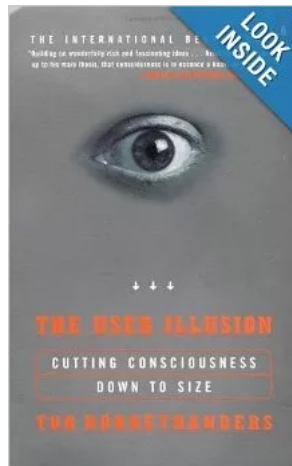
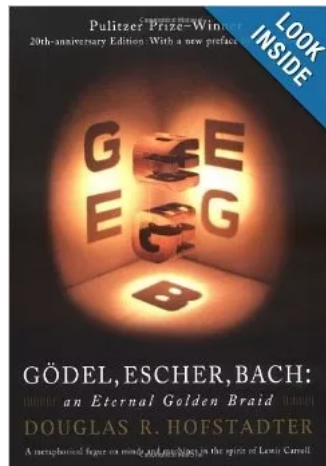
Upvote 29 Downvote Comment



Amit Dev, Life long learner, Eclectic, C... (more)

84 upvotes by Christophe Grosjean, Abhay Patade, Santosh Pandey, (more)

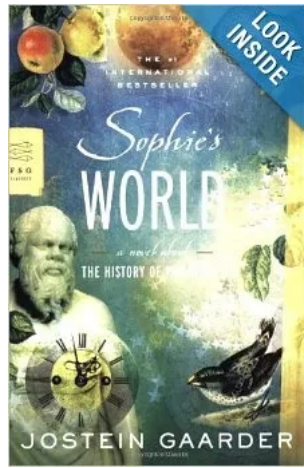
On Consciousness:



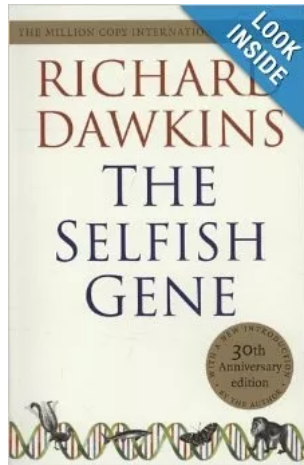
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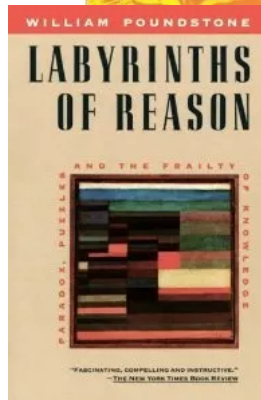
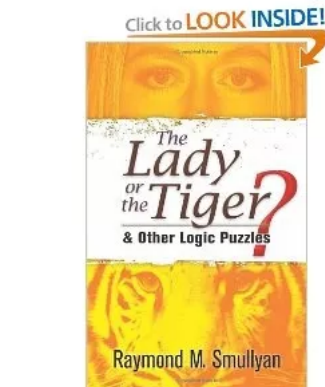
On Philosophy:



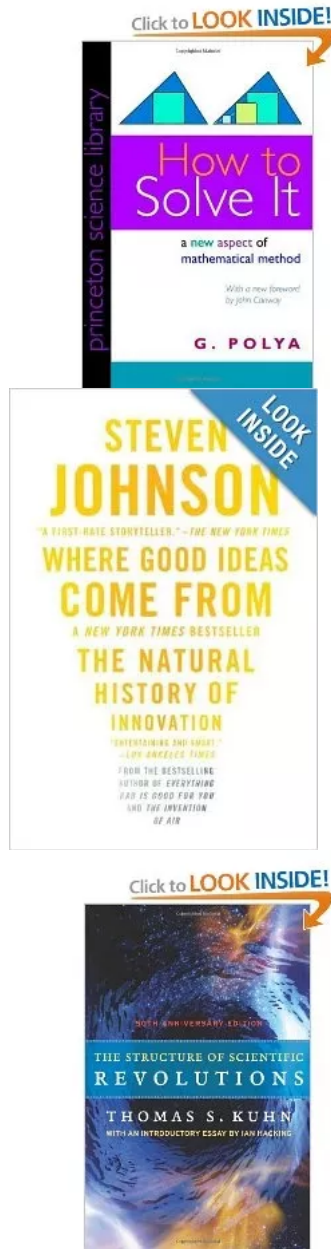
On Science:



On Logic:



On Problem Solving / Innovation:



Written 7 Oct, 2013.

Upvote 84 Downvote Comment

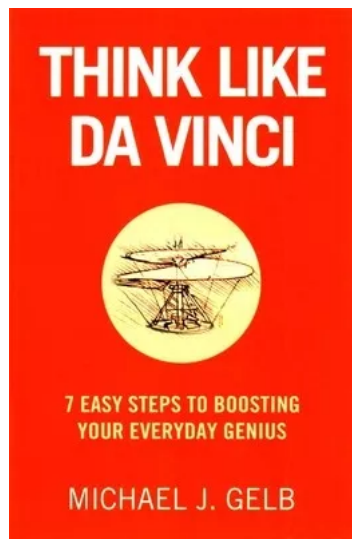


Smriti Iyer, Non- Fiction Books and Fiction... (more)

39 upvotes by Quora User, Brihati Jain, Richard Ivan, (more)

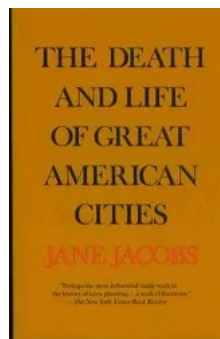
These are the two **MUST READ** books for anyone wanting to expand their minds.

1) **Think like Da Vinci**



Genius is made, not born. And human beings are gifted with an almost unlimited potential for learning and creativity. Now you can uncover your own hidden abilities, sharpen your senses, and liberate your unique intelligence—by following the example of the greatest genius of all time, **Leonardo da Vinci**

2) **The death and life of great American cities:** Jane Jacobs



This book is a critical take on the city planning of American cities (easily applicable on any other mega metro city in the World) from a common man's point of view....and how the so called modernization actually failed to connect with the most important elements in the city- **The people.**

Although might seem like a book for the urban/ city planners on design, but its written by the observations of a common man. Must read for everyone!
A REAL EYE OPENER FOR SURE.

Written 22 Jul.

[Upvote](#) 39 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Quora User

43 upvotes by Anonymous, Vish Desai, Kreso Kreso, (more)

For a book to be mind-expanding it should help you think on a level that's higher than your current consciousness level. I think it can do it one of the following:

1) **Build awareness about the mental pitfalls that you have and help you to overcome them to reach to a higher consciousness level**

- *Thinking Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman

This book summarizes a massive amount of research on decision-making. Every single page introduces interesting concepts and grows your understanding of your thinking, all through academic researches.

- *Hardwiring Happiness* by Rick Hanson

This book, with scientific backing, focuses on the idea that you can intentionally shape your brain. Even though it mainly talks about how fully feeling the positive experiences in your life changes your brain and makes you more inclined to notice the positives in your life, it also suggests that you can do more intentional neuroplasticity on your own.

2) Introduce you to a novel thinking paradigm and substantially upgrade your conceptual toolkit

- *Thinking in Systems by Doanella Meadows*

This book is a good introduction to systems thinking, which enables you to have a better understanding of how interrelations work in almost everything - from ecology to business organizations.

- *Mythologies by Roland Barthes*

This book introduces you to the exciting possibilities of critical thinking. He reflects on modern cultural phenomena (from "Soap-powders and Detergents" to "The Brain of Einstein") and discusses all the complex relationships that go unnoticed. It helps you be more conscious your daily life and see how almost nothing is coincidental.

3) Give a different perspective on your life and help you identify which of your thoughts are circumstantial, not personal to you. This helps people step back from their daily consciousness.

The examples for this category will be person-specific. I am just going to share some of my favorites in this category:

- *The Defining Decade by Meg Jay*

This book is for twentysomethings; it helps framing your life on a higher level of awareness and perspective when you are in your 20s. She is also reasonably convincing and inspiring.

- *Intellectual by Edward Said*

This book is for highly-educated people from developing countries. He helps defining the inevitable syndromes of being an "intellectual" (for example, feeling "on exile" even at home) and includes discussions on the responsibilities of an "intellectual".

- *Reborn: Journals and Notebooks, 1947-1963 by Susan Sontag*

Susan Sontag is one of the most interesting intellectuals of 20th century and her early journals shed light on her insightful reflections on stuff that many twentysomethings are going through

Written 17 May.

[Upvote](#) 43 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Kat Townsend

90 upvotes by Quora User, Laura Breton, Bob LeJeune, (more)

[A Short History of Nearly Everything](#) by Bill Bryson

Not only mind-bending, but also entertaining and often quite funny

Written 27 Mar, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 90 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 9



Todd Allen, Software developer, amateur ph... (more)

22 upvotes by Alexander Podrabinovich, Saurabh Vashist, Matt Hodel, (more)

Alright, though they might be mentioned already.

Isaac Asimov, The Last Question. It's now public domain, so may be found freely. [The Last Question -- Isaac Asimov](#)

Richard Bach, Jonathan Livingston Seagull and Illusions.

Stephen King, the Dark Tower series.

How on earth is The Little Prince (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry) not in the answer wiki or the top answers yet? Go read it.

Jared Diamond's Guns, Germs, and Steel is great, but Collapse should be up there with it. I actually found that more enlightening and to have a lot more things I didn't already know.

Denis Leary's Why We Suck. It's a nice cut through bullshit.

Neil Stephenson, Snow Crash. The tongue might be well in the cheek, and the Internet has developed a long way since then, but still well worth the read.

The Wind in the Willows. Also public domain, so can be read online. [The Wind in the Willows](#)

I'm sure I'll think of more, but that's what comes off the top of my head and isn't in the answer wiki.

Written 4 Aug.

[Upvote](#) 22 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Hunter McCord

30 upvotes by Quora User, Mehrab Momin, James Fisher, (more)

The following books expanded my mind

This is your brain on music-Daniel Levitin

<http://www.amazon.com/This-Your-...>

Priceless: The Myth of Fair Value (and How to Take Advantage of It)-William Poundstone

<http://www.amazon.com/Priceless-...>

The Science of Fear: Why We Fear the Things We Shouldn't--and Put Ourselves in Greater Danger-Daniel Gilbert

<http://www.amazon.com/Science-Fe...>

Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior-Ori Brafman/Ram Brafman

<http://www.amazon.com/Sway-Irres...>

How We Decide-Jonah Lehrer

<http://www.amazon.com/How-We-Dec...>

The Tipping Point-Malcolm Gladwell

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Tippin...>

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion-Robert Cialdini

<http://www.amazon.com/Influence-...>

The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less-Barry Schwartz

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Parado...>

Written 3 Jun, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 30 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 3+



Muhammed Tüfekyapan, Co-Founder @Optlooknet - Start... (more)
22 upvotes by Byron Henry, Roland Kofler, John Phileas, (more)

Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman

The Personal MBA by Josh Kaufman

Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg

Updated 23 Apr, 2013.

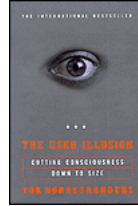
Upvote 22 Downvote Comments 3



Quora User

149 upvotes by Quora User, Garrick Saito, Quora User, (more)

Mind Expanding:



The User Illusion, by Tor Norretranders.

Read it twice.

You will never see the world the same. Very well written and researched. None of the data or concepts are in the public dialog and after reading this book you will ask why.

I shall offer just one point: the Conscious mind is fed "reality" by the sub Conscious. The sub Conscious edits 98% of the input it receives from your senses and present a Believable concept of the world. It also reacts to all inputs and responds in most cases **before** you have even made your conscious choice. This all happens in a proven 1/2 second delay between the reaction of your conscious mind to any input. This is a very long period in time in reality when it comes to making choices as these delays set a cascade of events that if really understood are making you more into an observer of "you" then a controller of your reactions. The shocker comes when it is demonstrated that your sub Conscious recreates "time" in your mind so as to allow you to "Believe" your conscious was in control the entire time.

I am not doing proper justice to this, just one of the concepts this book covers. Nor can I cite the 100s of repeatable science behind the concepts.

Here is a video that explores some of the concepts:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D...>

Update:

Many have asked if there are any other companion books to The User Illusion. I would recommend the The Holographic Universe by Michael Talbot. This book catalogs the work of University of London physicist David Bohm, a protégé of Einstein and quantum physicist, and Stanford University neurophysiologist Karl Pribram.

Updated 28 Dec, 2012.

Upvote 149 Downvote Comments 19+



Steffan Clarke, Starting to think that conscio... (more)

18 upvotes by Randy Crawford, Quora User, Nalin Savara, (more)

George Orwell's "1984"

Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World"

Timothy Leary's "The Psychedelic Experience"

Carl Sagan's "Pale Blue Dot"

Alan Moore's "Watchmen"

All together, you cover the justice, astronomical, cognitive and political systems in ways you have never imagined - guaranteed to expand the mind.

WARNING - May induce prolonged paranoia and self-loathing as well as the sudden realisation of all the neuroticisms that do infact make up 'you'.

Written 5 Jun, 2013.

Upvote 18 Downvote Comment 1



Mike Townsend, ZingCheckout & Flowtab. Books:... (more)

123 upvotes by Yusup Ashrap, John Phileas, Sundar Lakshmanan, (more)

This is my personal list of 10+ years collecting and reading the best I could find on behavioral economics, psychology, general business and mind expanding books.

Top Reads: *Outliers* - Malcolm Gladwell; *How to Win Friends and Influence People* - Dale Carnegie

Personal favorite: *Born to Run* - Christopher McDougall

Best quick read: *E-Myth* Michael Gerber

Best core idea: *The Black Swan* - Nassim Taleb

Best fiction story: *Deception Point* Dan Brown

Most inspiring (entrepreneurial): *Losing My Virginity* - Richard Branson; *Zappos Delivering Happiness* - Tony Hsieh

Most interesting (behavioral): *Why We Make Mistakes* - Joseph Hallinan

Most interesting (business): *Founders at work* - Jess Livingston

Most interesting (psychological): *Mindstorms* - Seymour Papert

Most dense with information: *Economic Facts and Fallacies* - Thomas Sowell; *Short History of Nearly Everything* Bill Bryson

Most valuable (entrepreneurial): *Rework* Jason Fried; *Four Steps to Epiphany* Steve Blank;

Most valuable (growth stage business): *Good To Great* - Jim Collins

Most empowering: *48 laws of Power* Robert Greene; *The art of war* Tsu

Most sexual: *I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell* - Tucker Max

Most disappointing: *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health* Andrew Weil

Most useless: *How I Made My First Million on the Internet* EWEN CHIA

Most overrated: *Super Freakonomics* Levitt & Dubner; *The Knack* Norm Brodsky

*Quite a few of these are available as audible books, I recommend

Audible.com

I attribute many of my perspectives in life to the following authors:

Chronologically ordered (top - oldest; bottom - most recent)

- 48 Laws of Power Robert Greene
- The Black Swan Nassim Nicholas Taleb
- The Power of Full Engagement Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz
- The Strategy and Tactics of Pricing (5th Edition) Thomas Nagle
- Leaving Microsoft to Change the World John Wood
- Losing My Virginity Richard Branson
- E-Myth Michael Gerber
- Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind Shunryu Suzuki
- 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing Al Ries & Jack Trout
- How I Made My First Million on the Internet EWEN CHIA
- Strategy for Sustainability Adam Werbach
- Rich Dad, Poor Dad Robert Kiyosaki
- Super Freakonomics Levitt & Dubner

- I Hope They Serve Beer in Hell - Tucker Max
- Why We Make Mistakes Joseph Hallinan
- Deception Point Dan Brown
- Audacity of Hope Barack Obama
- Vagabonding Rolf Potts
- Good To Great Jim Collins
- Short History of Nearly Everything Bill Bryson
- Eight Weeks to Optimum Health Andrew Weil
- A Whole New Mind Daniel Pink
- Zappos Delivering Happiness Tony Hsieh
- Economic Facts and Fallacies Thomas Sowell
- Game Change James Heilemann
- Getting Things Done David Allen
- How to Win Friends and Influence People Dale Carnegie
- Linchpin Seth Godin
- Born to Run - Christopher McDougall
- Outliers Malcolm Gladwell
- Rework Jason Fried
- 4 hour work week Tim Ferriss
- The Knack Norm Brodsky
- Success Principles Jack Canfield
- The Talent Code Daniel Coyle
- 10 Faces of Innovation Tom Kelly
- The Tipping Point Malcolm Gladwell
- Too Big To Fail Andrew Sorkin
- What the Dog Saw Malcolm Gladwell
- 4 steps to epiphany Steve Blank
- 48 laws of Power Robert Greene
- The art of war Tsu
- Innovators Dilemma
- Paypal wars Eric Jackson
- Who Says elephants can't dance Louis Gerstener
- Founders at work Jess Livingston
- The Big Short (2010 Book) by Michael Lewis (author)
- Cognitive Surplus: Creativity & Generosity in a Connected Age - Clay Shirky
- The Score Takes Care of Itself by Bill Walsh
- The Upside of Irrationality by Dan Ariely (author)
- The Checklist Manifesto - Atul Gawande
- The Curse of the Mogul - Jonathan Knee, et. al.
- \$100 Startup - Chris Guillebeau
- The Thank You Economy Gary Vaynerchuk
- Mindstorms - Seymour Papert
- Word of Mouth Marketing - Andy Sernovitz
- One click - Jeff Bezos (inspiring start, although vague at times)
- Predictably Irrational - Dan Ariely (fascinating case studies)
- Contagious - Jonah Berger (triggers, social currencies and practical value)
- Basic Economics - Thomas Sowell (how the economy really work)
- David and Goliath - Malcolm Gladwell (more here: [What can a Startup learn from "David and Goliath"](#))
- The Hard Thing About Hard Things - Marc Andreessen (business war stories, little too much self promotion)

- The Future of the Mind - Michio Kaku (deep ideas of what's possible, programmable memory, telekinesis, etc)
- Blink - Malcolm Gladwell (first impressions are programmed into us)
- Currency Wars: The Making of the Next Global Crises - James Rickards (modifying relative value of currencies is more powerful than war)

*Though, not a book, I enjoy [Paul Graham's](#) perspective in his essays. [Cities and Ambition](#) is my favorite.


Haven't opened, but I'm sure they're good:

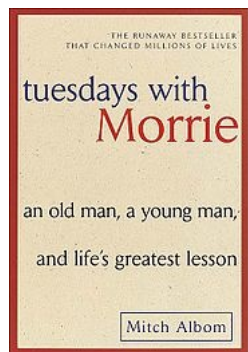
Quora User's recommendation, **The User Illusion**, by Tor Norretranders

Quora User's recommendation **Flow** by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Updated 1 Apr.


[Upvote](#) 123 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 5+

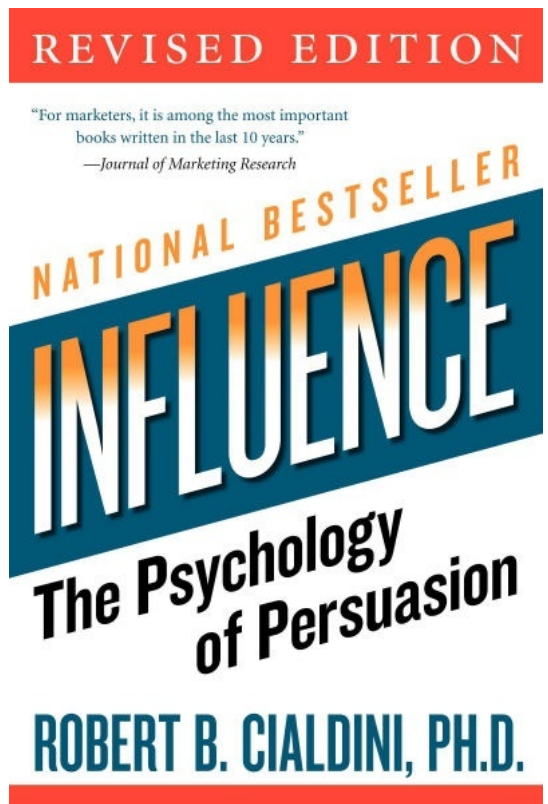
 **Trishla Prasad**, Through the Looking Glass
43 upvotes by Quora User, Nishaanth Shanmughasundaram, Tarun Kuckian, (more)
Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom.



Written 11 Apr, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 43 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 2

 **Mayank Agrawal**, Bringer of the Truth
30 upvotes by Omar Velis, Quora User, Hunter McCord, (more)



Every Single page is filled with Chewable Knowledge!!
 Knowledge with immediate IMPACT!

Written 17 Oct, 2012.

Upvote 30 Downvote Comments 4+



David Litwak, CEO of Mozio

34 upvotes by Ravinandan Puri, Thomas Michael Corcoran, Greg Maza, (more)

I find there are very few books that truly present a novel idea, way of thinking, or insight into a particular industry. Here are my top ones, some of which have already been mentioned.

The Arabs (David Lamb)

The Africans (David Lamb)

David Lamb was the bureau chief in Cairo for the Los Angeles times, which gave him a lot of insight into both the Arab world and sub-saharan Africa. It has all kinds of insights into how each of the countries work, histories about all the various dictators and wars, colonization, etc., from a perspective that we don't normally get. Fascinating read. The Africans is pretty out of date, hasn't been updated in ~15 years so in many cases the dictators he talks about have already been deposed (Gadaffi being the most recent example), but it is still interesting as a snapshot from that time, and an insight into a volatile region that is largely ignored by the U.S. due to "Africa fatigue."

The Black Swan (Nassim Nicholas Taleb)

Bunch of people have already mentioned this. Definitely changed the way I think about events and interactions with people. Particularly liked his "Turkey theory," where he points out that for 364 days of the year a Turkey gets fed and live a normal life, each day becoming more sure and sure of its existence, only for it to be decapitated on the 365th day, Thanksgiving. Was a good illustration of events beyond our understanding. Taleb is a bit long winded, and he seems to like to hear himself pontificate, so it's not super easy to get through, but is valuable. He has two other books I will be reading soon as well.

The Big Short

Liars Poker

(Michael Lewis)

He illuminates the world of finance in ways that make "credit default swaps" understandable by the everyday man with little to no finance background. In addition, he's quite funny. Many Michael Lewis books take an industry and give insight into how it works, not necessarily the most complex ones either (Moneyball and The Blind Side are good examples).

Reel Power (Mark Litwak)

Delves into the inner workings of Hollywood, the history of the studios, how powerful agents are, the roles of writers, producers, directors and how to break into the business. Also a bit outdated, was written 25 years ago, but an interesting read. Most of the names have changed, but the dynamic hasn't as much. As a person who grew up around the film industry but was never really interested in it (I became an engineer) it was a fascinating look into an industry that the entire world is enchanted with but really has no clue how it operates. Disclaimer, my father wrote this book.

Telling Lies (Paul Ekman)

Paul Ekman is the human lie detector who the main character in the series "Lie to Me" is based off of. He is an expert at detecting lies in micro-expressions on the face, voice inflections, you name it. I have not been able to get fully through the book yet as he is not a very good writer and is long winded, but still has some pretty cool concepts.

Freakonomics, Blink, Tipping Point. These are the types of books that are at the front of barnes and noble year round you have already read. Anything by Malcom Gladwell falls into this category. All these are fairly standard, read them, they were interesting, but these are all so famous no need to elaborate.

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (William Shirer): Definitive history of the Nazi regime. Would only be good for history buffs like myself. But as an insight into perhaps the most evil government in history, it is fascinating to watch the gradual descent from bigoted populism into a full fledged death machine and how an entire country was corrupted and brainwashed.

Hitlerland

Gives an amazing view into the Americans who either witnessed the rise of the Nazi party and even in certain cases aided and abetted it. Characters like Hanfstaengl, who was a Harvard grad and knew the Roosevelts ran Hitler's propaganda efforts for a long time. Many Americans who visited thought "it wasn't that bad," and were mesmerized by the order, cleanliness and lack of crime, and drew good conclusions about the Nazi party. Also serves as a good reminder to not be seduced by the facelift that often accompanies Authoritarian regimes, and to search deeper.

The Impossible State

Written by a Bush Administration official and North Korea expert. North Koreans learn to count, 2 dead Americans plus 2 dead Americans = 4 dead Americans. They hold a "juche" ideology that focuses on a self sustaining country free of trade, so many of their automobiles run on wood burning stoves. As a state North Korea deals drugs and works with other country's organized crime. North Korea actually used to be much more prosperous than South Korea, which was one of the most shocking things for me to find out. Details like this give us insight into the last remaining Cold-war-style authoritarian state. Delves into all the efforts at resolving the conflict on the peninsula, North Korea's constant game of brinkmanship, and reveals a lot of interesting info.

Losing my Virginity (Any of Richard Branson's biographies)

This is personal to me, but I love this guy. He got expelled from his secondary school for sneaking out at night to sleep with his headmaster's daughter. He was lowered in a glass box with only a cell phone covering his privates to launch Virgin Mobile. He started a record label, a nightclub, megastores, an airline, and hundreds of other businesses, and he's a awesome guy. He took a girl on a date to a private island by posing as a potential buyer. He then lowballed them, offered hundreds of thousands instead of the millions asked, and somehow bought the island, now referred to as Necker Island, later once the owner was desperate for cash. And he's a good guy who does a lot of philanthropic work and cares about the environment. His books are full of good stories of hustle and nerve.

Other books I'm excited for and will update this as I read them:

The Signal and the Noise

Barbarians at the Gates

Foiled by Randomness

The Purple Cow

Updated 9 May, 2013.

Upvote 34 Downvote Comments 5+



Sergey Polzunov, engineer

14 upvotes by Ming Law, Bob LeJeune, Philip Brandner, (more)

[Amazon.com: Foiled by Randomness: The Hidden Role of Chance in Life and in the Markets \(9780812975215\): Nassim Nicholas Taleb: Books](#)

- amazing perspective on the market and our assumptins

[Thinking, Fast and Slow: Daniel Kahneman: 9780374275631: Amazon.com: Books](#)

- it will explain how your perception works

Written 18 Dec, 2012.

Upvote 14 Downvote Comment 1



Kenny French, mostly harmless

38 upvotes by Alex Agne, Zed Li Zongyin, Quora User, (more)

Some books you read and forget about, these are the ones that I think about

almost every day after I've read them. My mind has forever been expanded by each of these books.

"A Short History of Nearly Everything" by Bill Bryson

This is basically the summary of human knowledge. Not just what we know, but how we know it. If I ever went back in time and could only bring one book with me, this would be it.

"Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" by Richard Feynman

Richard Feynman is one of the most interesting people I have ever learned about. He makes me proud to be a human.

"Pihkal: A Chemical Love Story" by Alexander Shulgin

At some point in all of our lives, we think about drugs. Whether you love them or hate them or are somewhere in between, this book will expand your perspective. Written by the chemist who personally tried (in a very scientific way) and created many of most potent mind altering substances we have today.

"Guns, Germs and Steel" by Jared Diamond

This book is a bit dense, but will give you a pretty thorough understanding of why some cultures and geographic regions have advanced and other have not. Written without bias, it will help you understand why things are the way they are.

The Complete Calvin and Hobbes by Bill Watterson

Far more than "just a comic strip." Reading this from a very early age helped me feel comfortable in my own skin. As philosophical as they are funny, and many are very touching.

Written 23 Sep, 2013.

Upvote 38 Downvote Comment

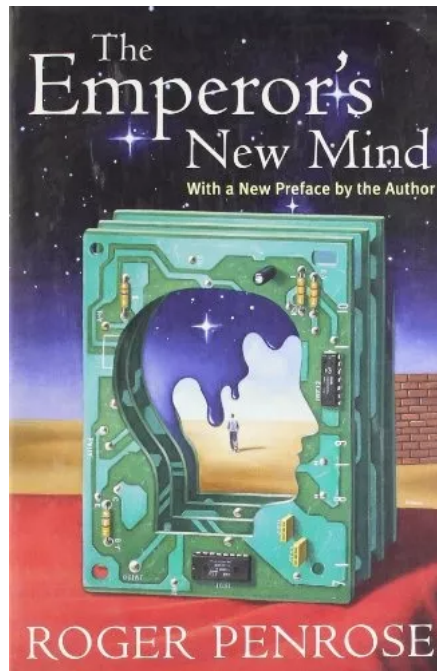


Vikram Rathore, Noogler

30 upvotes by Quora User, Nestor Nestorov, Quora User, (more)

This is from the time I got deep into Artificial Intelligence.

The book's called **The Emperor's New Mind**, after the short story [The Emperor's New Clothes](#)



Written by the great **Sir Roger Penrose**, it reads like science being narrated by a poet. He defends the weak AI faction reiterating that we will never be able to simulate the human brain on a machine.

The book takes you on a wonderful journey into automatons, fractals, turing machines, structure of the brain, modelling brain processes and great thought

experiments and paradoxes.

Penrose presents the argument that human consciousness is non-algorithmic, and thus is not capable of being modeled by a conventional Turing machine-type of digital computer. He hypothesizes that quantum mechanics plays an essential role in the understanding of human consciousness. The collapse of the quantum wavefunction is seen as playing an important role in brain function.

Written 30 Jan.

[Upvote](#) 30 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



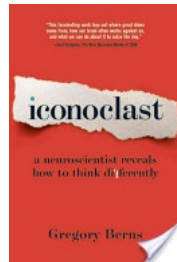
Shyam Sharma, Nature Fascinates Me

24 upvotes by Jay Best, Bob LeJeune, Laura Breton, (more)

I recommend this. An amazingly well inspiring and informative book.

Iconoclast:

A Neuroscientist Reveals How to Think Differently



Written 21 Mar, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 24 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



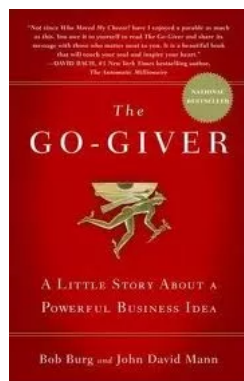
Manish Chauhan, Helping others to Improve thei... (more)

30 upvotes by Rajjat Gupta, Quora User, Nalin Savara, (more)

I would like to add 4 books names here which I have read myself and found them all life-changing . If you read all of them , some aspect of your life is touched and your thinking level will expand in some area. You will get better in life

1. Go Giver

Author - Bob Burg

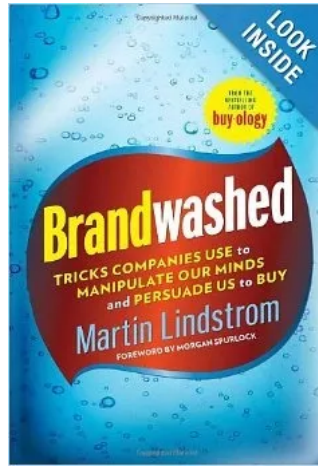


[Click Here to Buy this Book](#)

This book is a short 110 page book, but teaches you how you can get successful in life and overall business or whatever you are doing by adopting the Go-Giver attitude. Most of the people WANT from life/business/contacts/anyone, but no one concentrates on GIVING . This life changing book will really show you some mind blowing things about life and successful people operate.

2. BrandWashed

Author - Martin Lindstorm

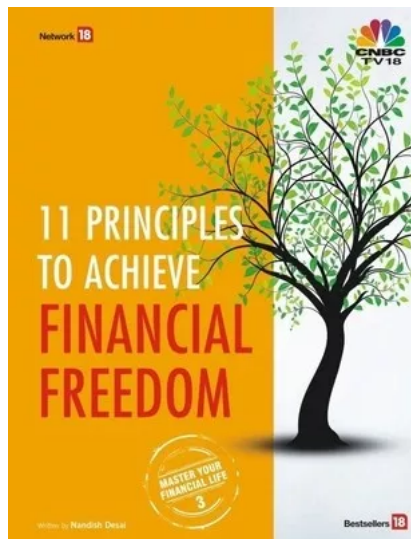


[Click Here to Buy this Book](#)

This book will teach you how we are taking decisions because of some of the tricks employed by companies world wide and how they are controlling our decisions subconsciously. You will really enjoy the book and the content and once you complete the book, you will be in more control of your decisions while purchasing things.

3. 11 Principles to Achieve Financial Freedom

Author - Nandish Desai

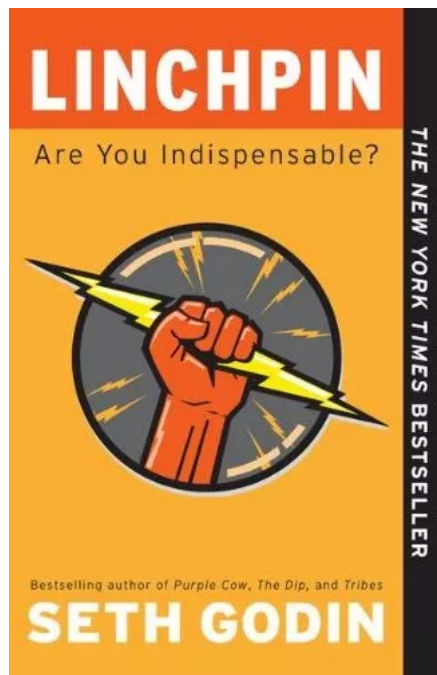


[Click Here to Buy this Book](#)

This book is written by my Business Partner on 11 principles one should know for achieving Financial Freedom. This book will teach you how to live a quality financial life, and change your mindset about money. This book conversations will really wash off all your low level thinking in the area of money and enlighten you about how to think beyond money. This book will give you power and a new dimension to think in your financial life

4. LynchPin

Author - Seth Godin



[Buy this book by Clicking Here](#)

This is a short , but extremely powerful book for those who wants to make an impact on world and think they have something of offer others . This books shows how you are playing small in this world and how have all the power to make a big difference. T

Written 27 Mar.

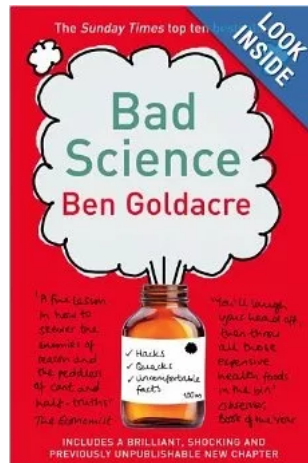
[Upvote](#) 30 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Siddharth Deshpande, Agnostic, system administrator... (more)

26 upvotes by Quora User, Kristine Veneles, Rajath Shashidhara, (more)

I'm surprised nobody seems to have mentioned



This is a masterful introduction to the scientific method that not only debunks, but trains the reader on how to debunk diet fads, alternative medicine, anti-vaccine hoaxes, pharma spiel and a whole bunch of pseudo-scientific crap. Was a real eye-opener. This should be mandatory high-school reading, IMO.

Written 5 Feb.

[Upvote](#) 26 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Joe McManus, Business and Economics Student

13 upvotes by Laura Breton, Varsha Iyer, Hunter McCord, (more)

I highly recommend The Beginning of Infinity by David Deustsch. It provides a really interesting exploration into how human knowledge has developed and

will proceed into the future without being too strung up on technical jargon. He makes the physics and philosophy interesting and easy enough to understand.

Also, *Ishmael* and *My Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn are good books about how our human development has shaped our morals and how we live today. Although I read them in high school they're still both deep enough to entertain the mind nowadays.

Written 17 Apr, 2013.

Upvote 13 Downvote Comments 1+



Alex K. Chen, InquilineKea/Simfish

174 upvotes by Rob Leathern, Marc Bodnick, Quora User, (more)

Outsmarting IQ: The Emerging Science of Learnable Intelligence by David Perkins

Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge by Edward O. Wilson

The Selfish Gene: 30th Anniversary Edition--with a new Introduction by the Author by Richard Dawkins

Heaven in a Chip: Fuzzy Visions of Society and Science in the Digital Age by Bart Kosko

The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature by Steven Pinker

The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedom by Yochai Benkler

DARWIN'S DANGEROUS IDEA: EVOLUTION AND THE MEANINGS OF LIFE by Daniel C. Dennett

The Executive Brain: Frontal Lobes and the Civilized Mind by Elkhonon Goldberg

Curious Minds: How a Child Becomes a Scientist by John Brockman

Why Smart People Can Be So Stupid by Robert J. Sternberg

The Quark and the Jaguar: Adventures in the Simple and the Complex by Murray Gell-Mann

Origin of Wealth: Evolution, Complexity, and the Radical Remaking of Economics by Eric D. Beinhocker

The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies by Bryan Douglas Caplan

The Stuff of Thought: Language as a Window into Human Nature by Steven Pinker

The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable by Nassim Nicholas Taleb

Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human by Richard W. Wrangham

Create Your Own Economy: The Path to Prosperity in a Disordered World by Tyler Cowen

Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe by Peter Douglas Ward

Crowdsourcing: Why the Power of the Crowd Is Driving the Future of Business by Jeff Howe

Super Crunchers: Why Thinking-by-Numbers Is the New Way to Be Smart by Ian Ayres

Predictably Irrational, Revised and Expanded Edition: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions by Dan Ariely

The Upside of Irrationality: The Unexpected Benefits of Defying Logic by Dan Ariely

Teaching As a Subversive Activity by Neil Postman

Origins of Genius by Dean Simonton

Mind wars: brain research and national defense by Jonathan Moreno

Spent: Sex, Evolution, and Consumer Behavior by Geoffrey Miller

Rapt: Attention and the Focused Life by Winifred Gallagher

Snoop: What Your Stuff Says About You by Sam Gosling

Figments of reality: the evolution of the curious mind by Ian Stewart

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions by Thomas Kuhn

The 10,000 Year Explosion by Gregory Cochran

The World is Flat by Thomas Friedman

Historical Grand Unification Books

Guns, Germs, and Steel by Jared Diamond

Why the West Rules--for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future by Ian Morris (thanks to Quora User for recommendation)

A Farewell to Alms by Gregory Clark

Also, **Razib Khan** of Gene Expression has many more book recommendations for particularly deep macrohistorical books (<http://www.razib.com/books> and <http://www.gnXP.com> - though a recent change screwed up the formatting on gnXP.com so you have to scroll to the bottom for these books)

Somewhat More Technical Books

How to Find a Habitable Planet by James Kasting (more technical)

Scientific Genius by Dean Simonton (more technical)

The Extended Phenotype by Richard Dawkins (more technical)

URLs for many of the books above here: <http://www.amazon.com/lm/R3L83OI...> and <http://books.google.com/books?ui...> . Latter link is to my Google Books library, which has *a lot* more.

All the World Question Center books by John Brockman (also free at edge.org)

Links of them: <http://books.google.com/books?id...>

<http://books.google.com/books?id...>

<http://books.google.com/books?id...>

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<http://books.google.com/books?id...>

Updated 11 Jul, 2011.

Upvote 174 Downvote Comments 5+



Alex Klein, Cofounder, Kano Computing

9 upvotes by Quora User, Neel Kumar, Quora User, (more)

There are provocations that expand the mind, and imaginations that enlarge the heart, and no book better bridges both than:

"[The Hero with a Thousand Faces](#)," by Joseph Campbell

About all the big questions in all the little ways.

Written 29 Dec, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 9 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



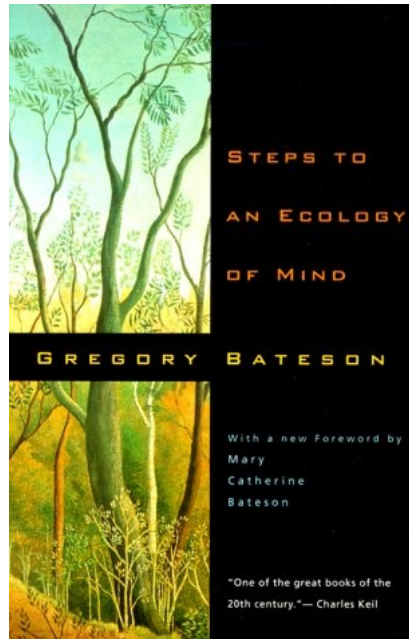
Christophe Grosjean, Agile Developer

11 upvotes by Paul Mcnevin, Cristian Plugaru, Sundar Lakshmanan, (more)

I've found Gregory Bateson really enlightning in many ways, many of his books are worth reading as he is one the fathers of Cybernetics but focusing on the mind, not on computers.

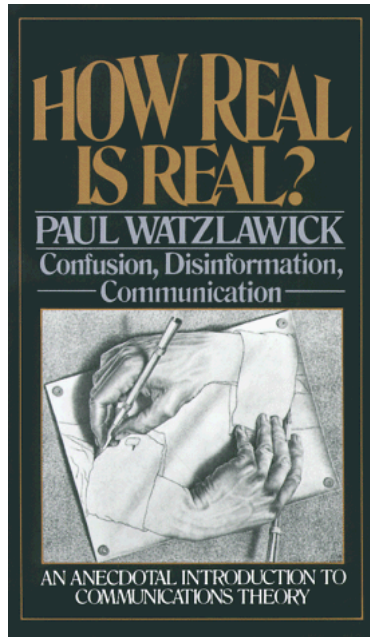
You could try this book, which is a collection of essays.

[Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology](#)

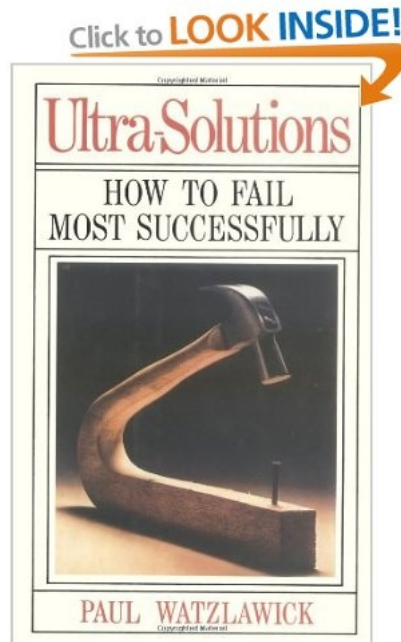


There is not so many people that can be described as a philosopher, anthropologist, photographer, naturalist, and poet. As an hacker I especially love metalogues, a father explaining fundamental concepts to his seven years old daughter. The game is to try to write the text in such way it's form will match it's content. Some are real successes in my eyes.

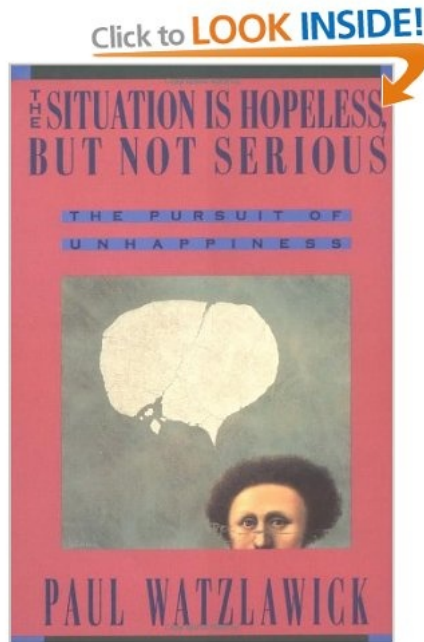
Also **many books from Paul Watzlawick** (kind of disciple of Bateson) are really enlightning. This one is a must read if you ever asked to yourself what's the difference between animal and human languages, or if as a spy you plane to meet some fellow spy, giving a date but without setting the place...



If you only have an hour, also from Watzlawick you can try one of his two best-sellers. Easy reading but still mind boggling.



or



Written 29 Aug, 2013.

Upvote 11 Downvote Comments 1+

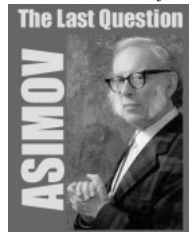


Tarik Tristan Chardon, always ask why.

13 upvotes by M. A. Steinberger, Mohit Bakshi, Sandhiya Baskaran, (more)

One of the mind-expanding books I've recently read is: **Isaac Asimov, The Last Question**.

It's a short read (just 4,000 words, about 20 minutes), and truly fascinating.



Also see the reviews here: [Good Reads: The Last Question](#)

Updated 25 Feb.

Upvote 13 Downvote Comments 1+



Byron Henry, wishing I had more time to read...

13 upvotes by Frank Meeuwsen, Roland Kofler, Lee Coursey, (more)

Here's a few golden oldies that still hold up.

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, by Robert Pirsig.

About mind, philosophy, quality. A bit about motorcycles, too. (I didn't get until second reading that the motorcycle is a metaphor for the narrator's mind. Oops.)

Catch 22, by Joseph Heller.

A great, entertaining read. Absurd, but not so much when you think about it.

The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, by Thomas Kuhn.

Hard going for the first few pages, but short and well worth the effort. This is the book that popularized the notion of paradigms, and paradigm shifts. It'll change the way you think about science, truth, knowledge.

Written 15 Jan, 2011.

Upvote 13 Downvote Comment 1



Jim Stone, Personal Productivity Philosopher

4 upvotes by Nalin Savara, Quora User, Mifanr Chen, (more)

- [The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves](#)

- [The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology](#)
- [The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies](#)
- [Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies](#)
- [The Selfish Gene](#)
- [A People's History of the United States: 1492 to Present](#)
- [The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language](#)
- [Wise Choices, Apt Feelings: A Theory of Normative Judgment](#)
- [Unknown Quantity: A Real and Imaginary History of Algebra](#)
- [The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals](#)
- [Meaning and Relevance](#)
- [Philosophical Investigations](#)
- [Human, All Too Human](#)
- [Status Anxiety](#)
- [Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior](#)

Written 29 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 4 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Sally Wark

11 upvotes by Randy Crawford, Irma Hafidz, Byron Henry, (more)

Thinking, Fast and Slow
by Daniel Kahneman

The book is Kahneman's explanation and presentation of many years of his research into the processes behind intuition and cognition. He talks about complex neurological processes in a manner that the everyday person is able to relate to and understand, and showcases theories behind why our minds function the way they do (both consciously and otherwise).

"Major *New York Times* bestseller

Winner of the National Academy of Sciences Best Book Award in 2012

Selected by the *New York Times Book Review* as one of the best books of 2011

A *Globe and Mail* Best Books of the Year 2011 Title

One of *The Economist's* 2011 Books of the Year

One of *The Wall Street Journal's* Best Nonfiction Books of the Year 2011

In the international bestseller, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman, the renowned psychologist and winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, takes us on a groundbreaking tour of the mind and explains the two systems that drive the way we think. System 1 is fast, intuitive, and emotional; System 2 is slower, more deliberative, and more logical. The impact of overconfidence on corporate strategies, the difficulties of predicting what will make us happy in the future, the profound effect of cognitive biases on everything from playing the stock market to planning our next vacation—each of these can be understood only by knowing how the two systems shape our judgments and decisions.

Engaging the reader in a lively conversation about how we think, Kahneman reveals where we can and cannot trust our intuitions and how we can tap into the benefits of slow thinking. He offers practical and enlightening insights into how choices are made in both our business and our personal lives—and how we can use different techniques to guard against the mental glitches that often get us into trouble. Winner of the National Academy of Sciences Best Book Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and selected by *The New York Times Book Review* as one of the ten best books of 2011, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* is destined to be a classic."

Written 19 Apr, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 11 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Jim Smith

11 upvotes by Aqsa Khan, Byron Henry, Cristián Egaña, (more)

The Stranger: Albert Camus

Written 11 Mar.

[Upvote](#) 11 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



MC Hayashi

9 upvotes by Nitish Ranjan, Quora User, Quora User, (more)

These are some books which have had a tremendous impact on my outlook in life:

- The 3rd Wave - Alvin Toffler
- The E-Myth - Michael E. Gerber
- A New Earth - Eckhart Tolle
- Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking - M. Neil Browne
- Den of Thieves - James B. Stewart
- Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain - Betty Edwards
- How to Think Like a Computer Scientist: Learning with Python - Allen Downey
- The Education of a Bodybuilder - A. Schwarzenegger
- On Death and Dying - Kubler-Ross
- Bushido: The Soul of Japan - I. Nitobe
- 7-Habits of Highly Effective People - Covey

Updated 7 Oct, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 9 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 1+



Adam Morley, PhD in Bird Law

7 upvotes by Quora User, Quora User, Kshitiz Mishra, (more)

Manufacturing Consent - Noam Chomsky

Agree or not with premise you'll never again look at anything the same way you did before reading this book (also got 3 hour video summary available on YouTube)

Written 17 May.

[Upvote](#) 7 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Mark DeBolt, schizophrenic writer

10 upvotes by Abdullahi Geedi, Quora User, Quora User, (more)

Chuang Tzu (Zuangzi)

The Bhagavad Gita

The Zohar (though its very difficult)

Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story, by Jim Holt

The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos,
by Brian Greene

Last and First Men, by Olaf Stapledon

The Collected Fictions of Jorge Luis Borges

Written 15 May.

[Upvote](#) 10 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Quora User

3 upvotes by Ming Law, Jacob Larsen Lundgaard, and Julie Prentice.

How To Win Friends and Influence People - Dale Carnegie

Vintage yet effective

Written 23 Oct, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 3 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Peter Flom, "When I get a little money I b... (more)

1 upvote by Bharath Shivaram.

[Book Review: Anathem by Neal Stephenson](#)

[Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance](#)

[Tao te Ching](#)

[Proofs and Refutations](#)

[Godel Escher Bach](#)

Written 10 Mar.

[Upvote](#) 1 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Michael P. Anthony, Interested in all things human

14 upvotes by Natalie Natalie, Ceren Akkan, Parag Kulkarni, (more)

[Reading Robert Kurzban's "why Everyone Else Is A Hypocrite"](#)

Kurzban is an evolutionary psychologist who writes about how the brain works. He's funny, opinionated, and wicked smart. This is a very readable book, and he helps bring together diverse areas of research to explain what we know about how our noggins really function. You will be very surprised.

Written 6 Feb.

[Upvote](#) 14 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 1+



Chris Mojo, Young Professional, Perpetual ... (more)

10 upvotes by Mihai Trandafir, Steve Joseph, Quora User, (more)

[Brave New World and Brave New World Revisited: Aldous Huxley](#)

[On the Road \(Penguin Great Books of the 20th Century\): Jack Kerouac](#)

[Naked Lunch: William S. Burroughs](#)

[Howl and Other Poems \(City Lights Pocket Poets, No. 4\) Alan Ginsberg](#)

[The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam: Barbara W. Tuchman](#)

[Man's Search for Meaning: Viktor E. Frankl](#)

Written 17 Jul.

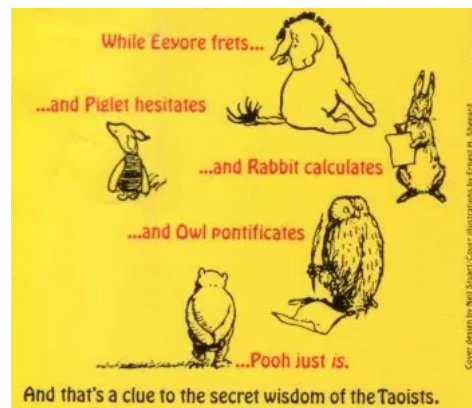
[Upvote](#) 10 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Tarun Kuckian, Knock, knock; Who?Infini... (more)

26 upvotes by Kate Simmons, Quora User, Vishesh Kumar, (more)

[The Tao of Pooh and The Te of Piglet](#) by Benjamin Hoff.



Through the analogy of Winnie the Pooh tales, the author Benjamin Hoff explains the concepts of Tao in a beautiful manner. It isn't a philosophical book at all. If I have to categorize it, I will put it under self-help. The author examines how peoples' behaviour reflect in the characters of Tigger, Piglet, Owl, Rabbit and Eeyore and finally presents Pooh as the example of Taoist living or to quote Wiki "[Winnie-the-Pooh](#) himself, for example, personifies the principles of [wei wu wei](#) , the Taoist concept of 'effortless doing,' "

Once again to quote Wikipedia: "The book starts with a description of the [vinegar tasters](#) , which is an actual painting portraying the three great eastern

thinkers, [Confucius](#) , the [Buddha](#) , and [Laozi](#) over a vat of vinegar. Each tasting the vinegar of "life," Confucius finds it sour, the Buddha finds it bitter, but Laozi, the traditional founder of Taoism, finds it satisfying. Then the story unfolds backing up this analogy."

The Te of Piglet was written about 10 years after the first book. This second book :(wikipedia)"*The Te of Piglet* is based around two topics, the concept of [Te](#) , the Chinese word meaning 'power' or 'virtue', and [Piglet](#) of the [Winnie the Pooh](#) books.[3] Hoff elucidates the Taoist concept of 'Virtue — of the small'; though, he also uses it as an opportunity to elaborate on his introduction to Taoism."

Another 'mind-expanding' book is '*Many lives. Many masters*' by Dr. Brian Weiss.

Also may I add to this list '*One hundred poems of Kabir*' ~ translated by Rabindranath Tagore with Evelyn Underwood. Saint Kabir was a mystic who lived in India in the 15th century. The poems are full of mysticism as well as earthly wisdom.

Updated 15 Apr, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 26 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Priscila Ruiz

17 upvotes by Cyndi Perlman Fink, Tavish Naruka, Ninu Ciprian Marginean, (more)

The books that have expanded my mind the most- because I have to admit every book I've read has helped me some way- are:

Blink, Outliers, The Tipping Point and What the Dog Saw- All by Malcolm Gladwell

Freakonomics- by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

They all challenge "conventional wisdom" leading to the most unanticipated answers.

A Thousand Splendid Suns- by Khaled Hosseini

A beautiful book that made me realize how much of life we miss out while complaining (that by the way will make you cry rivers). It tells the story of two women, starting when they were just girls and how their completely different lives end up tangled up in a conflicting Afghanistan.

Man's Search for Meaning- by Viktor Frankl

An eye-opening book that shows us if we are really living or just going through life. Told from the perspective of a psychiatrist that was interned in a concentration camp during WWII without falling in the clichés that characterize the books that take place in this period of time.

The Success Principles- by Jack Canfield

A complete guide for life, backed up with life experiences, and divided in 64 worth-reading (and applying) principles.

The 48 Laws of Power- by Robert Greene

A compilation of rules that changed my view of the minds of powerful people.

Ageless Body, Timeless Mind- Deepak Chopra

A book that reveals the truth of the holistic aging and how to understand it and even revert it.

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People/Teens- by Stephen Coveit and Sean Covey (respectively)

This books show basically how to become progressively a "better working" person.

The Fifth Mountain- by Paulo Coelho

This book narrates a both physical and spiritual journey that leads back to the very beginning.

The Secret- by Rhonda Byrne

This book actually changed my life in a radical way, and proved itself by the way it got to my hands.

Some books that I'm about to read and expect to be very mind-opening are:

Daring Greatly- by Brene Brown (I highly recommend both her TEDTalks, you can find them here: [Brené Brown: Listening to shame | Video on TED.com](#) and [Brené Brown: The power of vulnerability | Video on TED.com](#))

Diary of Wimpy Kid- by Jeff Kinney

Flipped- by Wendelin van Draanen

God is not Great- by Christopher Hitchens

Henry David Thoreau : A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers / Walden, Or, Life in the Woods / The Maine Woods / Cape Cod – by Henry David Thoreau

Stumbling on Happiness- by Daniel Gilbert

The Art of War- by Sun Tzu

The Dip- by Seth Godin

You've got to read this book! - [compiled by] Jack Canfield, Gay Hendricks, with Carol Kline (This is actually a description of the books that changed people's lives and one way or another turned them huge personalities we know today)

I also recommend using [What Should I Read Next? Book recommendations from readers like you](#) to create lists of the books you've read or want to read, the websites also suggests readings based on any book you've liked.

Written 31 Jul, 2013.

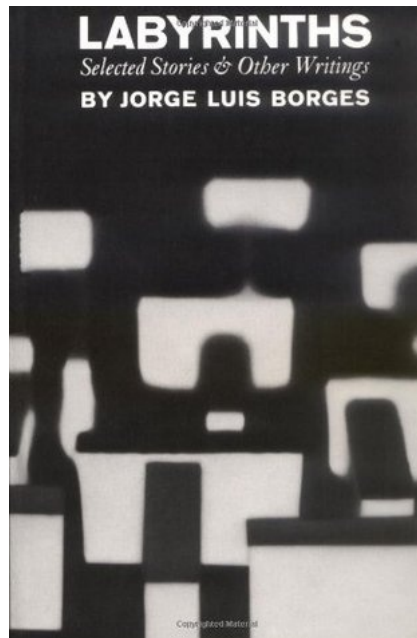
[Upvote](#) 17 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 2+



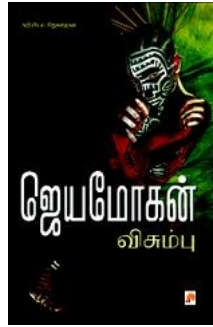
Srivathsan Rangarajan, He wanted to confirm if he was... (more)

13 upvotes by Sundar Lakshmanan, Quora User, Ramzi Zehani, (more)

Read this book Labyrinths Selected Stories & Other Writings by Jorge Louis Borges. One of the most profound story telling on paper. The stories are no more than 6 to 7 pages but the ideas they plant in your mind will stay for a while. Handling very delicate themes like labyrinths, infinity, eternity and treading the lines between fantasy, fiction and realism, this book is a treasure chest of ideas.



For Tamil readers, the short story collection 'Visumbu' by Jeyamohan is the one to read. Dealing with science fiction very specific to Tamil culture, it serves as a good quick read but also makes you ponder on some brilliant ideas, related to siddha medicine and Ayurveda.



Written 8 Jan.

Upvote 13 Downvote Comment 1



Sam Jp, Hacker in residence @DesignerFund

6 upvotes by Eric Page, James H. Kelly, Suneetha Malkani, (more)

On Being Certain - Believing You Are Right Even When You Are Not.

Here is the author's talk at Google:

By the way, you'd be interested to know that Gladwell didn't do his homework very well on Blink as he did with his other works. I am afraid Blink was nothing but an expansion of a New Yorker article he wrote and some of the neuroscience is a tad overstretched (I spent a semester in college doing research on the subject). During my research, I came across Robert Burton's book and talk above. He is a great writer, reminiscent of Gladwell and Alan Lightman, but also brings great clarity through his domain knowledge in neuroscience.

This book gives one a healthy dose of questioning. I highly recommend the video - it's somewhat interactive in the beginning - he gives you a puzzle to figure out :-)

Here is a meta-link to my other answer on a related topic that comes quite frequently in Blink - facial emotion reading [What do real social psychologists think of the TV show Lie to Me?](#)

Written 1 Jan, 2011.

Upvote 6 Downvote Comments 1+



Vo Anh, Insight hunter for a cause, co... (more)

8 upvotes by Hanningtone Omollo, Vandio Zuccarelli, Kshitiz Mishra, (more)

Updated Jan 20, 2014

Shock Doctrine by Naomi Klein on how the world worked (politics, economics, history, war, public relation)

Start-up Nation by Dan Senor & Saul Singer on advantages of wartime mentality (Israel, war, innovation, willpower)

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card on maturity and survival instinct (science

fiction, war, military)

Warped Passages by Lisa Randall on leaps of faith in science (theoretical physics)

Sperm Wars by Robin Baker on a notion of war in all aspects of life (sexuality, evolution, psychology)

The Lexus and The Olive Tree by Tom Friedman on how simple ideas manifest themselves in all aspects of life (economics, public relation)

Abundance by Peter Diamandis on how optimistic Peter is

How to Create a Mind by Ray Kurzweil to fortify my own theory of hierarchical consciousness

Updated 20 Jan.

[Upvote](#) 8 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Michael Carradice, human being.

6 upvotes by Mallika Mathur, Jan Kowalski, Nalin Savara, (more)

Good science fiction books. Science fiction is a literature of ideas. Other flavors of literature bring you beauty or even knowledge; good science fiction has that along with new ideas for you to ponder and make your mind richer. Be it Ender's Game, Dune, or any other the books that are pillars of good science fiction.

Written 31 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 6 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Mahesh Sampath, Science loving Software engineer

9 upvotes by Quora User, Quora User, Nithin Kumar Athreya, (more)

Seven mysteries of Life - By Guy Murchie

This, in my opinion is the most underrated book of all times. The scope of this book is mind blowing. Its a tour for the layman through birth of the universe, evolution, biology, physics, psychology, sociology and finally religion, all with a generous pinch of philosophy. I intentionally slowed down reading this book because I didn't want it to end. The author gives a slight overdose of philosophy at times, but I ignore it now and then. Over all, for anybody interested in science, I would bet this would turn out to be one of the best books they might have read.

[The Seven Mysteries of Life](#)

Written 6 Dec, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 9 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Quora User

8 upvotes by Nalin Savara, Quora User, Shreyas Manjunath, (more)

- Beyond Good and Evil by Friedrich Nietzsche
- Discipline and Punish by Michel Foucault
- Crime and Punishment by Fyodor Dostoevsky
- Imagined Communities by Benedict Anderson
- The death of Ivan Ilyich by Leo Tolstoy
- Democracy in America by Alexis de Tocqueville

Written 17 Aug, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 8 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Leah Hamilton, hominid

15 upvotes by Murali Krishna Uppala, Bob LeJeune, Christopher Ogden, (more)

- *Steppenwolf*, and *The Glass Bead Game* by **Hermann Hesse**
- *The Wall*, by **Jean-Paul Sartre**
- *The Bone People*, by **Keri Hulme**

- *A Brief History of Time*, by **Stephen Hawking**
- *Godel, Escher, Bach*, by **Douglas Hofstadter**
- *Confessions of a Mask*, by **Yukio Mishima**
- *The City and The City*, by **China Mieville**

Written 19 May, 2013.

Upvote 15 Downvote Comments 2



Rajesh Sampathkumar, Engineering, quality and proje... (more)

6 upvotes by Nagasubramanian Viswanathan, Sriram Murali Velamur, Stephen Troxel, (more)

Some "mind expanding" books I've read:

1. Aleph - Jorge Luis Borges
2. Flow - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
3. The Black Swan - Nassim Nicholas Taleb
4. Cognitive Surplus - Clay Shirky
5. Society of Mind - Marvin Minsky
6. Fight Club - Chuck Palahnuik
7. The Language Instinct - Steven Pinker
8. A Short History of Nearly Everything - Bill Bryson
9. Chaos - James Gleick
10. Nightfall and other short stories - Isaac Asimov

Written 11 Jul, 2013.

Upvote 6 Downvote Comment



Hwang Min Hae, med student

35 upvotes by Byron Henry, Greg Maza, Daniël Kortekaas, (more)

I read "The Neurophysics of Human Behaviour" - Kind of mind-bending. Really.

Or pick up any philosophy book by Wittgenstein, Plato etc...

Expand your knowledge by building parallels.

- Pick up an introductory book on "Game Theory"
- Read about "Chaos Effect"
- Read an advanced maths book

I don't know... most books are really enlightening when you start to see connections between seemingly unrelated fields.

Written 21 Mar, 2013.

Upvote 35 Downvote Comments 3



Phillip McCreight, Imagine, Explore, Create, Share

6 upvotes by Bret L Simmons, Meredith Branscombe, John St.Cyr, (more)

I've found the 5th Discipline by Senge was a good stepping off point to systems thinking.

Written 7 Jan, 2011.

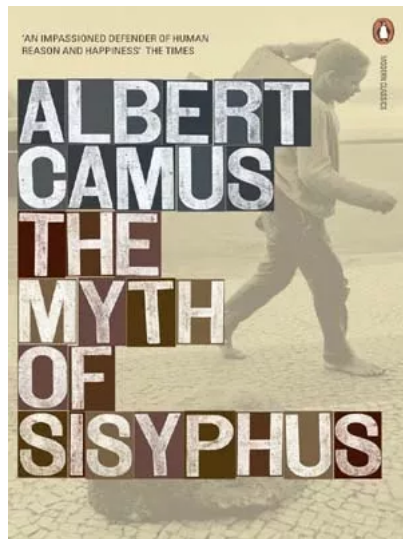
Upvote 6 Downvote Comment



Aditya Gupta, unanswered questions are bette... (more)

14 upvotes by Sushant Mehta, Rudrek Pan, Quora User, (more)

The Myth of Sisyphus by Albert Camus

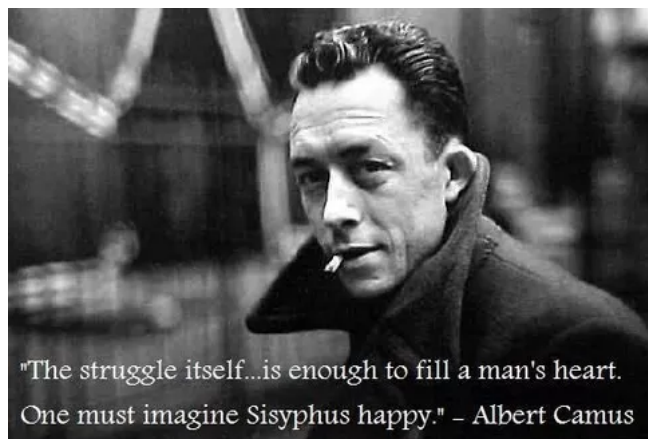


"Thinking is learning all over again how to see, directing one's consciousness, making of every image a privileged place."

"If it were sufficient to love, things would be too easy."

"All great deeds and all great thoughts have a ridiculous beginning. Great works are often born on a street-corner or in a restaurant's revolving door. So it is with absurdity. The absurd world more than others derives its nobility from that abject birth. In certain situations, replying "nothing" when asked what one is thinking about may be pretense in a man. Those who are loved are well aware of this. But if that reply is sincere, if it symbolizes that odd state of soul in which the void becomes eloquent, in which the chain of daily gestures is broken, in which the heart vainly seeks the link that will connect it again, then it is as it were the first sign of absurdity."

and the most profound of them all



If people have read this book please share their experience.

Written 26 Jul.

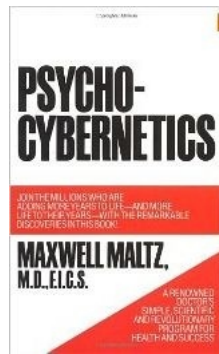
Upvote 14 Downvote Comment



Anand Silodia, curious soul

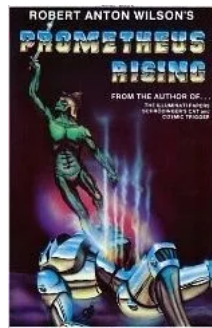
5 upvotes by Aditya Ajmani, Aseem Rohatgi, Michael Hughes, (more)

A lot of good answers here. Let me add a couple of books which go beyond theories and give practical exercises that you can try out yourself:



From the Amazon page: *Psycho-Cybernetics* is the original text that defined the mind/body connection—the concept that paved the way for most of today's personal empowerment programs. Turn crises into creative opportunities, dehypnotize yourself from false beliefs, and celebrate new freedom from fear and guilt.

In case it sounds hocus-pocus, let me assure you, it isn't. Each chapter tackles a different aspect of human behaviour and its relation to the body and subconscious mind. At the end of the chapter there are practical exercises with precise instructions, including the time limit in which they will bear fruit.



From the Amazon page: Imagine trying to make sense of an amalgam of Timothy Leary's eight neurological circuits, G.I. Gurdjieff's self-observation exercises, Alfred Korzybski's general semantics, Aleister Crowley's magical theorems, and the several disciplines of Yoga; not to mention Christian Science, relativity, quantum mechanics, and many other approaches to understanding the world around us. That is exactly what Robert Anton Wilson does in *Prometheus Rising*. In short, this is a book about how the human mind works and what you can do to make the most of yours.

Again, full of mind-bending exercises to try out for yourself.

Written 28 Dec, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 5 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Mike Fishbein, Founder of Startup College [stp...](#) (more)

13 upvotes by Quora User, John Li, Quora User, (more)

The books below radically changed the way I think. They're not necessarily the best, most influential, or most valuable - but these books altered deep-seeded beliefs I've had about important aspects of life. I list the three I'd consider to be most mind blowing first, and then a few others that have been almost equally mind blowing. I highly recommend all of them!

1.) The 4-Hour Workweek: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich by Tim Ferriss ([link](#))

-Radically changed the way I think about work, money, lifestyle, entrepreneurship, definitions of success, and productivity, and proposed new opportunities I had not before considered.

2.) The Startup Owner's Manual: The Step-By-Step Guide for Building a Great Company by Steve Blank and Bob Dorf ([link](#))

-Having been thinking about and practicing business and entrepreneurship since I was a kid, this book radically changed the way I think about business strategy and the entrepreneurial process

3.) **Sex at Dawn: How We Mate, Why We Stray, and What It Means for Modern Relationships** by Christopher Ryan and Cacilda Jetha ([link](#))

-This book challenges conventional beliefs about sex and relationships in a major way. The authors pile on scientific evidence to support what some might have guessed from our 50% divorce rate: monogamy is far from natural.

Some others that have been quite mind-blowing:

[The Power of Now](#) (mentality), [Think and Grow Rich](#) (mentality, motivation, work ethic, success), [The Startup of You](#) (professional relationships, career, entrepreneurship), [The Game](#) (dating, mentality), [Ayn Rand philosophies](#) (government, politics, mentality), [Choose Yourself](#) (entrepreneurship, mentality, lifestyle).

Written 27 Aug, 2013.

Upvote 13 Downvote Comments 2



Michael Powe

5 upvotes by Bob LeJeune, Wael Al-Sallami, Michael Laudenbach, (more)

Tillich, Paul. *The Dynamics of Faith.* 9780060937133. Completely turns on their heads ordinary ideas about the nature of faith.

Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society.* 9780664235390. Deepened my understanding of ethics in a modern society.

Philbrick, Nathaniel. *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War.* 9780143111979. A revelatory history of the early years of the Plymouth colony. This is not your hagiographic schoolboy history.

Ellroy, James. *My Dark Places.* 9780679762058. A creepy, unflinching and gripping memoir of Ellroy's lifelong obsession with his mother's murder and his search for the murderer.

Gonzales, Laurence. *Deep Survival: Who Lives, Who Dies, and Why.* 980393326154. A plane crashes in the jungle. All the adult survivors subsequently perish. A single teenaged girl survives to be rescued. Why? This book explores answers to that question.

Egan, Timothy. *The Worst Hard Time.* 9780618773473. The definitive history of the Dust Bowl years of the Great Depression. Told through the voices of those who lived through it. I have never looked at dirt the same.

Coll, Steve. *Ghost Wars.* 9780143034667. An exhaustive history of Afghanistan from the beginning of the Soviet invasion to Sept 11, 2001. Details the extent of American involvement in the events and circumstances that would lead to the empowerment of bin Laden and Al-Qaeda.

Russell, Bertrand. *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy.* 9780760773406. Written while Russell was serving a prison sentence as a conscientious objector during WWI. Opened my eyes to the ideas behind ordinary numbers. (Encouraged me to study mathematics at university.)

Eggers, Dave. *What is the What.* 9780307385901. A fictionalized autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng, a survivor of the Sudanese civil wars. Deng escaped death in cross-country marches as a boy; survived life in refugee camps; and eventually, resettled to a life in America that included a home invasion and the murder of his girl friend. A witty and uplifting book. Could you keep your sense of humor through all that?

These are some books that changed my view of the world in some way.

Written 24 Jan, 2013.

Upvote 5 Downvote Comment 1



Silvia Trujillano, cosmic

7 upvotes by Patrick Capriotti, Bob LeJeune, Quora User, (more)

Recently I watched a very interesting video about energy and magnetism. Unfortunately is in spanish but in that video is mentioned a book and a experiment that is causing interest all around the world. The book is **The hidden messages in water.**

Hope you like it.

Written 22 Apr.

Upvote 7 Downvote Comment

**Suman Patnaik**, Professional dabbler and armch... (more)

18 upvotes by James H. Kelly, Abhilash Paliakkara Sasidharan, Kunal Kashikar, (more)

Fiction

- **A Thousand Splendid Suns** by Khaled Hosseini
- **The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle** by Haruki Murakami
- **Kafka on the Shore** by Haruki Murakami
- **The Elegance of the Hedgehog** by Muriel Barbery
- **Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress** by Dai Sijie

Non Fiction

- **Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!** by Richard Feynman
- **The Blue Sweater** by Jacqueline Novogratz
- **Hiroshima Diary** by Michihiko Hachiya
- **Color: A Natural History of the Palette** by Victoria Finlay
- **Shady Characters: The Secret Life of Punctuation** by Keith Houston
- **The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic – and How it Changed Science, Cities and the Modern World** by Steven Berlin
- **The Diary of Anne Frank**

Written 22 Jan.

Upvote 18 Downvote Comments 1+

**Quora User**

6 upvotes by Peter Flom, Kevin S Lin, Byron Henry, (more)

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance

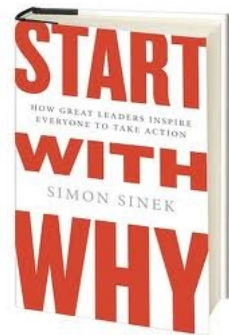
Written 1 May.

Upvote 6 Downvote Comment 1

**Quora User**

5 upvotes by Chad Lks, Qin Hao, Quora User, (more)

In business and branding the most mind expanding book would have to be "Start With Why" by Simon Sinek. It provides an amazing framework for starting a business that is driven by a purpose rather than a passion. Passion will fade with difficulties or time but a purpose will keep you focused in spite of hardships or changes within a market.



Written 12 Nov, 2013.

Upvote 5 Downvote Comment

**Ed Camara**, Graphic Designer, Advertising.... (more)

7 upvotes by Ming Law, Quora User, Keven Dones, (more)

Anything from Isaac Asimov... The End of Eternity, Complete Stories, Foundation...

Science Fiction, pretty awesome. Written more than 50 years ago, many of the

technologies he exposes are now available, and his explanations seem pretty feasible.

Written 29 Jan, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 7 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Shishir Singhai

9 upvotes by Ashish Urmila Ambar, Robert Rezončnik, Minh Do, (more)

Blink by Malcom Gladwell

Its a good book talks about some thoughts comes to our mind without thinking :).

[Amazon.com: Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking eBook: Malcolm Gladwell: Books](#)

I like books that work out of some real life examples like blink and some of them are

Some more from Malcome Gladwell

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

[Amazon.com: The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference eBook: Malcolm Gladwell: Books](#)

Outliers: The Story of Success

[Amazon.com: Outliers: The Story of Success eBook: Malcolm Gladwell: Kindle Store](#)

Some others in the similar lines that I read and enjoyed a lot are:

Feakonomics - S Levitt and S. Dubner

[Amazon.com: Freakonomics Rev Ed: \(and Other Riddles of Modern Life\) \(P.S.\) eBook: Steven D. Levitt, Stephen J. Dubner: Kindle Store](#)

Thinking, Fast and Slow - **Daniel Kahneman**

[Amazon.com: Thinking, Fast and Slow eBook: Daniel Kahneman: Kindle Store](#)

Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't - **Jim Collins**

[Amazon.com: Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't eBook: Jim Collins: Kindle Store](#)

Updated 20 Mar.

[Upvote](#) 9 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Quora User

13 upvotes by Siwei Cheng, Quora User, Byron Henry, (more)

"Zen and the art of Motorcycle maintenance" is a great philosophical book that deals quite a lot with values and perceptions. It deals with the authors 17 day motorcycle trip and how he deals with certain aspects of that trip.

Written 3 Oct, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 13 [Downvote](#)



Himanshu Joshi, Bloke

10 upvotes by Quora User, Manish Panjabi, Matt Hodel, (more)

[The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything: Ken Robinson, Lou Aronica: 9780143116738: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Definitely one of the most amazing books. Whats best, its for everyone -

teachers, students, philosophers alike. How our education seems to be altered by global phenomenon like the industrial revolution and while it is important to study, it is all the more important to find our Element!

A profound read.

Written 26 Jul.

Upvote 10 Downvote Comments 1+



Sahar Najeeb Kharrufa, Associate professor of archite... (more)

10 upvotes by Craig Heile, Quora User, Bob LeJeune, (more)

Surprised nobody mentioned Bill Bryson's "A Short History of Nearly Everything".

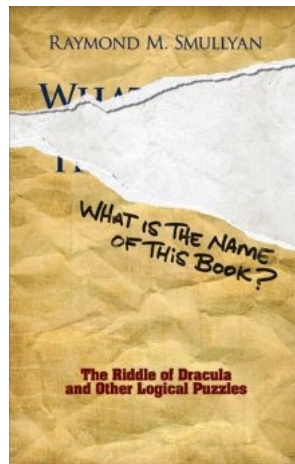
Written 23 Nov, 2012.

Upvote 10 Downvote Comment 1



Quora User

7 upvotes by Quora User, Ravi Chandra, Rajdeep Das, (more)



[What Is the Name of This Book?: The Riddle of Dracula and Other Logical Puzzles: Raymond M. Smullyan: 9780486481982: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Brain twisting fun!

Written 16 Aug, 2013.

Upvote 7 Downvote Comment

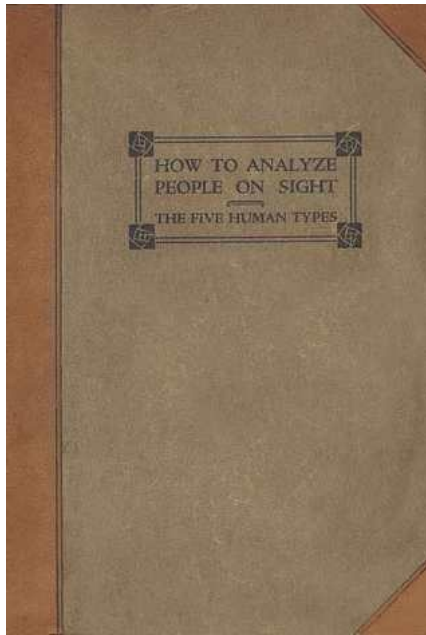


Kiran Babu, likes to think

9 upvotes by Quora User, Prashant Garagi, Dev Singhvi, (more)

How to Analyze People on Sight

by Elsie Lincoln Benedict, Ralph Paine Benedict



An old gem. It changed the way I perceived and interacted with people. I understood why certain people behaved in some ways and helped me understand them for what they are. People can't really have total control over themselves. They are born with somethings that can't be changed.

I have read many books that focus on the mind, but this one proves that the body is important too which makes it stand apart from the rest.

Written 20 Sep, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 9 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Henry Brice

7 upvotes by Todd Allen, Neel Kumar, Ravi Shekhar, (more)

To add one that I don't think has been here yet (at least, it isn't in the wiki):
Collapse - Jared Diamond

It is a book about various ancient and modern societies, and the amalgam of elements that contributed to their continuation or collapse. It has much to teach us, and much that should be taken into account when considering what we want our current societies to look like.

Written 5 Sep.

[Upvote](#) 7 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Lidia Onufrei, Never stop searching, learning... (more)

14 upvotes by Tanveer Ahmed Khan, Lalet Scaria, Rob Schumann, (more)

1. Facing love addiction - Not about love as the name suggests. But a very interesting breakdown of what drives human behaviour. Makes you realise how blindly we trek through life or question our own motivations.

2. The magicians way

3. The places that scare you

4. Zen in the art of archery

The last three need to be read to be understood. A mere explanation doesn't do them justice

Written 15 Dec, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 14 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Dan Saffer, English major, author, ex-book... (more)

5 upvotes by Uday Gajendar, Byron Henry, Quora User, (more)

Highly recommend The User Illusion by Tor Nørretrander. It's similar to Blink, but much deeper. "Consciousness is a fraud" is the author's premise. It's dense going initially, but then it gets A LOT easier and really changes the way you think about, well, how you think and consciousness in general.

Written 23 Dec, 2010.

Upvote 5 Downvote Comments 2+



Sean Pirtle, Technical Project Manager

14 upvotes by Renat Aksitov, Sunny Paul Purkayastha, Quora User, (more)

In college I read several of Richard Feynman's books and was intrigued by how he looked at the world. It gave me a fresh perspective to be able to question things and realize that there are multiple ways to solve problems and not always one right answer. **Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman! (Adventures of a Curious Character)**

And he was a very cool guy who got away with an incredible amount of stuff. I would have liked to have met him.

Written 10 Apr, 2013.

Upvote 14 Downvote Comment



Matthew Magill

10 upvotes by Tushar Rokade, Teja Naveen Varma, Alok Shukla, (more)

The Handmaid's Tale: dystopian novel where womans' only role is to breed. Although the book is famous for its feminist theme, I think the actual writing is the most 'mind expanding'; there's some beautiful descriptions of the main character's feelings of imprisonment.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep: another slightly dystopian future where having a pet animal is a sign of immense wealth and social presence. Although, like in the movie adaptation: Bladerunner, there are androids too as well as other machinery including a emotion simulator and virtual reality systems. The book asks questions on religion but most importantly on what it means to be real. Is a fake reality more realistic than the original? And if it isn't, then is it better?

Equus: a play about a boy who blinds 6 horses and is treated by a psychiatrist. Equus not only questions psychology (and it's askew morals) but mainly what it means to be passionate. Peter Shaffer presents a play full of perverse desire and forces the reader to ask themselves if it's right to strip that away from someone, with no real defiant answer.

Anything by Tennessee Williams.

Written 8 Sep.

Upvote 10 Downvote Comment



Justin Brickell

12 upvotes by Quora User, Scott Andersen, Quora User, (more)

Critique of pure reason by Immanuel Kant

Written 15 Dec, 2012.

Upvote 12 Downvote Comment



Andrew Lesk

11 upvotes by Michael Hughes, Michael Lundell, James H. Kelly, (more)

I won't duplicate the responses above so I will offer this: the best way to expand your mind is reading FICTION. Learning comes in many forms, and I've learned a good deal reading everything from Machiavelli to Dawkins; but nothing can duplicate the experience of entering another imagined world. Read the short stories of Mavis Gallant, Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth, Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass, Charles Burns' Black Hole, Morley Callaghan's Such Is My Beloved, and AE Housman's poetry.

And my .02 for non-fiction is to avoid books by Malcolm Gladwell. They are so poorly supported in their arguments that they are simply useless.

Written 10 Feb, 2013.

Upvote 11 Downvote Comments 2

**Cristina Truong**

9 upvotes by Anne Jackson, Hunter McCord, Quora User, (more)

I'm currently reading [Because I Said So](#) by Ken Jennings, the famous Jeopardy! player who holds the record for longest game streak.

In it, he takes common things parents tell their kids (don't cross your eyes or they'll stay that way, wait 30 minutes after eating before swimming, don't run around barefoot or you'll get worms) and determines how true these sayings are. He mixes in scientific findings to support or disprove the claims, general history to determine how it became widespread, and humor. It's definitely not a dense read and each "chapter" is only a few pages long.

[Because I Said So!: Ken Jennings: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Written 5 Mar, 2013.

Upvote 9 Downvote Comments 3

**Mike Bursell**, Geek, dad, single malt fan, au... (more)

3 upvotes by Randy Crawford, Mathew Crawford, and Toby Yang.

Gödel, Escher, Bach by Douglas Hofstadter for an introduction to cross-disciplinary thinking.

Written 10 Jun, 2013.

Upvote 3 Downvote Comment

**Saurabh Mithal**

14 upvotes by Quora User, Kshitiz Mishra, Quora User, (more)

Some of the books i have read that have helped me understand the world in a different light.

1. Siddharth by Hermann Hesse
- to find enlightenment on your own.
2. Small is beautiful by E.F. Schumacher
- looking at the modern economic system from a lens of humanity
3. Bhagwad Gita
- more practical than religious
4. Yoga Vashisht
- discussions between ram and vashisht are just mind boggling

<will add on to the list as i read more>

Written 3 Feb.

Upvote 14 Downvote Comment 1

**Prasanna Kumar**, Product Guy, Growth Hacker

9 upvotes by Sandeep Kumar Jha, Neel Kumar, Quora User, (more)

Daniel Kahneman - Think Fast and Slow, absolutely mind blowing book written by a Nobel Laureate

Written 9 Sep, 2013.

Upvote 9 Downvote Comment

**Thomas Michael Corcoran**, Photographer

5 upvotes by Benjamin Winchester, Sharath Kumar Murtugudde, Mickey Warner, (more)

Guns, Germs, and Steel

<http://www.2shared.com/document/...>

Written 3 Feb, 2013.

Upvote 5 Downvote Comment



Adrienne Wadewitz, PhD in English, digital humanist
7 upvotes by Mallika Mathur, Jim Stone, Quora User, (more)

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn - This book tells US history from the perspective of minorities and labor. This is "bottom-up" history rather than "top-down" history - it is less about important figures, such as presidents. You learn about a lot of important historical movements that are left out of traditional historical narratives.

His Dark Materials trilogy by Philip Pullman - This series of novels raises questions about the nature of reality, the existence of God, the place of children in society, innocence vs. experience, and a whole host of fascinating questions. None of its answers are easy, but rather provocative.

Written 31 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 7 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Evgeny Zislis, Software Engineer
3 upvotes by Wael Al-Sallami, Shalini Varma, and Quora User.

[Your Brain At Work](#) by David Rock. Expands the brain into a mean-lean machine.

Written 7 Nov, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 3 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Michael Ambros
2 upvotes by Carrie Lynn Wick and Francesca Irene.

I would recommend Bernard Werber books!

Written 1 Oct, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 2 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Jonangus Mackay, venture zenarchist
7 upvotes by Joseph Wierzbicki, James H. Kelly, Kavita Rao, (more)

- 1) 'Labyrinths', Jorge Luis Borges.
- 2) 'I Am That', Nisargadatta Maharaj.
- 3) 'Gödel, Escher, Bach', Douglas Hofstadter.
- 4) 'Gratefulness, the Heart of Prayer', David Steindl-Rast.
- 5) 'Science Set Free: 10 Paths to New Discovery', Rupert Sheldrake.
- 6) 'Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind', Shunryu Suzuki.
- 7) 'Cosmic Comics', Italo Calvino.
- 8) 'Quantum Psychology', Robert Anton Wilson.

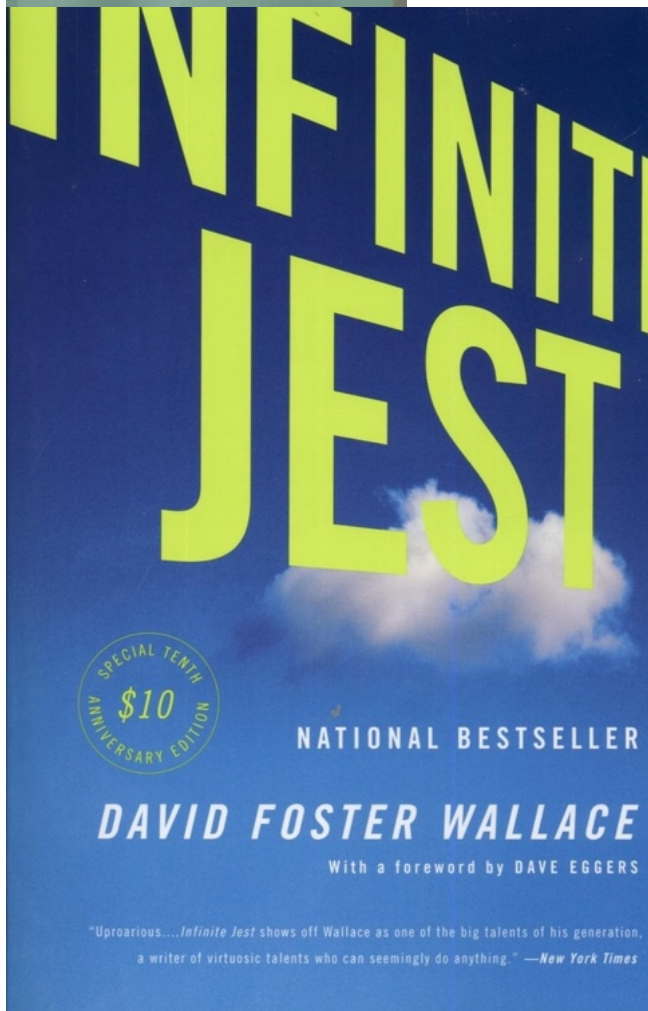
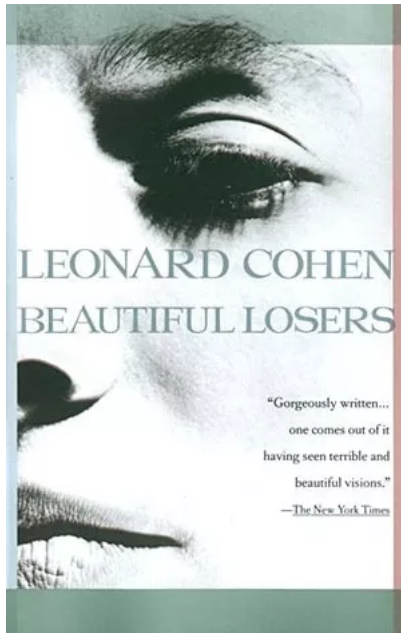
Written 26 Apr, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 7 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 3



Lizzy Brock, Internet Marketer/Super Slueth... (more)
4 upvotes by Stu Thurston, Ed Camara, Apoorv Balwani, (more)

Beautiful Losers by Leonard Cohen...& of you have a lot of time, *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace. beautiful losers changed the way I view literature forever (it won awards for best experimental fiction) & is a quick absurdly brilliant read. I recommend reading it when you are feeling a bit on the brink of insanity. *Infinite Jest* will expand the way you view the world today, consumerism, tennis, rehab, & so much more (I cannot do justice to the two & recommend reading a summary online).



Written 11 Oct, 2013.

Upvote 4 Downvote Comment



Asaf Atzmon

6 upvotes by Anda Tayyr, Ilya Avdyushev, Arunkumar Lakshminarayanan, (more)

Guns, Germs and Steel / Jared Diamond , of you want to really understand why human society developed the way it had (European Caucasian men invading ROW)

Written 31 Jul, 2013.

Upvote 6 Downvote Comment 1



Kyle Kaufman

3 upvotes by Neel Kumar, Ed Camara, and Randy Crawford.

1984.

Written 7 Feb, 2013.

Upvote 3 Downvote Comments 2



Brian Johnson, Here to destroy your hope.

6 upvotes by Quora User, Kenneth Urbina, Aditya Ajmani, (more)

Escape from Freedom - Erich Fromm
Man for Himself: An Inquiry Into the Psychology of Ethics - Erich Fromm
Fromm
The Sane Society - Erich Fromm
The Art of Loving - Erich Fromm
The Pathology of Normalcy - Erich Fromm
The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness - Erich Fromm
Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Towards Self-Realization - Karen Horney
The Neurotic Personality of Our Time - Karen Horney
Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World In Our Time - Carroll Quigley
To Have or To Be? - Erich Fromm
Icarus or the Future of Science - Bertrand Russell
Impact of Science on Society - Bertrand Russell
The Vulnerability of Empire - Charles Kupchan

Written 20 Oct, 2012.

Upvote 6 Downvote Comment



Jeremy Shimmerman

4 upvotes by Xuebin Li, Venki Das, Nathan Benmargi, (more)

'Tricks of the Mind' by Derren Brown was a pretty good read.

Written 16 Jan, 2013.

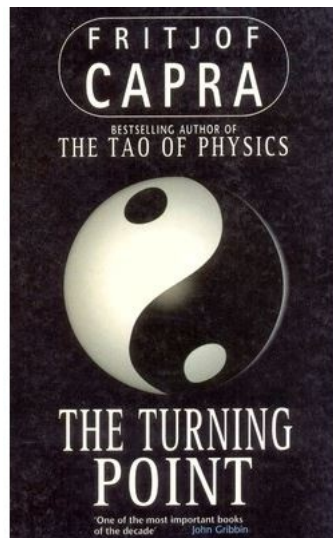
Upvote 4 Downvote Comment



Quora User

3 upvotes by Ollie Palmer, Romain Minaud, and Fintan Moloney.

The Turning Point by Fritjof Kapra



Written 7 Oct, 2013.

Upvote 3 Downvote Comment



KC Cromie, Small but Optimistic

6 upvotes by Mallika Mathur, Quora User, Gurman Singh, (more)

I'm currently enjoying "Mindset" by Carol Dweck. It says a lot about how mindset affects success.

Written 30 Jul, 2013.

Upvote 6

Downvote Comments 2



Laura Wigod

4 upvotes by Randy Crawford, Avinash Maheshwari, David Cole, (more)

I will add "Automate This: How Algorithms Came to Rule Our World," by Christopher Steiner. It's a quick and simple read but packs a lot of thought-provoking material on how algorithms are being used to make decisions in many aspects of our lives. Sometimes algorithms are benign, such as those used in scouting athletes. Others, like those used on Wall Street, have dangerous global implications. I especially enjoyed the portions dealing with algorithms and creativity. [Automate This: How Algorithms Came to Rule Our World: Christopher Steiner: Amazon.com: Kindle Store](#)

Written 9 Feb, 2013.

Upvote 4

Downvote Comment



Sneha Saran

6 upvotes by Quora User, Tarun Kuckian, Satish Vemuri, (more)

Man's search for meaning by Victor Frankl . After reading about his experience of the Holocaust , the journey he traversed for 3 long years in extreme hostile conditions at the concentration camps would make anybody love their lives. A must read. Highly recommended!

Written 24 Mar, 2013.

Upvote 6

Downvote Comment



Tiffany France

3 upvotes by Dingkun Fu, Muhammed Tüfekyapan, and Anne Jackson.

I just finished the Power of Habit. Very thought provoking and enjoyable. As far as fiction, my latest mind expanding read was Genesis...oh and Code Name Verity

Written 29 Mar, 2013.

Upvote 3

Downvote Comment 1



Jerry Farkle

4 upvotes by Quora User, Sreekanth Nair, Yi Zou, (more)

Walden by Henry David Thoreau, followed by some of his journals, The Maine Woods, and finally Cape Cod

Written 3 Dec, 2013.

Upvote 4

Downvote Comment



Gowtham Kaki, CS Grad Student. Studies PL Th... (more)

3 upvotes by Quora User, Byron Henry, and Raghu Teja.

[Logicomix: An Epic Search for Truth: Apostolos Doxiadis, Christos H. Papadimitriou, Alecos Papadatos, Annie Di Donna: 9781596914520: Amazon.com: Books](#) is an interesting comic-style presentation of the story of foundational quest for mathematics interwoven with the biography of Bertrand Russel. The book gives a fascinating account of how monumental efforts of 19th and 20th century logicians to develop rigorous foundations for mathematics based on set theory met with disappointing results due to resulting paradoxes. It takes readers through experiences of Russel, who observes the common theme among these paradoxes and develops type theory out of the wreckage

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personal lives of logicians involved (the book describes this as well), authors classify Logicomix as a tragedy.

[Amazon.com: Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy \(9781420938401\): Bertrand Russell: Books](#) is written by Russel himself as an introduction to Principia Mathematica. It captures the intuition behind rigorous definitions in principia quite elegantly and is a very good read for anyone who is interested in some meta-level discussion of everyday mathematics.

Written 18 Aug, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 3 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Ken Ludwig

2 upvotes by Quora User and Michael Lundell.

Zen Flesh, Zen Bones
 The Sot Weed Factor-John Barth and everything else
 Nikos Kazintzakis-anything, everything
 John Steinbeck, ditto
 Tristram Shandy, Laurence Sterne
 The Proverbs of Heaven and Hell, William Blake
 Don't Make Me Think, Steve Krug

Written 24 Oct, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 2 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Jann Balasubramanian

3 upvotes by Jay Best, Quora User, and Mahadevan Venkataraman.

Few books off the top of my head which gripped me by introducing to an entirely new line of thinking:

Influence: Science and Practice by Robert Cialdini.

Moneyball by Michael Lewis

Blink by Malcolm Gladwell

Jonathan Livingston Seagull by Richard Bach

Written 13 Nov, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 3 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Quora User

2 upvotes by Murtaza Aliakbar and Athol Nicol.

This book helped me understand the ways I was socialized and internalized my successes and failures in life. I had a gazillion aha moments.

[The Secret Thoughts of Successful Women: Why Capable People Suffer from the Impostor Syndrome and How to Thrive in Spite of It](#)

Written 14 Dec, 2012.

[Upvote](#) 2 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 1+



Geordie Keitt, somewhat relaxed

2 upvotes by Aditya Ajmani and Jim Stone.

[The Life and Behavior of Living Organisms: A General Theory](#) Elliott Jaques. This is in my opinion the most accessible book, by the most original thinker, on the nature of thinking and human interaction. Read this first, and then read:

[Flow](#) Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Once you know a little bit about cognitive capacity, this book will help you figure out how to calibrate your work and play to use all your capacity and achieve happiness. A great companion book is:

[Tempo: timing, tactics and strategy in narrative-driven decision-making](#) Quora User. This has got specific tools and methods by which you can measure your current capability of managing complexity, either as a function of sheer info volume or of rate of change of info, and bring it under your control.

On a different topic, architecture and design:

[The Timeless Way of Building](#) Christopher Alexander. In case you were wondering what the hell is wrong with the every housing development, strip mall, and apartment project you see, and what you are craving to see instead.

Updated 31 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 2 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Angela Chang

4 upvotes by Quora User, Amrit Virk, Peter Flom, (more)

From childhood on up, [The Little Prince](#) by [Antoine de Saint-Exupéry](#)

is quite a deep book about the nature of man.

Written 16 May.

[Upvote](#) 4 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Logan Shope, Built a better mouse trap... a... (more)

3 upvotes by Christophe Grosjean, Ann Litz, and Sushmita Mohapatra.

The Disappearing Spoon, by Sam Keane, is a book revealing the history and interesting stories behind the Periodic Table and its elements. It gives the reader much more in depth and exciting view on the topic that many dreaded in high school Chem class: the Periodic Table of Elements.

Written 5 Nov, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 3 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Vinesh Raj

8 upvotes by Malika Nayar, Swaraj Kate, Matt Hodel, (more)

1. awaken the giant within - tony robbins
2. tough times never last but tough people do - robert schuller
3. over the top - zig ziglar
4. Fahrenheit 451 - ray bradbury
5. catch 22 - joseph heller
6. working with emotional intelligence - daniel goleman
7. freedom is not free - shiv khera
8. infinite jest - david foster wallace
9. thinking fast and slow - daniel kahenman
- [Page on 10.it](#) only takes a minute to change your life - willy jollie
11. the 7 habits of highly effective people - stephen r. covey
12. the greatest salesman in the world - og mandino
13. outliers - malcolm gladwell
14. the law of success - napoleon hill
15. unlimited power - tony robbins

Written 5 Sep.

[Upvote](#) 8 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#) 1



Emanuel Datt, Homo Sapien

1 upvote by Siddharth Nair.

Here are a couple of books that will make you wise:

- Aesop's fables: a timeless classic full of wisdom and lessons for life. Can be enjoyed even by children.

- Tao te ching by Laozi: a superb and short read that is packed with insight.

Written 16 Oct, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 1 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Ian Ayris, writer

6 upvotes by Daniël Kortekaas, Quora User, Hunter McCord, (more)

I'd recommend anything by Richard Bach - particularly Jonathan Livingston Seagull and Illusions:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Jonathan...>

[The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah: Amazon.co.uk: Richard Bach: Books](#)]

Also, anything by the Sufi poet, Rumi:

[Amazon.co.uk: Jalal Al-Din Rumi: Books](#)

This next is also an incredible little book:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Guide-Jo...>

Have fun on your journey :)

Best wishes,

Ian

Written 27 Feb, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 6 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 1+



Rachel Robinson

7 upvotes by Quora User, Hunter McCord, Kal Doon, (more)

Ishmael by Daniel Quinn.

An incredibly edible story that shifts your smallest & most seemingly insignificant thoughts into some of the most grand.

Written 20 Feb, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 7 [Downvote](#) [Comments](#) 4



Quora User

11 upvotes by Muhammed Tüfekyapan, Cyndi Perlman Fink, Bob LeJeune, (more)

Not really mind expanding, more like mind separation.

"The Power of Now"

Eckhart Tolle

Written 11 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 11 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



John Roscoe, Been up, been down,; been arro... (more)

6 upvotes by Nestor Nestorov, Abhilash Paliakkara Sasidharan, Byron Henry, (more)

- Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance
- The Naked Ape
- Guns, Germs and Steel
- The Foundation Trilogy

Updated 24 Feb.

[Upvote](#) 6 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Quora User

2 upvotes by Michael Lundell and Quora User.

Many of these books will expand your thinking about thinking, about contemporary issues. All good.

In my case though I lean toward the classics.

Read Dante's Divine Comedy for a map of the human condition in its baseness and its glory.

Read Ovid's Metamorphosis for an entertaining excursion into the gods and goddesses, the ancient tales of Greece, as seen by a cynical Roman poet.

Read War and Peace for immersion in those two issues as parsed by individuals of many different social positions and opinions.

Read Steppenwolf, the Glass Bead Game and Journey to the East to see life in a way only Herman Hesse could imagine it.

Read 100 Years of Solitude to feel your way into Latin America and the possibilities of magical realism.

Read Moby Dick to learn about America, about good and evil, about whales and whaling, about friendship and loyalty.

Read the Trial to understand bureaucracy, futility, frustration and the existential dilemma.

Read Romance of The Three Kingdoms to get a grasp on early Chinese martial history and the type of person and history respected in this emerging great power.

Read Journey to the West for an introduction to the Monkey King, Buddhism in China and for the fun of it.

Read Tales of the Arabian Nights for the amazing collection of tales gathered there, from Sinbad to Aladdin and so many more.

Read the Tao Te Ching for an immersion in a world perspective likely very different from your own, yet compelling.

Read Willa Cather to learn about the pioneer and immediately post-pioneer experience.

Another riff on this is Giants of the Earth.

Read Theodore Dreiser, especially the trilogy of desire.

Read Sinclair Lewis, too. Together these writers give a solid sense of what being American was like at the turn of the 20th century.

Read the Koran and the Bible for the stories and for the grounding in these contentious religions.

I added nothing here from the great corpus of India only because I have not read them myself. Books like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are on my to read list.

And so many more. These books and their core ideas form the ligaments of the cultures from which they spring. You are only as self-aware as you are aware of the sources of your self.

Written 30 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 2 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Jaspreet Singh, Product Engineer at John Deere
2 upvotes by Nitin Kumar and Jesse Lashley.

Nobody mentioned about it here, so I have to

"Animal farm"

Written 30 Jul, 2013.

[Upvote](#) 2 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)



Julian Gallo, Writer/Musician
5 upvotes by Quora User, James H. Kelly, Sundar Lakshmanan, (more)

One I found extremely interesting was "The Existential Jesus" by John Carroll. It reexamines The Gospel of Mark through an existentialist prism. Absolutely fascinating. For the record, you don't need to be religious to enjoy it.

Written 23 Apr.

[Upvote](#) 5 [Downvote](#) [Comment](#)

Write an answer

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Quora User

6.3k upvotes by Pranav Sharma, Karthick Mani, Lokesh Bhaskar, (more)



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How did you become a good writer?



Ellen Vrana, I see you

444 upvotes by Marcia Peterson Buckie, Lee Garibaldi, Anonymous, (more)

Happy to answer this but be aware, my writing abilities are quite limited. I am an essayist, an article writer of short, pithy, vignettes. That's it. I cannot write novels (like Quorans Graeme Shimmin, Cristina Hartmann, Aman Anand, Clifford Meyer) or extremely persuasive pieces (Jon Mixon, Gary Teal, Marcus Geduld), nor can I distill massively complex issues to a single truth (Erica Friedm...

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What happens to heroin addicts when they quit cold turkey, and why is it so unbearable?



Lee Garibaldi, bigger on the inside, behold t... (more)

509 upvotes by Quora User, Quora User, Amey Apte, (more)

The last time I quit heroin , I went cold turkey on a friends couch. It wasn't really planned but it happened something like this. I was living with some junkie in her parents house. Her parents were both coke heads and they knew I was doing heroin but they had a 'no needles' policy so when they found out we were shooting up, they "politely asked me to leave." I was left with very little

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