

Some suggested titles for further reading:

On Organizations:

The Abilene Paradox, by Jerry B. Harvey (Jossey Bass, 1988)

One of the all-time best books about management and organizational life. Includes such essays as "Organizations as Phrog Farms," "Group Tyranny and the Gunsmoke Phenomenon," and "Encouraging Future Managers to Cheat." Harvey fearlessly attacks the assumptions and myths that cause organizational dysfunction. He is also fun to read.

How Come Every Time I Get stabbed in the Back My Fingerprints Are on the Knife?, by Jerry B. Harvey (Jossey Bass, 1999)

Includes "What If I Really Believe This Stuff?" "On Tooting Your Own Horn or Social Intervention as the Process of Releasing Flatus in the Confines of Religious Institutions," and "Ode to Waco: When Bizarre Organizational Behavior is Concerned, God Works in Strange and Mysterious Ways."

Harvey continues his onslaught on myths and faulty thinking that cause us to derail in our workplace.

On Interpersonal Skills/Negotiation:

Dealing with People You Can't Stand, by Rick Brinkman and Rick Kirschner (McGraw Hill, 1994)

Very engaging reading, funny and down-to-earth. Filled with practical suggestions and scenario-based solutions (What to do if . . .).

Getting Past NO, by William Ury (Bantam, 1993)

Ury's second book. His first was Getting to Yes; it sold more and is almost as good. The book is short, an easy read, filled with anecdotes and very applicable ideas for negotiating from a collaborative standpoint. His third book, The Third Side, is more theoretical and will appeal to NT's. I haven't finished it yet, so it's not listed separately.

Influence: Science and Practice, by Robert B. Cialdini (Allyn and Bacon, 2001)

I read this book again and again. Robert Cialdini cites thousands of studies that verify how we are influenced (often without realizing it) by advertisers, salespeople, politicians, and others. After reading this book, you will be much more alert about people trying to get you to buy things you don't need, to contribute to causes you don't really care about, and to do things that you later realize you didn't want to do. An amazing book!

On Innovation:

A Whack on the Side of the Head, by Roger von Oech (Warner Books, 1998)

Von Oech has a terrific sense of whimsy and fun. This book is full of great stories, games, exercises, and principles of creativity. It is also illustrated very well. I have used many of the exercises within for years in creativity classes, and they work extremely well to help think “out of the box.”

Paradigms, by Joel Arthur Barker (Harper Business, 1992)

One of my all-time favorite books. Barker makes a terrific read and establishes a strong case for questioning our mental models using anecdotes, quotes, and historical events. The book is short, packed with ideas, and easy to digest.

Blink, by Malcolm Gladwell (Little, Brown and Company, 2005)

A great read, fascinating. This book explores how we make snap decisions—some good, some not—based on very little conscious information. Our best decisions are not made by gathering more and more information, but by a process called “thin-slicing,” which is filtering the few important data from an overwhelming number of variables.

What the Dog Saw, by Malcolm Gladwell (Little, Brown and Company, 2009)

A collection of essays from the New Yorker. Includes articles about Ron Popeil, Cesar Milan, ethnic profiling, and ketchup, among others.

The Einstein Factor, by Win Wenger and Richard Poe (Three Rivers Press, 1996)

Based on compelling research about intelligence, this book is fun and interesting. Contains exercises to free inhibitions that may block creative thinking and innovative problem solving. Win Wenger conducts seminars all over the country at major universities and corporations. The documented results of applying his techniques include improved memory, faster reading, and increased IQ.

The Seven-Day Weekend, by Ricardo Semler (Portfolio Books, 2004)

Semco, Ricardo Semler’s wildly successful company in Brazil, credits its growth to his commitment to break all the rules of organizations. He is the master of the leader’s most important question—“What if?” He encourages his employees to play hooky. Employees choose their own salaries, set their own hours, have no job titles. No time sheets, no HR department, no org. chart. A very enjoyable read.

A Whole New Mind, by Daniel H. Pink (Riverhead Books, 2005)

Pink concludes that we’re at the start of a new conceptual age—beyond the information age—that will need new skills in addition to the capabilities that powered the Information Age. He calls them “High Concept” and “High Touch.” He makes a compelling and well-researched argument for a focus on design, story, symphony, empathy, play and meaning. A fast read.

On Management:

Managers as Facilitators, by Richard G. Weaver & John D. Farrell (Berrett Koehler, 1997)

Weaver and Farrell join a number of writers trying to re-define management to meet the needs of a rapidly-changing market environment. The book is moderately pedantic, but makes a strong case for management as a facilitative rather than a directive function.

Balance of Power, by James R. Lucas (Amacom {American Management Association}, 1998)

Lucas is the first writer I know to have thrown out the term “empowerment” (Yay!) and moved to the idea of Power Sharing. Makes a lot of sense. He can be a bit obtuse and theoretical at times, and the book is still a pretty good read. He really changed my thinking about power in organizations.

The Vth Discipline, by Peter Senge

I don't have the publishing information for this one, as my copy is out on loan (somewhere). A terrific book about learning organizations. Senge and his organization, the Society for Organizational Learning, continue to provide insight into better practices that encourage organizational members to continuously learn.

This Job Should Be FUN!, by Bob Basso (Bob Adams, Inc., 1991)

Basso is well outside the norm, a free thinker and iconoclast. He's also a pretty successful businessman and consultant. The book contains many case studies as well as plenty of strong arguments that challenge the old work ethic to suggest that people work harder, faster, and smarter when they have fun. Don't let cynicism prevent you from reading FUN!

Leadership Aikido, by John O'Neil (Harmony Books, 1997)

Aikido is a martial art that stresses inner discipline and visualizing over board-breaking (for the most part). I found this book a tough but rewarding read. O'Neill takes the main principles of Aikido and applies them to working with people. The result is a very different approach to leadership and management.

Walk the Talk, by Eric Harvey and Alexander Lucia (Performance Publishing, 1995)

A pamphlet in a series from California. These guys have a website as well and encourage input from numerous sources. They're a bit “new-agey” but there are some very practical suggestions about acting as we say we'll act as managers and supervisors.

Leadership and the New Science, by Margaret Wheatley

Very cerebral, fascinating, and far-reaching. Meg Wheatley connects quantum mechanics, chaos theory, and leadership very effectively. One of my favorite books.

Drive, by Daniel H. Pink (Riverhead Books, 2009)

Focuses on the disconnect between what science knows and what organizations do. The most powerful motivation is intrinsic—autonomy, mastery, and purpose—while external motivation (the carrot and the stick) actually impedes performance over time. This book is clear, well-reasoned, and well-researched.

I'll Have What She's Having: Mapping Social Behavior, by Alex Bentley, Mark Earls, and Michael J. O'Brien (MIT Press, 2011)

Suggests that people are much less individual than we may think. We tend toward collective behavior, whether through social networking or consumer decision-making. As leaders, we need to better understand the human tendency to follow the 'wisdom of the group,' even when that wisdom is flawed. This book is based on cutting edge research and a fast read to boot.

On Teamwork:

Bentley, Mark Earls

No-Nonsense Teamwork, by Glenn M. Parker ((HRD Press, 1995)*

A collection of "what to do when . . ." suggestions. Great handbook of real-world scenarios and solutions. Glenn Parker is a significant force in team operation, having published several excellent assessments, including the Parker Team Development Survey.

Teams at Work, by Suzanne Willis Zoglio (Tower Hill Press, 1993)

Easy to read and to use. Zoglio has good insight into team functioning. She is occasionally simplistic, but the book has many great tips on managing, and managing within, a team.

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team, by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey Bass, 2002)

This book is very down-to-earth and practical. The first half tells the story of a new supervisor who inherits the world's most dysfunctional team. The second half contains an assessment tool for judging team problems, and methods for making teams stronger and more aware of what they need to do to succeed.

The Practical Executive and Workforce Diversity, by William Sonnenschein (NTC Business Books, 1997)

This book explores global diversity—thinking styles, communication preferences, conflict styles, every difference that makes working in teams challenging and rewarding. This book will change forever what you think of when you hear "diversity," and contains practical assessments and tools for helping understand each others' differences.

On Changing Government:

Imposing Duties, by Malcolm K. Sparrow (Praeger Publishing, 1994)

The handbook for redefining regulation and compliance toward a more technical assistance model within the federal government. Sparrow can be very theoretical (he ties Darwin to changes in government), and he has had a tremendous impact on EPA, law enforcement, and the Department of Education.

On Communication:

The New Doublespeak: Why No One Knows What Anyone's Saying Anymore, by William Lutz (Harper Collins, 1996)

Short, clear, and a fun read. When does an invasion become a "pre-dawn vertical insertion"? When does helping people evade taxes become "account accommodation"? Why did Congress give federal bureaucrats the right to label frozen chickens "fresh"? Why does the army label bombing survivors "interdiction non-succubers"?