

Books that lead to success

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On the subject of books, Mortimer Adler, the philosopher and author, said: "The point is not to see how many of them you can get through, but how many can get through to you."

In the information age, this effort to distil and digest literature can seem little more than a romantic quest.

But even in our era of getting and spending, books shape our professional and personal conduct.

The Financial Times asked leading names from the philanthropic community to name their influential texts.

Doris Buffett, founder and president of the Sunshine Lady Foundation, Inc.:

Don't Just Give It Away: How to Make the Most of Your Charitable Giving, by Renata Rafferty. It's very practical. The first seven chapters go into motivation and, starting with chapter eight, it's a guidebook on how to be philanthropic, a real how-to book. And it has a foreword by Paul Newman, who is certainly a leader in the field.

Commissioner Israel Gaither, national commander, Salvation Army:

Good to Great, by Jim Collins. He focuses on how an organisation looks at itself and its environment and how it becomes more effective by changing, reshaping and reinventing itself. He discusses issues of integrity in service.

Quiet Strength: The Principles, Practices & Priorities of a Winning Life, by Tony Dungy, the coach of the Indianapolis Colts. It's about life lessons that have come to him as a coach and family man. If you watch him on the sidelines, he's a quiet, contained, almost expressionless individual. You can see within him an inner strength.

The Purpose-Driven Life, by Rick Warren, is a superb book to get a sense of what people can do with their lives through the relationship with God. I think that leaders, we who are privileged with the gift of leading in both the public and private sectors, need to feed our souls. It's a spiritual book.

Brian Gallagher, president and chief executive of United Way of America:

Good to Great and *Built to Last*, by Jim Collins, have enduring ideas that apply to the sector.

Leading With the Heart: Coach K's Successful Strategies for Basketball, Business, and Life, by Mike Krzyzewski, Duke University's basketball coach. The leadership principles here are as good as any I've seen in a business book, and he's performed at a world-class level for years. It has character- and value-based ideals.

The Kite Runner, by Khaled Hosseini, is such an intersection of global conflict, decision-making, leadership, and empathy. It's just brilliant.

David La Piana, founder and president, La Piana Associates, whose book, *Play to Win*, was honoured

by the Alliance for Non-profit Management as one of the best non-profit management books of 2005:

Governance as Leadership, by Richard Chait, William Ryan and Barbara Taylor, builds on the traditional view of [non-profit] governance. Everyone knows a board must take its fiduciary role seriously. Most people also know that it is the board's role to partner with management in forming strategies. But this book goes further. It describes a new role for boards – “generative thinking”. Whereas strategy is about finding the answers to pressing questions, generative thinking is about figuring out which are the right questions to ask in the first place.

The Leadership Challenge, by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, is a great read on the attributes of successful leaders. They describe key behaviours like “modelling the way”, “inspiring a shared vision”, “enabling others to act”, and “encouraging the heart” that can really resonate with readers.

Neil Nicoll, president and chief executive of YMCA of the USA:

Leading in Black and White: Working Across the Racial Divide in Corporate America, by Ancella Livers and Keith Caver, provided me with a way to test some of the assumptions about race we bring to the workplace. It helped me see the perspective of African-American leaders.

Leading from Within: Poetry That Sustains the Courage to Lead, by Sam Intrator and Megan Scribner, with a foreword by Madeleine Albright. It's a series of poems by Tennyson, Dickinson, Langston Hughes and others, with comments by leaders in our society on how these poems have influenced their lives. It forces you to reflect on where you're heading and what you're trying to do.

Tom Rogerson, national director, Bank of New York Mellon's Family Wealth Services:

Wealth in Families, by Charles Collier. He interviews different families on how they've used philanthropy to build human capital and thinks about how we identify, preserve and grow the wealth in our families. The basic premise is that wealth is not necessarily defined as money; it's whatever values the family holds, and philanthropy plays a role in preserving that.

Philanthropy, Heirs and Values, by Roy Williams and Vic Preisser, talks about the benefits of philanthropy to the families who give, as well as to the charities. It's written by two professors who have done a lot of research on why families lose wealth. It references a number of studies, so it's more of an intellectual piece about why to engage in philanthropy.

The Ultimate Gift, by Jim Stovall, is a novel about a family who tries to instill values in the next generation. It includes 12 lessons they try to impart, and two or three have to do with philanthropy. It's hokey, but it's powerful. And when it was made into a movie, charities around the country held private screenings for their boards and donors.

Dr Eugene Tempel, executive director, the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University:

The Road Not Taken, the poem by Robert Frost. I have two degrees in literature, and one of the things I do every year is to read it to our students. I ask them to reconsider the whole poem, rather than thinking only about the last stanza. Frost is really talking about the importance of trying new things and going back to the fork in the road and recognizing mistakes, being willing to take risks. It's good for thinking about how to advance in an organisation.

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