



The Nonfiction Essentials List

(Updated 2018)

About This Guide

Here you will find the nonfiction works that have had a profound influence on me as a person. I have split them into categories, some that are obvious, like ‘psychology’, and others that I felt necessary to define myself, like ‘eye openers’. All books appear as a list within each genre, but they are not in order of importance. If you want to purchase any of them, *please do so here: <https://kit.com/WillSchoder/essential-nonfiction-books>*. It helps me tremendously.

As you will notice, the bulk of books come from philosophy. That’s because I think philosophy has more essential reading than other genres. In all other genres, I’ve decided upon ‘keystone’ works. That is, works that are the foundation of any further thinking of mine within that genre. Are there genres missing? Absolutely. Is there a diverse enough number of perspectives? No. Unfortunately, history isn’t that way either. We do our best.

Like anyone else, I have a long way to go in understanding even a fraction of the world. But it is my opinion that there is no limit to the growth and development of a mind. I urge you not see books as a painful accumulation of knowledge or a way to ‘get ahead of the race’. They are, as historians Will and Ariel Durant said, “The transmission of our mental, moral, technical, and aesthetic heritage for the enlargement of our understanding, control, embellishment, and enjoyment of life.”

In the two years since starting my channel, I have been blown away by your generosity and goodwill as fans. I hope you enjoy these books, and thank you for being a lifetime learner.

*much love,
Will*





PHILOSOPHY



Start Here

1. *A History of Western Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell
2. *The Story of Philosophy* by Will Durant
3. *The Dream of Reason: A History of Philosophy from Greeks to the Renaissance* by Anthony Gottlieb
4. *The Dream of Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Philosophy* by Anthony Gottlieb

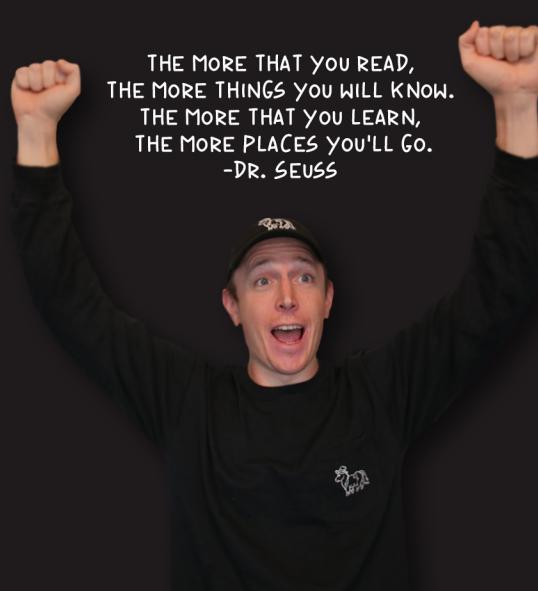
Western Tradition

1. *A Guide to the Good Life: The Ancient Art of Stoic Joy* by William Irvine
2. *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius
3. *Discourses* by Epictetus
4. *Manual for Living* by Epictetus
5. *Enchiridion* by Epictetus
6. *Letters from a Stoic* by Seneca (third favorite)
7. *On the Shortness of Life* by Seneca
8. *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith
9. *Self Reliance* by Ralph Waldo Emerson
10. *The Collected Works of Baruch Spinoza* by Baruch Spinoza (second favorite)
11. *The Collected Works of David Hume* by David Hume (my favorite philosopher)
12. *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill
13. *Antifragile* by Nassim Taleb
14. *Philosophical Investigations* by Ludwig Wittgenstein
15. *This is Water* by David Foster Wallace
16. *The Myth of Sisyphus* by Albert Camus
17. *The Prophet* by Khalil Gibran
18. *Poor Charlie's Almanack: The Wit and Wisdom of Charles T. Munger* by Charlie Munger
19. *The Denial of Death* by Ernest Becker
20. *Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Nietzsche

Eastern Tradition

1. *The Book* by Alan Watts
2. *The Wisdom of Insecurity* by Alan Watts
3. *The Way of Zen* by Alan Watts
4. *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu
5. *The Bhagavad Gita*
6. *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu
7. *The I Ching*
8. *The Analects* by Confucius

THE MORE THAT YOU READ,
THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW.
THE MORE THAT YOU LEARN,
THE MORE PLACES YOU'LL GO.
-DR. SEUSS



PSYCHOLOGY

1. *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie
2. *The Righteous Mind* by Jonathan Haidt (my favorite nonfiction book)
3. *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* by Robert Cialdini
4. *Thinking, Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman
5. *Metaphors We Live By* by George Lakoff
6. *The Owner's Manual for the Brain* by Pierce Howard



“The reading of all good books is like a conversation with the finest minds of past centuries.”

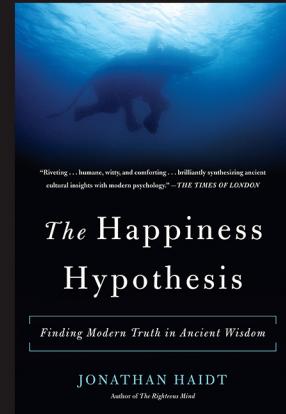
-René Descartes

I once read a book this wide. It was terrible!



HAPPINESS

1. *The Happiness Hypothesis* by Jonathan Haidt
2. *Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
3. *Learned Optimism* by Martin P. Seligman
4. *Authentic Happiness* by Martin Seligman
5. *A Guide to the Good Life* by William Irvine



HISTORY

1. *The Lessons of History* by Will and Ariel Durant
2. *A People's History of the United States* by Howard Zinn
3. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* by Jared Diamond
4. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari
5. *John Adams* by David McCullough (Adams' life has influenced me greatly)
6. *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides
7. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass

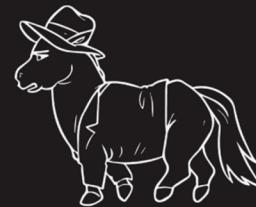
ECONOMICS

1. *Economics in One Lesson* by Henry Hazlitt
2. *Human Action* by Ludwig Von Mises
3. *The Road to Serfdom* by F.A. Hayek
4. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* by John M. Keynes

“You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them.”

— Ray Bradbury

LEARNING



1. *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler
 2. *The Art of Learning* by Josh Waitzkin
 3. *Moonwalking with Einstein* by Joshua Foer
 4. *The Five Elements of Effective Thinking* by Edward Burger and Michael Starbird
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SELF-HELP

1. *Ego is the Enemy* by Ryan Holiday
 2. *Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School* by John Medina
 3. *The Obstacle is the Way* by Ryan Holiday
 4. *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg
 5. *The Defining Decade* by Meg Jay (important for those entering their 20s)
 6. *Mindset* by Carol Dweck
 7. *Discipline Equals Freedom* by Jocko Willink (no frills)
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BUSINESS

Step 1: Business
Step 2: Profit!

1. *Business Adventures* by John Brooks
2. *Zero to One* by Peter Thiel
3. *The Personal MBA* by Josh Kaufman

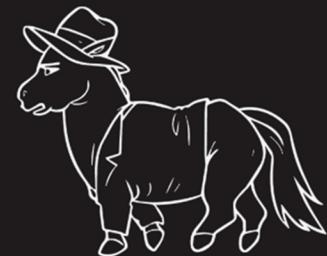


If there is a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet,
you must be the one to write it.

-Toni Morrison

EYE-OPENERS

1. *I Am A Strange Loop* by Douglas Hofstadter
 2. *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking
 3. *The Demon Haunted World* by Carl Sagan
 4. *Cosmos* by Carl Sagan
 5. *On Human Nature* by EO Wilson
 6. *Surely You're Joking, My Feynman!* by Richard Feynman
 7. *Vagabonding* by Rolf Potts
 8. *For the Love of Physics* by Walter Lewin
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APHORISMS

1. *Striking Thoughts* by Bruce Lee
 2. *Worldly Wisdom: Collected Quotations and Aphorisms* by Josh Kaufman
 3. *Maxims and Reflections* by Goethe
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STORYTELLING

1. *The Anatomy of Story* by John Truby
 2. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell
 3. *Story* by Robert McKee
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META-CULTURAL

(THESE SHOULD BE READ IN ORDER)

1. *The Medium is the Massage* by Marshall McLuhan
2. *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman
3. *The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr

“A room without books is like a body without a soul.” — Cicero

Want to talk about the list? Other books? Suggestions? Just want to say hi?

Please reach out:



[goo.gl/JbF5Jr](https://www.youtube.com/c/willschoder)



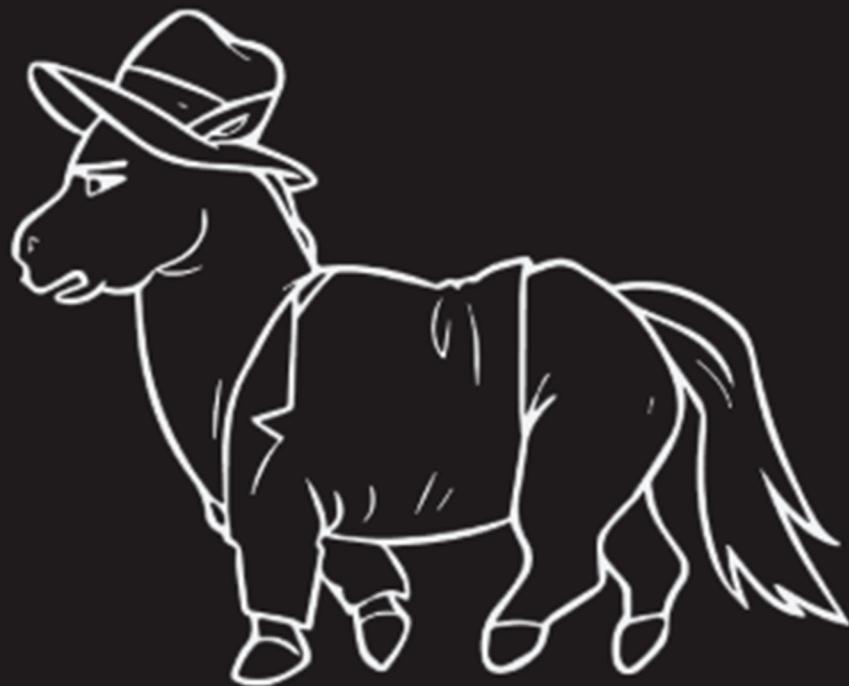
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Happy Reading!