

Creativity & Personal Mastery



A Program That Will Profoundly Change
Every Aspect Of Your Life

THE **RAO** INSTITUTE

Personal Mastery for Extraordinary Impact

Course Syllabus

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- 1 Do you have a nagging sense that, somehow, time is slipping by and you have accomplished only a fraction of what you are capable of?
- 2 Do you feel stuck in some area of your life... as if you are trying to swim through molasses?
- 3 Would you like to recapture the light-hearted joy of your younger days when stepping into puddles was pure bliss and a nickel was better than a dime because it was bigger?
- 4 Is there an undercurrent of stress in your life? This is sometimes weak and sometimes strong but it is always there under the surface.
- 5 Would you like to have deeper, meaningful connections with others? To have conversations that leave you nourished and energized and with a sense of kinship?
- 6 Would you like to inspire others? To help them unearth talents they never knew they had and reach heights they could not have dreamt about?
- 7 Think of a time in your life when you exerted a little effort and the payoff was quick and immense. Remember how you felt. Would you like such experiences to be a routine, normal part of your life?
- 8 Are you troubled by ethical conflicts in the workplace or in your personal life?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions you should seriously consider applying for the Creativity and Personal Mastery Program (CPM). It will transform your life for the better in a manner that you cannot even conceive of.

CPM will help you improve relationships with your bosses and colleagues, spouse and children, customers and friends. It will make you resilient to the point that very little, if anything, will ever faze you again. You will lightly brush off reverses that others would consider traumatic and you, yourself, may have considered so before the program.

You will become more effective and efficient and accomplish more than you ever thought possible. Stress will decrease markedly in your life and perhaps even vanish. Wonderful people will appear in your life and many will become long-lasting friends.

You will barely recognize the person you were before you began the CPM program and, importantly, you will not want to.

CPM can do all this and more for you.

And, before you ask, No, it will not cure cancer.

There is a catch – admission to the program is by invitation only. You have to apply and be accepted and many do not make it. I am looking for successful persons who have accomplished much and are now ready to climb higher mountains and reach new pinnacles of achievement. If you are a qualified individual, the program WILL deliver.

The only question is: *"Are you qualified?"*

Read on to find out.

One of the sad by-products of Internet publishing and unregulated spam is that extreme hyperbole has become endemic. Countless charlatans from vendors of penis-enlargement devices to peddlers of “make big money working at home for two hours a week” programs offer you instant Nirvana and promise to make you beautiful and wealthy and young at the same time.

Caution is advisable, nay mandatory.

So, can any program perform as described? If yes, then can it have such an effect on YOU given your unique circumstances? Finally, even if tempted to take the plunge, how can you guard against being taken for a sucker?

These are all good questions. Let me give you the context and data you need to make an informed decision.



Photo credit on page 83

We, in the industrialized West and the affluent sections of other countries, have life better than ever before in many ways. We eat — or can if we want to! — better food, can access superior health-care, live in larger homes, take fancier vacations and travel further to do so and have electronic gizmos that would have been classified as miracles a scant ten years ago. Our cars are safer, our lawns are greener and lusher and our career options are plentiful. In fact, a goodly number of us work in occupations that did not even exist two decades ago.

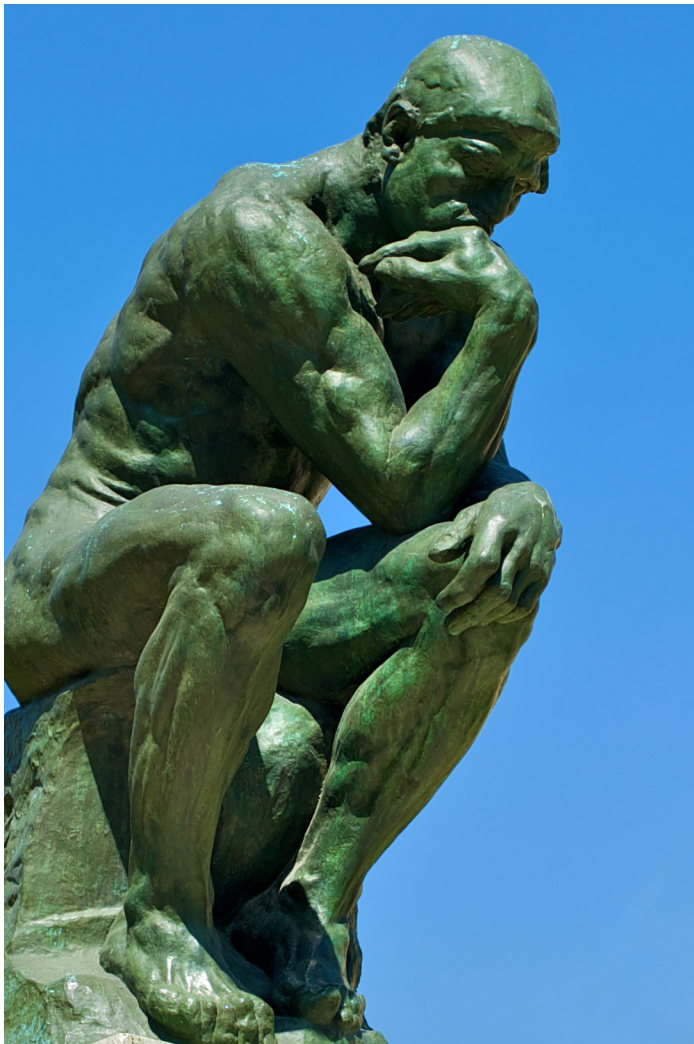


Photo credit on page 83

There is a large fly in this comfortable ointment. Our mental landscape is ever more inhospitable. We are more estranged from each other with quickie texts and social media messages replacing honest to goodness conversation. We eat mindlessly and too much and futilely combat obesity with bouts of workouts and starvation. Our insecurities rise as others much younger achieve the success we crave. Our relationships with spouse and children are shakier and our close friendships are fewer. And underlying this all is anxiety in a steady vibration that never goes away. We are scared about our jobs, our future, our health, the economy and the state of the world. We are more obsessive-compulsive and over a greater number of things.

The picture is desolate.

Try this simple experiment. Really try it to understand how serious the situation is. Sit down in a comfortable armchair, place your feet firmly on the ground and for half an hour...do nothing! No sexual fantasies, no making and reviewing to-do lists, no TV or Internet or books or magazines. No music or phone calls or Sudoku or crossword puzzles. Just sit down and observe the meanderings of your mind. Odds are good that you will be blown over by the gale that erupts. Most persons cannot even manage five minutes, let alone a half hour.

How free are you, really, if you cannot even sit quietly by yourself for thirty minutes?

Nearly three thousand years ago
the Buddha said:

*We are what we think.
All that we are arises with our thoughts.
With our thoughts we make the world.
Speak or act with an impure mind
And trouble will follow you
As the wheel follows the ox that draws
the cart.*

*We are what we think.
All that we are arises with our thoughts.
With our thoughts we make the world.
Speak or act with a pure mind
And happiness will follow you
As your shadow, unbreakable.*

*How can a troubled mind
Understand the way?*

*Your worst enemy cannot harm you
As much as your own thoughts,
unguarded.*

*But once mastered,
No one can help you as much,
Not even your father or your mother.*

- Dhammapada the Buddha

We interact with the world through our minds. The thrill of romantic love, the exhilaration of achievement, the despondence of tragedy, the terror engendered by events such as losing one's job – they all exist in our minds. The mind is a finely balanced and highly complex tool and yet none of us routinely receive any training on how to use this remarkable instrument. We muddle through life making endless mistakes learning a little from some and nothing from others.

It is an inefficient process.

Consider your personal computer. Its limitations were severe when it first appeared during the eighties. Its operating system was ramshackle and pitiful. Say you wrote a letter to a potential employer showcasing your strengths and wanted to save it as a template for repeated use. You were restricted to eight characters and would have had to label it something like LPEHS1 — for Letter to Potential Employer Highlighting Strengths, version 1.

Good luck trying to figure out what this meant two weeks later.

It was not till Windows 2005 appeared that you could use long, descriptive file names.

A superior operating system improves your experience with word-processing, spreadsheet and presentation programs and a lot more beside.

Your mind also has an operating system. This is a pastiche of beliefs, models, and judgments and conjectures that you have created. It is with and through this hodge-podge that your mind functions. You probably don't recognize this as an operating system but it plays exactly the same role.

This course provides you with a superior operating system and trains you in its use. This is the reason it has significant impact on every area of your life. Please note that I will not train your mind. I will teach YOU how to do so and provide you tools of great power that will assist you.

You are successful. Others certainly think so and you can easily think of many who would swap places with you in a heartbeat. You know that you have shortcomings — your spouse points these out to you with some regularity! — but you also know what you are good at, what your strengths are. That is why you achieved the success you have.

Right? Maybe, maybe not!

Have you ever considered that perhaps your worldview is not serving you well? That perhaps you would have done even better and risen much higher if you discarded some of your cherished beliefs about ‘this is the way the world works?’

Consider yourself as a moon rocket. The first stage ignites and takes it to a tremendous height. This is a necessary part of the journey.

But then the fuel runs out. This is the time to jettison the first stage and ignite the second. If you persist in holding on to it, its weight will pull you down inexorably.

Your belief systems are exactly like that. You may have succeeded because of them. You may have succeeded in spite of them. No matter. They have served their purpose and brought you to where you are.

If you want to reach your full potential, you will have to see the world differently. You have to dump your first stage.

It is not easy to recognize that you have to change in order to progress. It is even tougher to understand what is holding you back so you can release it.

This program will help you on both fronts.



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For many years I taught a course called “Creativity and Personal Mastery” at Columbia Business School. It was designed to help executives and MBA students discover their passion and show them how to live deeply fulfilling lives. Word got around and soon students from Law, International and Public Affairs, Journalism and other schools were applying in droves. It was always heavily oversubscribed. Then I started hearing from alumni and from persons unaffiliated with the university. They wanted to know if the course was offered elsewhere or if they could ‘sit in’ on classes. The course migrated to London Business School, the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and the Haas School of Business at the University of California at Berkeley.

I now offer it privately in New York, London and San Francisco and driven, successful people are drawn to it. Entrepreneurs and senior executives seeking to improve find it particularly helpful. Other cities may join this list soon. Stay tuned!



What it is all about?

The thesis of this program is simple. Life is short. And uncertain. It is like a drop of water skittering around on a lotus leaf. You never know when it will drop off the edge and disappear. So each day is far too precious to waste. And each day that you are not radiantly alive and brimming with cheer is a day wasted.

Stop right now and evaluate your life. YOUR LIFE. As it is right now. Are you, by and large and daily variations aside, happier now than you have ever been? Do you have the inner conviction that you are on the path that is just right for you, the one that is transparently leading you to fulfillment in many dimensions – in your career, in relationships, in spiritual development?

If the answer is, NO, ask yourself WHY NOT? The first step to getting there is to refuse to accept anything less. This program is designed to be that first step for you.



Photo credit on page 83

What are the benefits?

Innumerable participants have attested to the life — changing nature of this approach. To hear from them in their own words go to my website www.theraoinstitute.com/about-testimonials

Be aware that while practically everyone has benefited to some extent, not everyone has had similar epiphanies and later sections of this document will address this.

I expect this program to have a profound impact on your life. It **will** have such an impact if you are ‘ready’ and totally dedicate yourself to it. ***Do not apply to take this program before you have read the entire syllabus.***

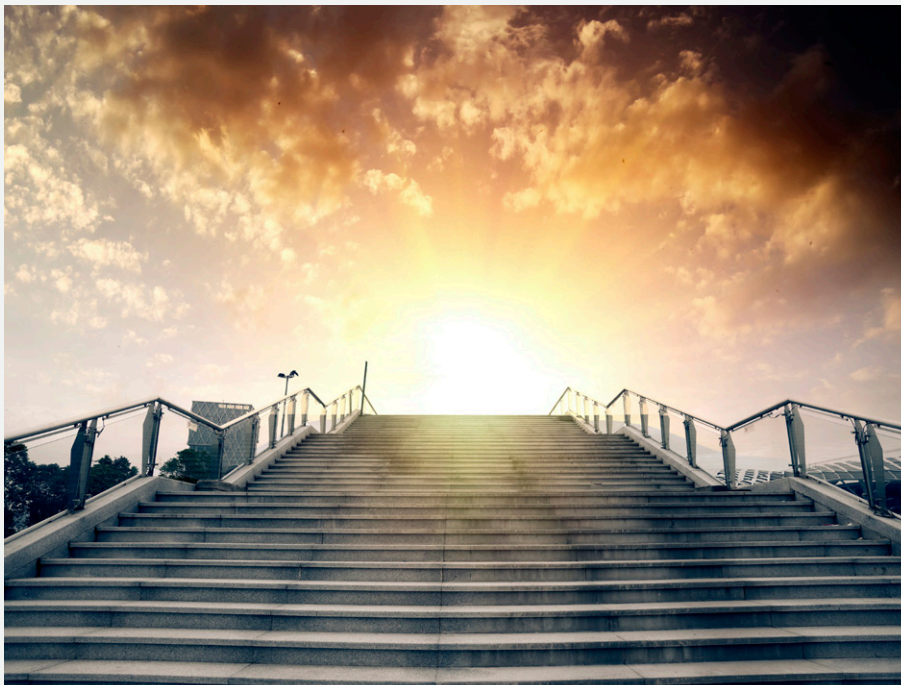
Is this right for me?

This is a tough one. Only you can answer it. The proviso in the previous section was not added as a clever mechanism to get me off the hook for over promising. It just happens to be the way it is. The program can indeed turn your life around in myriad, marvelous ways, but only if you are ‘ready’ and if you put in the effort.

Here is a good heuristic for judging if you are ‘ready’. Read the entire syllabus carefully. If you are not so strongly drawn to it that you would disrupt your life considerably to take this program, *don’t* take it. This topic is also dealt with in greater detail later.

Objectives: The Program has Four Principal Objectives

- 1 To expose you to a wide variety of techniques and exercises that have been found to be helpful in sparking the creative process; to help you select those that best fit your personality and apply them to many different business and personal situations.
- 2 To help you discover your “purpose in life”, the grand design that gives meaning to all of your activities; to help you find that to which you can enthusiastically devote the rest of your life. When you are moved by deep inner conviction is when you have the greatest opportunity to sway others, in short to become a “leader”.
- 3 To show you how you can mobilize resources to reach your goals most efficiently. There is a non-linear relationship between “work” and “results”. Immense exertion can produce little outcome and, at other times, a little effort can yield a huge payoff. If you have an open mind you can learn to create serendipitous opportunities.
- 4 To enable you to find and achieve the balance in life that is right for you. Stress levels are rising in our society across all ages and occupations. It little profits you to achieve any goal if you are a nervous wreck during or after. There are always tradeoffs between accomplishments and price paid but they are not necessarily obvious. It is important to learn how to strive mightily while remaining serene.



Objectives: The Program has Four Principal Objectives

Though they seem to be disparate, these objectives are really strongly related. There is a substantial body of evidence indicating that people tend to be more creative when working on projects that interest them, and most creative when passionately immersed in their endeavors. It would be naive of you to expect that all these objectives will be achieved during the time we have together.

Creativity research encompasses a vast and growing field. Your purpose in life tends to change as you grow and evolve. It is frequently a mystery and many, perhaps the vast majority, never find out. This program will serve to start – or spur – you on a journey of discovery that will take many years. You

“Don’t aim at success – the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue... as the unintended side-effect of one’s personal dedication to a course great than oneself.”

– Viktor Frankl

will, of necessity, be alone on this adventure. Please note that I said ‘alone.’ I did not say ‘lonely.’

Creating serendipitous opportunities, when you have learned the technique, will give you a powerful tool that can help you in myriad ways. To use it you will have to alter your belief structure about ‘how things work’. Odds are that you do have this capacity already. If not, you would not have read so far. Your notion of balance keeps changing along with your life situation, as well as your evolving views on what your purpose in life is.

The first objective will be largely met. You will work indefinitely on the second. The analytical and intuitive exercises that you learn and practice will give you many “aha!” experiences that should provide both direction and encouragement. The third is unpredictable. Some of you will be able to accomplish it immediately; others will have to work on it for a long time before it suddenly falls into place. You will certainly make some headway with the fourth objective. This will be relatively easy if the quote that follows makes sense to you, somewhat more difficult if it does not.

I expect this program to have a profound impact on your life – while you take it and decades beyond. If it does not, then we will both have failed. I am not speaking egotistically as the instructor. What I am saying is that we will discuss fearsomely important “meaning of life” issues from the point of view of immediate personal relevance. Such discussions can greatly clarify your thinking and help you align your values and belief-systems with what you do on a day-by-day basis. In fact, this is what the program is designed to do. It is also designed to get you started on custom building your ideal life. Consider this vision:

You wake up in the morning suffused with an ineffable feeling of joy, a deep sense of well-being. You go to work, to a job you love so much that you would pay for the privilege of doing it. You labor intently but are so focused that time flies by unnoticed. At the end of the day you are invigorated, brimming with more energy than when you started. You have a penetrating awareness of the course you are charting, a clear knowledge of your place in the scheme of the universe. Your work feeds this, is congruent with it and brings great contentment and peace.

You face obstacles, big ones and small ones, perhaps more than your fair share of them. You understand very clearly that their purpose is to test your mettle, to bring out the best in you even as the abrasive whetting stone serves to finely hone the knife. So you plow on indomitably, sure of what you want to achieve and yet unconcerned about results. At times it seems as if you are riding on the crest of a powerful tidal wave, as if the universe itself is helping you, working with you and through you. Locked doors open mysteriously. Incredibly fortuitous coincidences occur. You accomplish prodigious feats, feats you would never have imagined yourself capable of. Yet it would have been perfectly okay if you had not accomplished them. You accept accolades gracefully but are not swayed by them because you march to the beat of your own drummer.

Your personal life is intensely fulfilling. You are active in a variety of civic, charitable and political causes and successful in all of them. Your spouse is perfectly compatible with you, a true helpmate in every sense of the word. You beget progeny and your offspring bring great satisfaction. You have a sense of trusteeship towards them and intuit what Gibran articulated:

*“ Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of life’s
longing for itself.
They come through you, not from you.
And though they are with you, they belong
not to you.
You may give them your love but not your
thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but strive not to
make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with
yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as
living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the
infinite, and he bends you with his might that the
arrows may go swift and far.*

*Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as he loves the arrow that flies, so he loves the bow that is stable."*

So it goes on year after year, each day more perfect than the one before. Your gratitude is so intense that at times it is like a physical ache. Your heart bursts as you thank the universe. What have you done to deserve such good fortune? And when the time comes for you to depart, you do so joyfully and in peace, achieving identification with the Cosmic Principle, that incredible merging which has been called many things by many peoples but is ultimately indescribable, far beyond the feeble capabilities of language.

A life such as described above is your birthright. You have to reach out and claim it. Will you succeed? I do not know. I do know that the first step towards getting there is recognizing that you want to get there. It is very important that you desperately want to reach the goal. It is equally important that you not particularly care whether you do or not. If this sounds like a paradox to you, you are correct. It is. Remember that all paradoxes are resolved as you reach higher levels of understanding, even the ultimate paradox of all — that which we call life.

He was a desperate seeker and he banged on the door of the master. "I want to be enlightened," he gasped, "If I stay as your disciple, how long will it take?"

The master surveyed the young man. He had a strong physique and the inner restlessness that drove him was almost palpable. A good candidate. "Ten years," said the master.

The youth wilted as if struck with an ax. For a few minutes he stood with head bowed, then he looked up. "If I work night and day," he asked fiercely, "If I do without sleep and do twice what your other disciples do, then how long will it take for me to become enlightened?"

"Twenty years," said the master calmly. So perplexed was the youth and so earnest his demeanor that the sage relented and explained, "When you have one eye so firmly fixed on the goal, you have but one eye left to find the way."

Your life is a creation. It is a work of art no less than the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel or the giant statue of Gomateshwara at Sravanabelgola. You are the artist. All works of art first come into being in the mind of the craftsman. **This program is an invitation to you to explore and define what you want to create.**

There is little question that we are living in a time of acute change. As always, in such cusps of evolution, the world around us seems to have gone crazy. Government has all but broken down in many parts of the globe and its institutions are not held in high regard here. There is breakdown of social order, growing inequality of wealth and opportunity, a seemingly permanent and increasingly disliked underclass and a degradation of standards in fields ranging from education to popular entertainment. There is anxiety about the future, seeds of generation conflict, widespread environmental despoliation and growing polarization of society. Technology has, in many instances, accelerated and exacerbated these trends. On the flip side, there is still a thriving global economy, an increased ability to meet the basic needs of most of humanity, a dynamic international business community and a growing realization that radical surgery needs to be performed on the existing order of things. Shifts of consciousness can occur with startling rapidity in these days of electronic communication.

I take it for granted that you would like to do your bit, and perhaps a little extra, to leave the world a better place than when you entered it. If you do not, this program is assuredly not for you. Change will have to happen at three levels before the “new era”, whatever it is, arrives:

- 1 **Individual attitudinal change:** We have to recognize that we do not function in isolation, that we have an impact on society and are, in turn, impacted by it. Personal aggrandizement at the expense of everyone else is counterproductive. Bernie Madoff is not the ideal. Chief Seattle articulated this in a letter to President Franklin Pierce in 1855. There is now controversy about authorship and date but the ideas are very much germane.

“Humankind has not woven the web of life... we are but a part of it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves. All things are bound together... all things connect. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls also the children of the earth.”

– Chief Seattle

- 2 **Organizational structural change:** The world has altered greatly in the last few decades but our institutions – business, government, religious and societal – have remained antiquated. The old command-and-control hierarchies are totally unsuited to the present era of instant multi-level communication with employees seeking personal growth and autonomy. Re-engineering and similar strategies are but Band-Aids incapable of coping with severed arteries. Many smaller firms are experimenting with radically different ways of internal organization and, out of the existing chaos, the butterfly will emerge. The form and color are, as yet, unknown.
- 3 **Societal value change:** As long as material accumulation remains the index of success, we will have excess. Consumption will continue as the measure of well-being and some combination of investment bankers, attorneys and accountants will ingeniously devise ever more convoluted instruments, which may or may not help the organizations on which they are foisted but will certainly ensure them very comfortable early retirement. Too many of our athletes, politicians and business leaders are poor role models but we have spawned them as a society. Better leaders will only emerge when we change what we honor. When, for

example, a teacher who builds a championship chess team from given-up-for-lost ghetto kids is celebrated more than a drug-ingesting pugilist. There are indeed signs that a backlash has begun, but they are inchoate and diffuse.

This program is designed to get you thinking about all three types of changes. #1 is, to some extent, under your control and will probably start happening as you move through the modules, complete the exercises and interact with your colleagues. Someday, you will likely reach a position of authority and can then experiment with #2. The experiment is more likely to be beneficial if you start refining your ideas now. If you reach a station of great prominence, and I hope you do, you might well make a contribution to #3, which will also be affected collectively by the actions of all of the persons you influence. Think of it as the spreading ripples from a stone tossed in a pond, with the ripples growing stronger instead of attenuating.

Who should take the program?

You should take this program if: you sometimes wonder what you would like to do with your life or whether the educational or career path that you are on is right for you; you are troubled by ethical conflicts in the workplace and in personal life; you have a nagging sense that there is a great deal that you have to accomplish and that, somehow, you are not living up to even a fraction of your potential; you have a curious mind and enjoy being challenged by radical ideas and have even come up with a few of your own or would like to; you are comfortable with ambiguity and are willing to make the effort required to “know thyself”.

This syllabus is replete with quotations and parables. If you feel intuitively drawn towards most of them, you will probably benefit from taking this program. Expect that this will be the most meaningful program you will ever take or, at the very least, be open to the possibility.

Who should NOT take this program

You should not take this program if: you cannot tolerate ambiguity and live in a black and white world with few shades of gray; you become upset if your beliefs are challenged and you are called upon to justify them; you are uncomfortable examining values and cultural systems different from your own; you are unshakably confident that you know exactly what you want to be and how to get there. If you cannot maintain an open mind when confronted with seemingly strange ideas, you are unlikely to benefit much from this program.

Read this syllabus carefully, especially the quotes, parables and descriptions of exercises. If you are not intuitively drawn towards most of them, do not take this program. It could be an enormous waste of time for you.

One of the strengths of modern education is that it instills the habit of questioning everything. This has led to great scientific advancement and to the breakdown of many pillars of ‘knowledge’ from the notion of a flat earth to Newtonian concepts of time and space. But such attitudes can also lead to the rejection of valid concepts that are ambiguous.

You will be exposed some quite radical ideas in our sessions. DO NOT attempt to ‘prove’ them false by searching vigorously for counter examples. Accept them with an open mind and see if they work for you. If they do not, discard them. If they do, continue working with them and refining them so they have maximum useful impact on you and your personal situation. Judging them before trying them is a waste of your energy and could deprive you of tools that are extremely valuable. Leave your preconceptions at home. If you are unable to do this, then you should probably not take this program.

This work is a passion and a calling for me. I will pull out all stops to make sure that you can begin finding answers to the questions that are of import to you. I need your help. Your unreserved help. This is not my program. This is our program. A program that is different each time it is offered, because the persons who take it are different. I need you to

take responsibility for ensuring that it is maximally useful. If something is not working, let me know immediately. If something is especially powerful, do likewise. If you have thoughts on what could make it better, express them. I may not be able to implement all suggestions and will use instructor prerogative in some cases, but welcome such involvement. In my view you have an obligation to yourself as well as to others who are taking the program with you. If there is anything that you can do to make it better for someone else, do so. If it is something I need to do, let me know. If you wish your contribution to be confidential, that’s fine. Just let me know.

This program is an exercise to collectively raise the level of our thinking.

Here is a powerful quote that summarizes my approach:

“The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

– Albert Einstein

Does the subject matter of this program call to you so strongly that you would walk ten miles in tight boots to attend each session? Are you ready to crawl on bare knees over broken glass to explore these issues with a group of your peers who are similarly motivated?

If the answer is 'yes', you will assuredly have a profoundly transformative experience that will change your life for the better in unimaginable ways. Here are some that have been reported: depression being replaced with deep-seated optimism and joy; warm relations developing with estranged parent; changes in career path in line with innate interest and passion; astonishing turnabout in job-interviewing skills – rejection changing to near 100% call backs; unbelievable, almost miraculous, 'coincidences' from hostile bosses leaving the company to uncompromising

employers agreeing to flexible job arrangements; profound reconnection with spirituality and newfound ability to infuse it into all aspects of life with no inherent contradiction; extra-ordinary increase in effectiveness – three to four times as much accomplished with less strain and effort; clarity about personal values and how to shape jobs, relationships and other activities so they are in conformity.

If the answer is 'no', ask yourself further questions. Can I engender the motivation, the commitment, to give this program my very best shot? Will I work hard enough that I will not 'let down' others who are taking the program and who expect the same degree of involvement from me? If the answer to these is 'yes', you will probably benefit greatly from taking this program. If the answer is 'no', do yourself, and others, a favor and exit now.



The funny thing about life is that it always encroaches. The more you let it encroach, the more it accommodates you. You WILL run into conflicts when you take this program: Work related deadlines; ‘Important’ projects that suddenly pop up; personal situations that eat up time; peers, customers, employers and family members who make demands; long decided travel and vacation plans; etc.

I expect you to resolve most of these conflicts in favor of this program and the exercises and assignments you are given. Excellent if you can resolve all of them in this way.

One participant who took the program years ago reminisced, *“I never really did the XXXX exercise. I felt I didn’t have a choice. I had to finish a work project and my group members were angry at my dawdling.”*

He continued, *“I did it on my own a few months ago and got such amazing insights that I am still quivering. It has definitely changed my life. I kick myself for delaying it by three years. The ironic part is that I don’t even remember what that other project was all about or who was with me on it.”*

This, by the way, is a fairly typical reaction from alumni.

Please understand that I am not making these demands because of an inherently sadistic streak that I am unable to satisfy elsewhere. I am merely

trying to ensure that you get maximum returns from the investment you are making in this program.

The ONLY reason this program works is because it is about YOU. What do YOU want to create? What kind of life do YOU want to lead? What do happiness and success mean to YOU?

No one can give you the answers. You have to discover them on your own. It will be much easier if you make a whole-hearted emotional and psychic commitment. Submerge yourself in this program for the duration and give it your very, very best shot. It is quite unlikely that you will soon be in a situation again where so many well-intentioned peers are grappling with these enormously important life issues at the same time. Our society, as presently organized, does not accord too many forums for such exploration. Do make the most of this opportunity.

If you register for this program it is an excellent idea to lessen your workload elsewhere in any way you can. Offload as much as you can on your peers and direct reports and eschew added responsibility for the duration. Tell your drinking buddies that you will be unavailable for a few months. Reassure your spouse of your undying love but explain that you really need to do this for both of you. Give away your TV. Pack the kids off to relatives if this is an option. You get the picture!!

Managing Expectations – What Will You Get Out of This Program?

A good friend of mine is the chairman and principal founder of a rapidly growing multi-billion dollar technology company. His credo is “underpromise and overdeliver” and that is exactly what he has incorporated into the culture of the organization. One major customer reported that what really made them raving fans of the company is that they received high quality business process recommendations for gratis even as the technology fixes were being put into place.

Good advice. Relatively easy to follow when there is a fair consensus on what was promised and what was delivered. But what if there is no such consensus? There have been students who have said something like, “Professor Rao, I really got a great deal out of this program and I have noticed many, many changes in my life. However, they have not been momentous and I don’t classify them as life-changing. I feel somewhat let down when I think of the syllabus.”

There have also been students who have said something like. “Professor Rao, I got more value out of this program than any other I have taken in my life. It, by itself, was worth the entire cost of my graduate education and the loan I am groaning under. Thank you ever so much.” And, of course, everywhere in between.

The king was celebrating his sixtieth birthday and so joyous was he that he made an unusual proclamation. Each of his subjects could enter the royal palace and take any single item of his choosing.

The seamstress entered the anteroom and stood in awe of the furniture and the magnificent tapestries. She saw a bolt of the finest silk waiting to be made into a curtain and grasped it eagerly. It became hers.

The cabinetmaker wandered the rooms marveling at

the strange objects and the luxury of appointments. He espied a pile of ivory tusks and another of mother of pearl and promptly gathered them unto him. “What beautiful cabinets I can now make,” he thought as he hurried out congratulating himself for making off with two items instead of one.

The jeweler scoured the palace, examined and ignored the various treasure rooms and ornaments in the queens’ quarters. At last he found what he was looking for. In the middle of the royal diadem was the most magnificent jewel in the entire land. He grabbed it with feverish fingers and rushed out thinking, “When I sell this I will be wealthy beyond belief. My children’s children will live a life of ease because of my cleverness today.”

The wise man too searched high and low and finally approached the king. “What! Still empty-handed?” exclaimed the king jovially. “Come with me. Here is a magnificent diamond. It is even better than the one the jeweler made off with. It would have rested on my diadem, but you can have it.”

But the wise man would not take it. “What, then, do you want?” asked the king puzzled and alarmed. A deep suspicion was growing in him. “Give me the philosopher’s stone that I know you possess,” said the wise man. “Give me that which will give me freedom from want and liberate me forever.”

The king’s face fell. “It was the one item I did not wish to lose,” he lamented. “I was so sure that no one would ask for it.” But he was true to his word and the wise man made his obeisance and left with it. And the king, to his great joy, discovered that the wisdom conferred by the stone did not require its presence. He prayed that the wise man would, in turn, bequeath it to a deserving other and he to

Managing Expectations – What Will You Get Out of This Program?

another and so on. This did, indeed, happen and no country ever had more wise men to counsel it in good times and bad.

What are YOU going to be as you enter the palace? That, more than anything else, will determine what you will bring out. The exercises, assignments and ideas in this program can truly, and completely, turn your life around. They can impact every aspect of your existence — your career, your relationships, your financial well-being, your health, your spiritual development.

This is not an egotistical claim. I freely admit that none of the ideas are my creation. They have been articulated and refined by persons of infinite wisdom, giants who strode this earth in different times and who belong to different traditions. My modest contribution is that I have presented them

in clothing acceptable to persons steeped in modern education. If your effort is sincere, the changes will happen. Change cannot but happen.

The cynical, or the astute, or the cynical and astute among you will spot that I have just given myself an out. Thoughts like the following may already have arisen, *“What a neat racket! The guy promises the moon and when he does not deliver, it becomes my fault. Cool! I must remember to use this one myself.”*

If such trains of thought persistently arise in you, it is a good indication that you should not take this program. That is just the way it is. You put in the best effort you are capable of, and the results will appear as inexorably as the wheel of the cart follows the ox. The onus is on both of us but more so on you.

This is the toughest program you will ever take.
This is the easiest program you will ever take. (*I always did admire the way Dickens got rolling in Tale of Two Cities!*)

This program is unique in that the work you do is done while you are doing what you regularly do. This is why very busy entrepreneurs and executives, including CEOs of major firms, have been able to take it while continuing with their other duties. That said, you will be spending much time contemplating your world-view and whether this is one you want to hold on to. Participants are thrilled at the discoveries they make and many suspend discretionary activity so that they can focus on the exercises for this program.

Exercises

You will be assigned a series of total immersion exercises that I call “asif”, a term derived from “asif”. Each lasts for about a week and it may sometimes be possible for you to work on two simultaneously. One “asif”, for example, may require you to treat every single person you meet as if it was his or her last day on earth. This means

everybody from your instructor through your team-mates on work projects to the vendor who sells you your newspaper and candy. Carefully observe your behavior and feelings and note how they differ from what they would otherwise have been. Do you feel that the other person’s behavior is different also? How? Record your observations. I guarantee that you will be amazed at how difficult it is to do justice to an “asif” and at how many times you ‘forget’. To help things along I suggest you get an alarm device that beeps at half-hour intervals to remind you to get back into the “asif”.

Other “asifs” might require you to perform every activity as if it was perfectly enjoyable or observe yourself non-judgmentally as if you were an invisible entity suspended a foot above your head.

Though simple to describe, asifs are very difficult to follow and can lead to profound changes. I hope that you will repeatedly experience a ‘paradigm shift’, a startling insight that results from viewing the same situation from a different perspective. With practice you can make such an insight a permanent part of your being rather than a transitory flash.

To illustrate the power of a paradigm shift consider this ancient parable:



The abbot of a once famous Buddhist monastery that had fallen into decline was deeply troubled. Monks were lax in their practice, novices were leaving and lay supporters deserting to other centers. He traveled far to a sage and recounted his tale of woe, of how much he desired to transform his monastery to the flourishing haven it had been in days of yore. The sage looked him in the eye and said, “The reason your monastery has languished is that the Buddha is living among you in disguise, and you have not honored Him.”

The abbot hurried back, his mind in turmoil. The Selfless One was at his monastery! Who could He be? Brother Hua?... No, he was full of sloth. Brother Po?... No, he was too dull. But then the Tathagata was in disguise. What better disguise than sloth or dull-wittedness? He called his monks to him and revealed the sage's words. They, too, were taken aback and looked at each other with suspicion and awe. Which one of them was the Chosen One? The disguise was perfect. Not knowing who He was they took to treating everyone with the respect due to a Buddha. Their faces started shining with an inner radiance that attracted novices and then lay supporters. In no time at all the monastery far surpassed its previous glory.



Photo credit on page 83

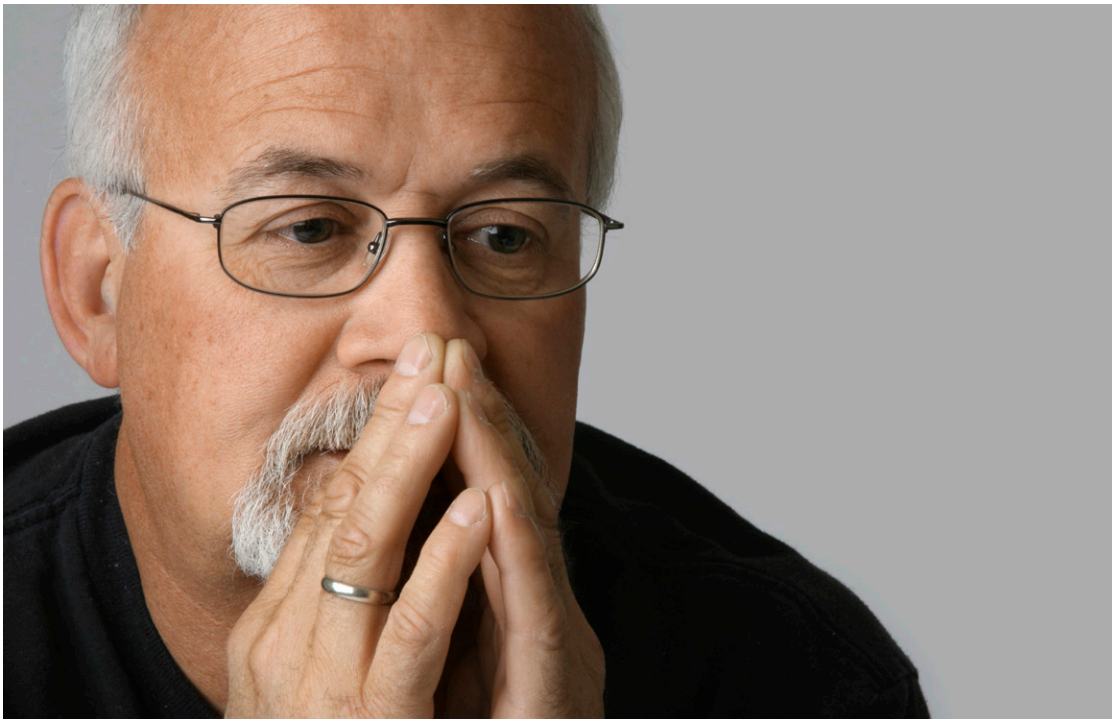
You will also learn breathing exercises, visualizations and meditation and discuss case studies of their application by the United States Special Forces, medical researchers, sports trainers and, I almost forgot, business consultants.

You are expected to report conscientiously on all exercises and assignments.

You will derive the greatest benefit from this program if you are scrupulously honest in all your

assignments. However, you will also be dealing with personal issues, many of them sensitive and quite possibly painful. If you are sure that you would like to take the program but are still troubled about privacy matters, speak to me personally and we will work to resolve your concern.

Please note that some of your assignments will be distributed to others. You will always be explicitly told about such distribution in advance.



Each session is highly interactive and you are expected to participate with vim and vigor. Your experiences, and those of your colleagues, as you wrestle with your asifs will be discussed. Topics will sometimes be assigned in advance but, more frequently, will arise spontaneously from the group. Guest speakers may occasionally share their insights with you. Be prepared to wrestle with Zen koans and quantum physical maps of reality as you struggle to understand what all this has to do with business or your personal situation. You will eventually find the relevance. Trust me on this one.

We will spend much time examining perceptions and how they affect and are affected by our belief systems. The mental models we carry around with us – often without even realizing that they are models – define and create the ‘reality’ we experience. Remember that we only observe what we have been trained to observe.

Little Tommy came home from his first pool party and he was being quizzed by his father. “How many kids were there?” asked his father.

“About a dozen,” said Tommy who couldn’t count any higher.

“And how many were girls?”

“How would I know? Nobody was wearing any clothes,” replied Tommy.

Remember also that what we observe reveals more about us than about reality.

Patrick was penniless when he came to America. He joined a sweatshop and learnt tailoring. He worked hard and soon opened his own shop. He was ambitious and he put in long hours and in a few years his chain of upscale men’s clothing stores made him a multimillionaire. He finally took a vacation to Europe and held court to admiring relatives when he came back.

“And when we went to Rome I had a private audience with the Pope,” he announced grandly.

There was a collective sigh as the audience tried to assimilate this momentous news.

“Yep,” Patrick continued, savoring the situation, “There was just the two of us in this huge office.”

There was more silence. Finally an aunt ventured, “Well Patrick, how was he?”

“Size 38 long,” said Patrick promptly, “But he’s tough to outfit because his trousers are size 42.”

Contacts are important. Every upwardly mobile professional knows this. Politicians know it better than anyone else. Experienced stockbrokers get signing bonuses because they can bring a book of business. Lawyers and lobbyists get hired because of the thickness of their rolodexes. There are books, programs and seminars on how to network better.

I have always had a problem with the notion that you should cultivate a person based on his — or her — position and the help that you might potentially receive some time in the future. Apart from the ethical and personal honesty issues involved, consider the enormous amount of time expended in the pursuit of such contacts – the after-hours socializing, the parties and formal affairs, the joining of business, civic and community organizations to meet the “right” people, and so on.

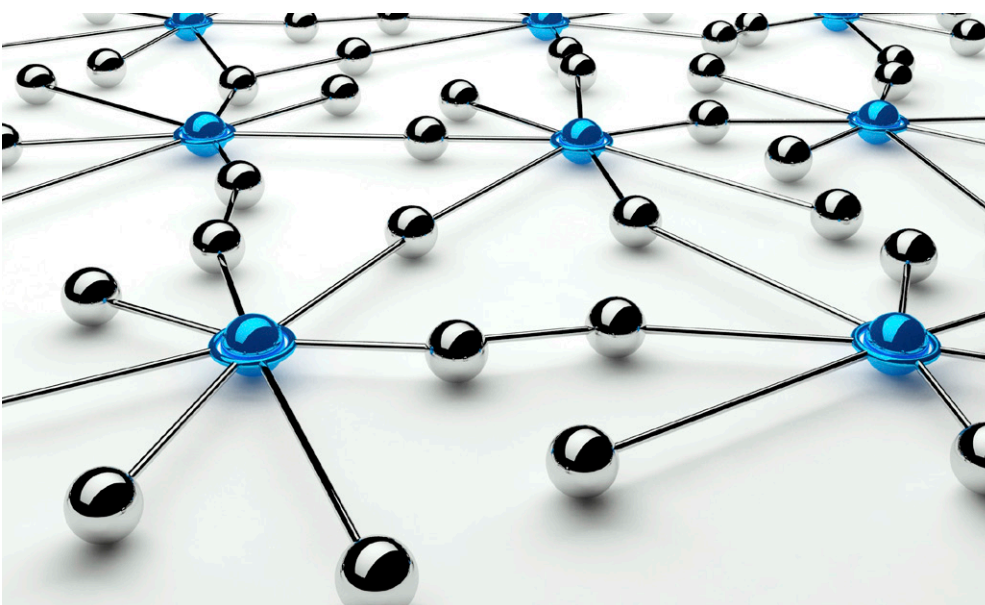
Suppose it were possible to set up a system whereby you did not have to build a network. Anytime you needed help, a person would appear who had precisely the knowledge and/or resources you required. You can learn to function in this way (go

“As you proceed, golden opportunities will be strewn across your path, and the power and judgment to properly utilize them will spring up within you. Genial friends will come unbidden to you; sympathetic souls will be drawn to you as the needle is to the magnet; and books and all outward aids that you require will come to you unsought.”

– James Allen

back and read objective #3 for this program). There are many prerequisites, the most important being that whatever you are trying to accomplish brings material and spiritual good to a larger community. Another condition is that you learn how to let go. You have to relinquish the ego driven need to be “in control”, the feeling – always false in reality – that you are the orchestrator of events. When you have the right mixture of passion for what you want to accomplish, detachment and acceptance of whatever actually happens, you will be amazed at how locked doors mysteriously swing open. You will find the cavalry showing up to rescue you every time you are beleaguered.

You will learn a different method of networking. One that is immensely powerful and in harmony with your values. Quite a few participants have been blown away by the simplicity of the method and the ease with which they have been able to forge strong connections with those they approached. Some of these were well known public figures and normally



“ True self-interest teaches selflessness. Heaven and earth endure because they are not simply selfish but exist on behalf of all creation. The wise leader, knowing this keeps egocentricity in check and by doing so becomes even more effective. Enlightened leadership is service, not selfishness. The leader grows more and lasts longer by placing the well-being of all above the well-being of self alone. The paradox is that by being selfless, the leader enhances self.”

– John Heider

unreachable. It may take you a while to tweak this method till it starts working for you, but you will find the exercise eminently useful.

Till you learn to function as above, you will have another resource. The nature of this program is such that you will form very deep bonds with your classmates. You will know many of them far more intimately than you know most friends or relatives. You will be able to call on them years hence, and they will be receptive to you because of your common shared experience. Alumni of this program have formed a community. They gather in groups, small and large, and keep the spirit alive. Join this community and be active in it.

Leadership is the new fad in our global economy. Innumerable “experts” are pontificating on the character of leaders and how to become one. Bestsellers identify corporate titans as champions worthy of emulation and reveal their secret – until now – techniques. Military figures from Attila the Hun through Napoleon to Colin Powell are being scrutinized for the same reason. It is a burgeoning cottage industry that is rapidly outgrowing its cottage.

The reality is that we have very few leaders in any of our major institutions. We don’t have them in education, or government, or business, or unions, or not-for-profits. We have a large number of people in positions of hierarchical authority. They wield great financial and social power, often unwisely. They can certainly impact your life for good or ill. But they are not leaders. They care not if you achieve your potential and you matter little to them except as a means of helping achieve their objectives. They neither have overarching visions nor the intuitive knowledge of how this translates

“The wise leader’s ability does not rest on techniques or gimmicks or set exercises. The method of awareness-of-process applies to all people and all situations. The leader’s personal state of consciousness creates a climate of openness. Center and ground give the leader stability, flexibility and endurance. Because the leader sees clearly, the leader can shed light on others.”

– John Heider

into the next step nor the manifest life-force that wins dedicated converts to their vision. What they do have is a small coterie of followers who have hitched their stars to them in a calculated bet that this is a route to personal advancement.

There are many reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs. Our competitive system rewards naked aggression. Our consumption-oriented society equates success with accumulation of material

wealth. Our fragmented worldview perceives leadership as something that can be learnt, as a technique that can be deployed.

Leadership is a state of being, not a skill. This is why great leaders have come in all stripes. Their styles have been autocratic and democratic, gentle and brusque, unhurried or frenetically active. Studying these styles will profit you nothing. What will help you is reflection on their deeper qualities. If this reflection



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produces changes in what you are, then you may be able to use some of their methods with success.

I have little sympathy for managers who lament that it is impossible to “motivate” workers and who primarily tinker with various forms of incentives and punishments. Such “motivation” is okay – maybe – if we are talking about animals in a behavioral psychology laboratory. It is demeaning when applied to human beings. Your function as a manager is to figure out what is demotivating your employees and getting rid of it. This is not semantic hairsplitting. It is a completely different philosophical approach and it has some pretty

startling implications, which we will explore.

We will discuss leadership in some depth. The goal is to help you refine your own ideas and define what you are. When you reach your position of authority, this will help make you an authentic leader, not an insipid imitator.

This is equally true of any other organization. The way you command the soul of your people is by working on yourself. By ‘being’ a beacon.

“ There is a soul to an army as well as the individual man, and no general can accomplish the full work of his army unless he commands the soul of his men, as well as their bodies and legs.”

– William Tecumseh Sherman

My desk is piled high with books that tout various types of good behavior. Treat the customer right so he/she will keep coming back. Look after your employees so they will treat the customer right and keep him/her coming back. Behave with integrity because – surprise, surprise! – if you do so your stock price will surely go up.

Every single one of these tomes finds it necessary to justify the behavior by pointing out that if you do this the company will benefit in terms of revenues, profits, share appreciation or some similar metric. They make convoluted chains of frequently twisted logic to substantiate their claims and give examples that are far from convincing. But they labor on nevertheless and the authors are held up as apostles of new and responsible thinking.

What a sorry pass we have come to when natural decent behavior has to be ‘justified’ in terms of some other benefit. What happens if behaving without integrity can get you growth and unparalleled profit? This is frequently the case in many developing countries with weak legal structures. Do you then jettison integrity?

In my book you treat the customer right because that is the proper thing to do. You treat your employees well because that is how you like to be treated. You behave with integrity because that is an expression of who and what you are. These are the givens. You DO NOT have to justify or explain or rationalize any of it.

In fact, if you attempt to link your values with external measures like profit you cheapen them and you discredit your actions.

“ We are not here merely to earn a living and to create value for our shareholders. We are here to enrich the world and make it a finer place to live. We will impoverish ourselves if we fail to do so.”

– Woodrow Wilson

We have systematically turned over our commercial enterprises to persons of overweening greed who use untested economic and behavioral models to justify actions that would otherwise be considered rapacious. It is high time we called a halt to this.

The good news is that there are dozens and dozens of enterprises started by individuals who are profoundly dissatisfied with ruthlessly exploitative business tactics. They are linking up with social activists to create a new, more humane business paradigm. It remains to be seen whether this will emerge as a new consensus. You are encouraged to join the revolt.

There are hundreds of thousands of companies out there and thousands of different ways — and combinations of ways — in which you can earn a living or accumulate wealth. I am puzzled — nay amazed! — That so many persons restrict their sights to either large well-known companies or smaller ones that they know through personal contacts.

Why is the rest of the cornucopia so ignored? Why? Why? Can you relate to this account from a student who took my program while at Columbia Business School?

I had just been offered an investment banking job with a very prestigious firm at a salary that was one of the highest offered to anyone in my graduating class at Columbia Business School. This was my third offer and it came after four grueling rounds of meetings. I thrived on interviews. I aced exams and I aced interviews. The Exec VP was only 35 and clearly on his way to the top. He was also a Columbia B-School grad and he made it very clear that he wanted me as a part of his core team, the team that would set the future direction for the entire operation. We got along like a house on fire. Not just a regular blaze but a 6-alarm conflagration. He told me the job was mine and that it would take a couple of weeks to get the paperwork straightened out. He was supposed to take me out to dinner but he begged out because he had a ton of work to do and he didn't really need any more time with me. So he turned me over to a junior member of his team.

She was a Wharton MBA and really, really pretty. Classic model looks and very bright to boot. Under other circumstances I would have tried to date her. She didn't know I had the job but her instinct told her that I was a rival. The gamesmanship began immediately. I didn't ask any questions but she proceeded to position herself higher on the hierarchy by telling me what my job responsibilities would be. I played it cool. She was in a cubicle and I knew she would have a heart attack when she found out that I

had negotiated an office for myself. A tiny one, true, but still an office with four walls and a door that I could close.

We went out for dinner and it was all cat and mouse. Majors are fluid at Columbia and I could position myself as a marketing major as readily as a finance one. She was a hardcore finance junkie and forthwith started to show me that I knew nothing about the field. I had four years of work experience and knew how to play that game. I pulled out advanced mathematical techniques from my undergrad Physics major days and proceeded to speculate on their applicability to esoteric niches in finance. She retreated immediately. Stalemate.

She looked at me with new respect and I could almost hear her brain whirring as she tried to figure out how she could gain an edge. I recognized resignedly that she would never give up. She would keep coming and coming and coming. She was also a part of the EVP's team and he had made it very clear that he expected us to get along. I suddenly realized that the very fact he had mentioned it indicated that he expected a problem. I didn't think I would have difficulty fending her off but caught myself speculating on how the dynamics would change if an amorous interest developed with the EVP. I had seen others derailed by office romances.

It was almost 10 p.m. and we returned to the office. It was no longer a hive of activity but there were still people around. I grabbed my briefcase. She let me know that she would put in a couple of hours of work and then be back by 7.30 a.m. the next day. She dripped saccharine as she bid me good night at the elevator and urged me to call her if I had any questions or if she could help me in any way.

As I went down the elevator a silent, totally involuntary scream came out from the depths of my being. It was frightening in its intensity and echoed forth from every fiber, every pore. "I don't want to do this." I couldn't have been more stunned if you had hit me behind the ear with a sock full of wet sand.

One of my other offers was from a top consulting firm and the other from a well-known investment bank. Both were equally unattractive. The pay was good. Financial success was assured if I played the game with a modicum of competence. I had no doubt that I could do that and then some. I had been doing some variation of it for most of my life. But my soul shriveled at the thought of long hours of bondage, of deadening grunt work, of the things I loved that I would have to give up, of the lack of flexibility.

None of my classmates could understand. Those who had been turned down by the firms that sought me thought I was arrogant and spoiled. Those who had received offers from firms of comparable prestige were a trifle envious because I got more upfront money but wanted to welcome me into a self-congratulatory elite group. There was no one I could talk to about my dilemma. Even my family thought that I had it made, that there was no problem. It was the most depressing time of my life.

So what should work be like and how can you find fulfillment in something that takes up so vast a proportion of your life and time? Part of it, of course, is the attitude you bring to it. Here is as beautiful a description of this as you are likely to find:

On Work

Then a ploughman said, "Speak to us of Work."

And he answered, saying:

You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.

For to be idle is to become a stranger unto the seasons, and to step out of life's procession, that marches in majesty and proud submission towards the infinite.

When you work, you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.

Which of you would be a reed, dumb and silent, when all else sings together in unison?

"The higher your aims and vaster your desires, the more energy you will have for their fulfillment. Desire the good of all and the universe will work with you. But if you want your own pleasure, you must earn it the hard way. Before desiring, deserve."

– Nisargadatta Maharaj

Always you have been told that work is a curse and labor a misfortune.

But I say to you that when you work you fulfill a part of earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when that dream was born,

And in keeping yourself with labor you are in truth loving life,

And to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret.

But if you in your pain call birth an affliction and the support of the flesh a curse written upon your brow, then I answer that naught but the sweat of your brow shall wash away that which is written.

You have been told also life is darkness, and in your weariness you echo what was said by the weary.

And I say that life is indeed darkness save when there is urge,

And all urge is blind save when there is knowledge,

And all knowledge is vain save when there is work,

And all work is empty save when there is love;

And when you work with love you bind yourself to yourself, and to one another, and to God.

And what is it to work with love?

It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth.

It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house.

It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit.

It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit,

And to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching.

Often have I heard you say, as if speaking in sleep, "he who works in marble, and finds the shape of his own soul in the stone, is a nobler than he who ploughs the soil.

And he who seizes the rainbow to lay it on a cloth in the likeness of man, is more than he who makes the sandals for our feet."

But I say, not in sleep but in the over-wakefulness of noontide, that the wind speaks not more sweetly to the giant oaks than to the least of all the blades of grass;

And he alone is great who turns the voice of the wind into a song made sweeter by his own loving.

Work is love made visible.

And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.

For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's hunger.

And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine.

And if you sing though as angels, and love not the singing, you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night.

– Kahlil Gibran

And another part is the environment in which you are. The culture of the organization, the nature of the tasks, the values of your colleagues and the intent of the enterprise all play a part in whether your job is drudgery or breathtakingly fulfilling. This environment can be shaped and you can play a part shaping this. Obviously, the higher up you are hierarchically, the easier it is for you to make an impact and the greater that impact will be.

However, the linkage is complex. For the environment also shapes you. And if you wait too long to reach a 'position of power' so you can begin making changes, you may well find that the person who wanted to make those changes is no longer there.

Can you retain ideals that are under constant, daily assault? We will spend time discussing this.

There are always tradeoffs to be made, but some may be unnecessary. Many accept that long hours come with the territory. That years of 'paying dues' must precede 'arriving' at some exalted status. That drudgery is a part of the package. Challenge all these assumptions. They exist only as constraints in your mind. Look at broad horizons. This program will force you to identify and define what your ideal job is and how it fits into your ideal life. More accurately, it will start you on the process. It may take years or decades before you arrive, but the sooner you start, the greater the fulfillment you will find. Ponder on the following:

"Until one is committed, there is always hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and endless plans: That the moment one commits oneself, then providence moves, too.

All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would come his way.

Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it! Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it and the work will be completed."

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

As a country and a society we are obsessed with freedom. We have codified laws that guarantee us freedom of speech and worship and assembly. We wrangle endlessly about other ‘freedoms’ such as the right to bear arms. But we define ‘freedom’ too narrowly. We equate freedom with the elimination of restrictions on our behavior. In our relentless pursuit of this goal we are reordering society, smashing traditions and taboos alike. Sexual preoccupation is reaching new highs as is acceptance of its flaunting. Illegal drugs are more powerful and chemically complex. Our popular

that consume all available time and more.

We are driven by our demons, all of us – takeover titan and LBO artist, corporate chieftain and newly minted MBA, serial killer and confidence trickster, presidential candidate and congressional intern. The talons of our addictions shred our minds and wreck repose. Some, like cocaine, we declare illegal and expend vast resources to counteract. Others, like workaholism, we applaud and reward. Still others, like hypochondria and gambling, we barely acknowledge.



Photo credit on page 83

entertainment constantly stretches and snaps boundaries of taste and propriety. We have become marvelously adept at titillating our jaded senses.

There is another type of ‘freedom’ that we have not achieved and are not even pursuing. We are still prey to the ruthless harpies of desire that constantly spur us into action, ignite avarice and overweening ambition and goad us into activities

Like it or not, we are all in the fierce grip of our restless minds, being blown hither and thither like a tumbleweed in a typhoon, expending our psychic energies in emotional roller-coasters that we are helpless to stop and unable to leave. This, too, is a prison and in our saner moments we want out.

We give to others the power to determine our

happiness and tranquility and do not even recognize that we have done so.

He was a respected sage, a teacher of many generations of students. No one could match him in knowledge of philosophy and the sacred texts. He lived simply with his family in the remote countryside. One of his students, who had achieved great fame and renown in the court of the king, came to visit him. As he paid his respects he noted the threadbare clothes of his teacher and the sparse larder. "Revered Sir," he said, overcome with emotion, "Please come with me to the capital. The king will shower you with wealth because there is no one to match you in wisdom. All you have to do is praise His Majesty and you will no longer have to subsist on lentils."

Tears rolled down the old preceptor's face. "My son," said the sage, "Is this all you have learnt in the years you spent with me? Do you not see that if you would learn to subsist on lentils, you would not have to praise His Majesty?"

It need not be so. There is an alternative to the maelstroms in our mind that we both cultivate and fear. This alternative permits us to be far more efficient and composed. It greatly increases the probability of 'success' in any endeavor and cushions us mightily against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. There is a catch. We have to be willing to live in a different mental world, adopt a different outlook on life. Don Juan – Carlos Castaneda's mysterious Yaqui warrior – summarizes the viewpoint of a "man of knowledge":

*"I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every wandering cloud that trailed
It's raveled fleeces by."*

– Oscar Wilde

A man of knowledge chooses a path with heart and follows it; and then he looks and rejoices and laughs; and then he sees and knows. He knows that his life will be over altogether too soon; he knows that he, as well as everybody else, is not going anywhere; he knows, because he sees that nothing is more important than anything else. In other words, a man of knowledge has no honor, no dignity, no family, no name, no country, but only life to be lived, and under these circumstances his only tie to his fellow men is his controlled folly. Thus a man of knowledge endeavors, and sweats, and puffs, and if one looks at him he is just like any ordinary man, except that the folly of his life is under control. Nothing being more important than anything else, a man of knowledge chooses any act, and acts it out as if it matters to him. His controlled folly makes him say that what he does matters and makes him act as if it did, and yet he knows that it doesn't; so when he fulfills his acts he retreats in peace, and whether his acts were good or bad, or worked or didn't, is in no way part of his concern.

We seek it here, we seek it there, and we've learnt to seek it everywhere like Frenchmen after the Scarlet Pimpernel. And yet this chimera eludes us with the facile grace of a chamois disappearing in craggy mountain heights. All of our activities — our pursuit of fame and fortune, our quest for meaningful relationships, and our drive to build or change things — are directed searches for this ephemeral state. We get there, but we can never heave a lasting sigh of relief because we leave before we are ready to.

What is 'happiness'? Can it be a permanent member of our household rather than an itinerant visitor like Tagore's Kabuliwallah? We will spend much time discussing this. Here is something for you to ponder and react to:

“ Recall the kind of feeling you have when someone praises you, when you are approved, accepted, applauded. And contrast that with the kind of feeling that arises within you when you look at the sunset or a sunrise, or Nature in general or when you read a book or watch a movie that you thoroughly enjoy. Get a taste of this feeling and contrast it with the first, namely, the one that was generated within you when you were praised.

Understand that the first type of feeling comes from self-glorification, self-promotion. It is a worldly feeling. The second comes from self-fulfillment. It is a soul feeling. Here is another contrast: Recall the kind of feeling you have when you succeed, when you have made it, when you get to the top, when you win a game or bet or argument. And contrast it with the kind of feeling you get when you really enjoy the job you are doing, you are absorbed in, the action you are currently engaged in. And once again notice the qualitative difference between the worldly feeling and the soul feeling.

Yet another contrast: Remember what you felt like when you had power, you were the boss, people

looked up to you, took orders from you; or when you were popular. And contrast that worldly feeling with the feeling of intimacy, companionship — the times you thoroughly enjoyed yourself in the company of a friend or with a group in which there was fun and laughter. Having done this, attempt to understand the true nature of worldly feelings, namely, the feelings of self-promotion, self-glorification. They are not natural, they were invented by your society to make you productive and to make you controllable. These feelings do not produce the nourishment and happiness that is produced when one contemplates Nature or enjoys the company of one's friends or one's work. They were meant to produce thrills, excitement and emptiness.

Then observe yourself over the course of a day or a week and think how many actions of yours are performed, how many activities engaged in that are uncontaminated by the desires for these thrills, these excitements that only produce emptiness, the desire for attention, approval, fame, popularity, success or power. And take a look at the people around you. Is there a single one of them who has not become addicted to these worldly feelings? A single one who is not controlled by them, hungers for them, spends every minute of his/her waking life consciously or unconsciously seeking them? When you see this you will understand how people attempt to gain the world and, in the process, lose their soul.

And here is a parable of life for you to ponder on: A group of tourists sit in a bus that is passing through gorgeously beautiful country; lakes and mountains and green fields and rivers. But the shades of the bus are pulled down. They do not have the slightest idea of what lies beyond the windows of the bus. And all the time of their journey is spent in squabbling over who will have the seat of honor in the bus, who will be applauded, who will be well considered. And so they remain till the journey's end.”

– Anthony DeMello

One of the most pervasive myths of our society is that ‘more’ will make us ‘happier’. Too few even recognize that this is a myth. Powerful institutions, such as the advertising industry, parade it as fact. Our entire economy is geared to fostering consumption and the more, the better. Our measures of societal well-being – such as per capita consumption — enshrine this notion. In fact, for most of us, our entire lives are a treadmill of effort to acquire ‘more’ — more money, bigger house, more attractive spouse, more power, more fame, more control, more cars and more luxurious cars, more vacation homes, more exclusive and more expensive trinkets. More of anything and everything.

Sometimes the ‘more’ is subtle. More refined and aesthetic pleasures to titillate us. More indulging of ego driven philanthropic urges. More of the ‘finer things of life’ like friendship, love, freedom and leisure. More, more always more. So intricately complex is our ability to play this game that some of us even want ‘more’ simplicity, ‘more’ renunciation. A few of us go to the hilarious end and want ‘more’ asceticism. It is this quest for more that drives us into all of the unfortunate predicaments in which we find ourselves.

Recognize that there is no problem in seeking more or wanting more or enjoying more. The problem lies in believing that any of this will bring us ‘more’ happiness. The causative link is spurious but, Oh, how firmly we believe in it!! Time for another instructive parable. Here goes.

He was a powerful monarch and presided over a prosperous kingdom. Art and science flourished and there was literature and theater and wholesome entertainment. His ministers were wise and dedicated. His wives were many and beautiful. His offspring were brilliant and dutiful. His army was powerful enough to keep all enemies at bay. He had leisure enough to pursue any field of learning and a mind keen enough to make rapid progress. There

*“Where seekest thou? That freedom, friends,
this world
Nor that can give. In books and temples vain
Thy search. Thine only is the hand that holds
The rope that drags thee on. Then cease lament,
Let go thy hold, Sannyasin bold! Say,
Om tat sat, Om!”*

– Swami Vivekananda

was nothing of this world he did not have.

Yet he knew that there was something missing. Serenity eluded him and his sleep was troubled. He eagerly sought out wise men who could possibly cure his malaise. One day he learnt of a sage in a distant town, a man of the greatest wisdom and accomplishment. He hurried thither to meet him.

The mystic was emaciated and unwashed. His locks were unkempt and he was barely clothed. But his eyes shone with an unnatural light and the king somehow knew that he was in the presence of greatness.

“Tell me, Sir,” asked the king anxiously, “Are you truly happy?”

“Of course I am, my son.” He replied. “How could I not be?”

And the king knew it was true and he earnestly asked for instruction.

The sage agreed, but the conditions he set were severe. For ten years he was to have the rule of the kingdom and the palace. If his slightest action was questioned, he would leave immediately. The emperor agreed and the wise man took up his abode in the palace.

He immediately started living a life of unbridled indulgence and luxury. Barbers and masseuses tended to him, the finest tailors clothed him, jugglers and clowns entertained him and he had sculptors

create massive statues of himself all over the kingdom.

The emperor was taken aback by this transformation, but he kept his word and instructed his staff to obey the sage. They grumbled loudly and felt that the king had taken leave of his senses, but grudgingly they obeyed.

Every evening, for one hour, the king received instruction and the wise man seemed different at these sessions. His words carried the ring of truth and the ruler learned much about statecraft and about philosophy.

At other times he despaired and regretted his impulsive invitation. The intruder discovered tobacco and puffed like a chimney. He was introduced to intoxicants and imbibed freely. He made boundless use of the ruler's hare

The breaking point came some months later when the king was with his favorite concubine and the sage asked him to begone so he could indulge himself. Red-faced with wrath the sovereign berated him and asked him to look at what he had become, how low he had fallen. "There is no difference between you and me," he asserted. "How could I have possibly thought that you had anything to teach me."

"I was wondering when you would erupt," said the sage amusedly.

"I will leave now because you broke your word. You are wrong. There is an enormous difference between us and until you understand this difference, you will suffer as you always have."

"What difference?" the king shouted. "You indulge yourself just as I do and seek enjoyment more than I ever did."

"Your word was weak," said the philosopher calmly, "So I will leave. But you are a good man and your intentions were honorable, so I will teach you this difference as a parting gift. But I cannot do it here

at the palace. You must come with me alone, for two weeks."

So the two set out and traveled far and the king kept pressing for answers and the sage smiled enigmatically. At length they reached the border and the mystic kept going. The king stopped even though the other pressed

"It is not safe," protested the emperor. "I have to hurry back. There are affairs of state to tend to and much to do. I regret that I indulged you again. Tell me the difference and begone."

"That is the difference, my son," said the sage as he discarded his raiment. "I was in the lap of luxury and I leave with no regrets, not a moment's sorrow. The time for such enjoyment is past. Like all things it comes and it goes

"You, on the other hand," he continued, "Are so stuck with being an emperor that you are prepared to forgo your own quest. This is the tragedy. What you seek is within your grasp, but you can only reach it if you let go of what you are clasping so tightly to your bosom. I understand this. You do not. That is the difference between us and it is a mighty chasm."

"Return to your palace. Rule wisely, my son, and I pray that someday you, too, will discover this truth for yourself."

The scales fell from the king's eyes and he remembered their evening sessions and how much he learnt. He earnestly begged for forgiveness and entreated the other to return.

"No, my son," said the sage firmly. "If I return now you will forever doubt whether I was a master gamesman or a true master. There is no more I have to teach you. Go back to your kingdom."

He turned and strode off. He did not look back.

The king returned to his palace and resumed his rule. He pondered on the sage's words and reflected on his teachings. And suddenly, one day, he understood.

You will spend half your waking hours at work, maybe much more. It would be a shame if so much time was spent on just a job. Here is a sampling of views on the nature and meaning of work and about life. Some of them should resonate deeply within you. If none do, then this program may not be appropriate for you.

“ Labore ut orare — To work is to pray.”

“ What you receive depends on what you give. The workman gives the toil of his arm, his energy, his movement; for this the craft gives him a notion of the resistance of the material and its manner of reaction. The artisan gives the craft his love; and to him the craft responds by making him one with his work. But the craftsman gives the craft his passionate research into the laws of nature which govern it; and the craft teaches him Wisdom.”

– deLubicz

“ The spider dances her web without knowing that there are flies who will get caught in it. The fly, dancing nonchalantly on a sunbeam, gets caught in the net without knowing what lies in store. But through both of them ‘It’ dances, and inside and outside are united in this dance. So, too, the archer hits the target without having aimed – more I cannot say.”

– Herrigel

“ But he learned more from the river than Vasudeva could teach him. He learned from it continually. Above all he learned from it how to listen with a still heart, with a waiting, open soul, without passion, without desire, without judgment, without opinions.”

– Hesse

“ Live, as it were, in trust. All that is in you, all that you are, is only loaned to you. Make use of it according to the will of Him who lends it, but never regard it for a moment as your own.”

– Francois Fenelon

“ There is nothing better for a man than that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labor.”

– Ecclesiastes

“ What you are now is the result of what you were. What you will be tomorrow will be the result of what you are now. The consequences of an evil mind will follow you like the cart follows the ox that pulls it. The consequences of a purified mind will follow you like your own shadow. No one can do more for you than your own purified mind – no parent, no relative, no friend, no one. A well-disciplined mind brings happiness.”

– The Dhammapada

“ Most men would feel insulted if it were proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then in throwing them back, merely that they might earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now.”

– Thoreau

“ The true husbandman will cease from anxiety, as the squirrels manifest no concern whether the woods will bear chestnuts this year or not, and finish his labor with every day, relinquishing all claim to the produce of his fields, and sacrificing in his mind not only his first but last fruits also.”

– Thoreau

“ Caring about our work, liking it, even loving it, seems strange when we see work only as a way to make a living. But when we see work as a way to deepen and enrich all of our experience, each one of us can find this caring within our hearts, and awaken it in those around us, using every aspect of our work to learn and grow...Every kind of work can be a pleasure. Even simple household tasks can be an opportunity to exercise and expand our caring, our effectiveness, our responsiveness. As we respond with caring and vision to all work, we develop our capacity to respond fully to all of life. Every action generates positive energy which can be shared with others. These qualities of caring and responsiveness are the greatest gift we can offer.”

– Tarthang Tulku

“ Therefore, without attachment, constantly perform whatever actions are needed. He who works in this spirit attains the highest end.”

“ Whose works are all free from the molding of desire, whose actions are burned up by the fire of wisdom, him the wise have called a sage. Having abandoned attachment to the fruit of action, always content, nowhere seeking refuge, he is not doing anything, although doing actions.”

–Bhagavad Gita

“ We are all, always, building foundations, either good or bad, solid or hollow, firm or frail. Every act is a hammer stroke. One coral insect appears to be of infinitesimal importance. But in time one such insect laid on another can wreck the staunchest ship that ever sailed the sea. Our hourly thoughts and acts, each in itself apparently of no moment, in time build our foundations and erect thereon our life’s structure.”

–B. C. Forbes

“ Ch’ing, the chief carpenter, was carving wood into a stand for musical instruments. When finished, the work appeared to those who saw it as though of supernatural execution; and the Prince of Lu asked him, saying, ‘What mystery is there in your art?’

‘No mystery, Your Highness,’ replied Ch’ing. ‘And yet there is something. When I am about to make such a stand, I guard against any diminution of my vital power. I first reduce my mind to absolute quiescence. Three days in this condition, and I become oblivious of any reward to be gained. Five days, and I become oblivious of any fame to be acquired. Seven days, and I become oblivious of my four limbs and my physical frame. Then, with no thought of the Court present in my mind, my skill becomes concentrated, and all disturbing elements from without are gone. I enter some mountain forest, I search for a suitable tree. It contains the form required, which is afterwards elaborated. I see the stand in my mind’s eye, and then set to work. Beyond that there is nothing. I bring my own native capacity into relation with that of the wood. What was suspected to be of supernatural execution in my work was due solely to this.’”

–Chuang Tzu

“ The Buddha, in his wisdom, made ‘right livelihood’ one of the steps to enlightenment. If we do not pitch our discussion that high, we have failed to give work its true dimension, and we will settle for far too little – perhaps for no more than a living wage. Responsible work is an embodiment of love, and love is the only discipline that will serve in shaping the personality, the only discipline that makes the mind whole and constant for a lifetime of effort. There hovers about a true vocation that paradox of all significant self-knowledge – our capacity to find ourselves by losing ourselves. We lose ourselves in our love of the task before us and, in that moment, we learn an identity that lives both within and beyond us.”

– Theodore Roszak

“ Nine requisites for a contented life: Health enough to make work a pleasure. Wealth enough to support your needs. Strength enough to battle with difficulties and overcome them. Grace enough to confess your sins and forsake them. Patience enough to toil till some good is accomplished. Charity enough to see some good in your neighbor. Love enough to move you to be useful and helpful to others. Faith enough to make real the things of God. Hope enough to remove all anxious fears concerning the future.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

“ Your work should be an area of great passion. Most of the time right livelihood means we get up and look forward to the day with the same excitement that we feel on vacations.”

– Michael Phillips

“ Thy lot or portion of life is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it.

– Ali Ibn-Ali-Talib

“ A human being is part of the whole, called by us the Universe; a part limited by time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical illusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task is to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature.”

– Albert Einstein

“ This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being thoroughly worn out before being thrown on the scrap heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.”

– George Bernard Shaw

“ Blessed is he who has found his work. Let him ask for no other blessedness.”

“ Our main business is not to see what lies dimly in the distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand.”

– Carlyle

“ Do little things in an extraordinary way; be the best one in your line. You must not let your life run in the ordinary way; do something that nobody else has done, something that will dazzle the world. Show that God’s creative principle works in you. Never mind the past. Though your errors be as deep as the ocean, the soul itself cannot be swallowed up by them. Have the unflinching determination to move on your path unhampered by limiting thoughts of past errors.”

– Paramahansa Yogananda

“ How can the mind which has itself created the world accept it as unreal? That is the significance of the comparison made between the world of the waking state and the dream world. Both are creations of the mind and so long as the mind is engrossed in either, it finds itself unable to deny their reality. It cannot deny the reality of the dream world while it is dreaming and it cannot deny the reality of the waking world while it is awake. If, on the contrary, you withdraw your mind completely from the world and turn it within and abide there, that is if you keep awake always to the Self which is the sub-stratum of all experiences, you will find the world of which you are now aware is just as unreal as the world in which you lived your dreams.”

–Ramana Maharshi

“ God can dream a bigger dream for you than you can dream for yourself, and your role on earth is to attach yourself to that divine force and let yourself be released to it.”

“ I will tell you that there have been no failures in my life. I don't want to sound like some metaphysical queen, but there have been no failures. There have been some tremendous lessons.”

– Oprah Winfrey

“ The Master in the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play, his labor and his leisure, his mind and his body, his education and his recreation, his love and his religion. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence in whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him he is always doing both.”

–Zen Buddhist Text

“ Many people are surprised to learn that in 27 years at UCLA, I never once talked about winning. Instead I would tell my players before the games, ‘When it's over, I want your head up. And there's only one way for your head to be up, and that's for you to know, not me, that you gave the best effort of which you are capable. If you do that, then the score really doesn't matter, although I have a feeling that if you do that, the score will be to your liking.’ I honestly, deeply believe that in not stressing winning as such, we won more than we would have if we had stressed outscoring opponents.”

– John Oden

“ What is work? What is beyond work? Even some seers see this not aright. I will teach thee the truth of pure work, and this truth will make thee free...All actions take place in time by the interweaving of the forces of Nature; but the person lost in selfish delusion thinks that he himself is the actor.

– Bhagavad Git

The following books are required reading. It is strongly recommended that you finish ALL of the books BEFORE the start of the program. This will serve to give you an early orientation and thus a head start. Also it will give you more time to do some of the other readings that will enable you to get so much more from this course.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi – *FLOW: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper & Row, 1990

FLOW is a state of intense absorption where the distinction between you and the work you are doing practically disappears. Time appears distorted with hours feeling like minutes or vice versa. Peak performers achieve this state regularly and it has been extensively studied in champion athletes and sports figures as well as performers in the arts. University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has researched the phenomenon in other occupations and explored the conditions under which FLOW can be achieved by practically anyone. Extraordinary creativity routinely occurs in the flow state. You may also wish to explore *The Evolving Self* by the same author.

Inamori, the legendary founder of Kyocera, puts it beautifully, *“I often tell a researcher who is lacking in dedication...unless he is motivated with determination to succeed, he will not be able to go past the obstacles... When his passion, his desire, becomes so strong as to rise out of his body like steam, and when the condensation of that which evaporated occurs...and drops back like raindrops, he will find his problem solved.”*

Michael Ray and Rochelle Myers – *Creativity in Business*, Doubleday, 1986

Michael is the Stanford Business School marketing professor who was a pioneer in teaching creativity in a business school. The book contains many business anecdotes – now somewhat dated – and is very entertaining, but reading it like a novel will not do you much good. Practice the exercises he suggests, particularly those relating to the VOJ (voice of judgment) and in chapters 4 and 6.

Michael Michalko – *Cracking Creativity*, Ten Speed Press, 2001

The subtitle of this book is “The secrets of creative genius” and it is exactly that. The author is a creativity consultant with many Fortune 500 clients and the business examples he gives are highly instructive. I particularly like the layout of the book and its excellent graphics. Use this as you would a recipe book, to search for ideas when you don’t know what to cook. Pay particular attention to the strategies of thinking fluently and making novel combinations.

P. G. Wodehouse – *Leave it to Psmith*, Many editions. Try the one by Overlook Hardcover 2003 but others also work.

Many, including myself, believe Wodehouse is one of the greatest humorists of all time. There are few persons who will leave you with such belly bursting gales of laughter. Do not read this book on trains or planes unless you are OK with fellow travelers looking askance at you and silently questioning your mental stability. On a more serious note, evaluate the mental models used by Psmith and his cheery insouciance when faced with the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. This is the spirit to cultivate and I cannot recommend this cultivation highly enough.

Paul Brunton – *A Search in Secret India*, Red Wheel/Weiser, 1990

Paul Brunton was a journalist on a quest and visited many parts of the globe. *A Search in Secret Egypt* is an earlier companion volume. The nature of his quest and the insistent questions that drove him may resonate with some of you. His observation is keen and his descriptions powerful. His matter of fact recital of some exceedingly strange experiences may leave some of you gasping. Suspend judgment and focus on the lessons he learned and would like to pass on.

Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander – *The Art of Possibility*, Penguin Books, 2000

Benjamin Zander is a conductor, so passionate about music that he literally sways audiences into rapture. He is legendary for his pre-concert lectures where he educates his audience about the music about to be played. He also offers to refund the admission of any member who is not emotionally moved. This is the kind of conviction that permeates this book. You, too, can be equally passionate about what you do. This book shows you how.

Srikumar S. Rao – *Are YOU Ready to Succeed? Unconventional Strategies for Achieving Personal Mastery in Business and Life*, Hyperion, 2006

A complete blueprint for effecting profound personal change using tools crafted by great masters. The methods have been tested over millennia and absolutely work. Simply written but very deep and with many layers. This is the book that sprang from this course and serves as both an introduction and a refresher. It gives you the reason for the exercises and the approach and ends with a comprehensive framework for viewing the world.

The literature on creativity is vast. When you add to it the literature on how to figure out what you want to do and why and sundry other topics, the available resources are mind-boggling. What follow are some of my highly personal and idiosyncratic recommendations. The books are organized in groups with a brief introduction to the group itself. Skim through many books in each of the groups. Read introductions, summaries and tables of content. Let your interests and inclinations guide you. Follow your intuition. If you do not feel a sense of breathless excitement, drop the book and explore another.

I have – in most cases – given my rating of how the book reads. Reading level 1 is straightforward and easily understandable. Most gripping mystery thrillers and many trashy bestsellers are written at this level. I have a strong preference for level 1 material because I firmly believe that if an author cannot communicate clearly then he/she probably has little worth saying. Reading level 3 is tangled and obscure and blessed by manufacturers of analgesics. It includes language like, “Item equivalence is a more concrete and micro level perspective, and presupposes both construct and operationalization equivalence”. Most academic “research” – including, alas!, my own – is written at this level and I invite you to share with me a moment of silence in memory of so many trees that have been so foully murdered. Reading level 2 falls squarely in between. It will not give you a headache but neither is it a whiff of oxygen.

Creativity

These are some other books on creativity that you might like. It is unlikely that you will learn new “techniques” because most of these have been covered in the required reading, but you might think you have because you find a particular anecdote or mode of presentation to be powerful. Browse away.

Ackoff, Russell L. –

The Art of Problem Solving; John Wiley, 1978

Wharton School professor and father figure in operations research Russ Ackoff is brilliant and incisive. He has an uncanny ability to frame problems so the solutions pop out and is funny to boot. There are many parables in the text – a form of exposition to which I am partial – and these clarify some quite complicated analyses and lead to “morals” such as, “The less we understand something, the more variables we need to explain it”.

Management in Small Doses; John Wiley, 1986

Pretty much the same comments as above.
Both books are at reading level 1.

Adams, James L. – Conceptual Blockbusting; Addison-Wesley, 1987

The author has a background as an engineer and Stanford professor. He defines various “blocks” to creativity such as stereotyping, judging etc. and suggests strategies to overcome them. The best parts are the exercises peppered throughout the various chapters. Be sure to try these. (Sample: Imagine the sensation of a long attack of hiccups).
Reading level 1.

DeBono, Edward –
***Lateral Thinking*; Harper & Row, 1970**

Vertical thinking, according to DeBono, is digging the same hole deeper. Lateral thinking is digging someplace else. Junior is bothering his aunt who is knitting a sweater. He feels constricted by the playpen and howls. Solution: put the aunt in the playpen where she can knit undisturbed while junior romps outside. Several sets of exercises are included. Reading level 1 with gusts of 2.

Six Thinking Hats; Little, Brown & Co., 1985

DeBono specifies hats of six colors, each associated with a different thinking mode. Putting on the white hat requires you to present facts and figures in a neutral, objective manner. The red hat requires you to present how you feel about “the proposal” emotionally, the black hat what your negative assessments are, and so on. The method is designed to switch thinking away from arguments into collaboration. Widely used techniques. Reading level 1.

***Serious Creativity*; Harper Collins, 1992**

Prolific as he is it is easy to understand how DeBono can afford to live on his own private island. This book summarizes his other works and gives new anecdotes, business examples and exercises. Reading level 1.

Isakson, Scott G. and Donald J. Treffinger – *Creative Problem Solving: The Basic Course*, Bearly Ltd., 1985

This is a workbook that comes in a three whole binder and provides detailed instructions on data finding, problem structuring, idea and solution finding etc. The checklists of questions are quite

helpful though the text is somewhat boring. Reading level 1 but goes to 2 quite often.

Michalko, Michael –
***Thinkertoys*; Ten Speed Press, 2006**

The original edition of this book was good and this one is better. The graphics are great and it has a friendly feel – you just want to flip through it and browse at length. Wonderful quotes from Sun Tzu at the start of each chapter. Michalko teaches you several techniques to challenge your assumptions. In “reversal” for example, you ask what happens if you change the order of things by say giving an onus to waiters before they start serving diners. Turns out that productivity actually increases. Reading level 1.

***Cracking Creativity*, Ten Speed Press, 2001**

The subtitle of this book is “The secrets of creative genius” and it is exactly that. The author is a creativity consultant with many Fortune 500 clients and the business examples he gives are highly instructive. I particularly like the layout of the book and its excellent graphics. Use this as you would a recipe book, to search for ideas when you don’t know what to cook. Pay particular attention to the strategies of thinking fluently and making novel combinations. Reading level 1.

Miller, William – *The Creative Edge*; Addison-Wesley, 1987

A consultant to major corporations, Miller does a fine job of showing how to enhance creativity in individual and group settings. His discourse on intuitive methods is good, as is his discussion of human values. Methods of achieving “win-win” solutions in the workplace are neat. Reading level 1, very occasionally 2.

Parnes, Sidney J. – *The Magic of Your Mind*; Creative Education Foundation, 1981

Another book that talks about the creative process, what blocks it and how we can overcome the blocks. Many standard exercises are presented. The sans-serif type is none too easy to read but, to compensate, there is a profusion of cartoons most of which are very, very funny. Reading level 1.

Von Oech, Roger –

***A Whack on the Side of the Head*; Warner 1983**

***A Kick in the Seat of the Pants*; Harper & Row, 1986**

Nobody would publish his first book so von Oech did it himself and created a block-buster success that is still being touted by purveyors of manuals on self-publishing. It also established his reputation as a creativity consultant and he picked up many prestigious Silicon Valley clients including Apple Computers. Oversize and easy to read. Good graphics and pictures. Fun exercises. Reading level 1.

The New Physics and Readings from Science

Quantum Physics has turned topsy turvy all of our cherished notions of how things work. In this world time can flow backwards with particles dying before they are born. Space is curved and exists in an infinite number of dimensions. Space and matter are inexplicably linked, neither can exist without the other. The type of our measuring instrument determines the nature of our observation, change one and so does the other. The act of observation alters that which is observed. A number of thinkers have raised the possibility that quantum phenomena have their counterparts in the “real” world, that too many of our assumptions are untested and probably false and have drawn strong parallels between the world views of Eastern philosophy and quantum mechanics. Be aware that others vociferously oppose the implications of such comparisons and there are scientists of Nobel Prize winning caliber on both sides of the argument. Leonard Shlain expresses it beautifully: “The new physics presently rests like a pea under the collective mattress of humankind, disturbing tranquil sleep just enough to begin to change how people think about the world.” What is indisputable is that there are few exercises more capable of stretching your mind than pondering the status of Schrodinger’s cat or the implications of the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen experiment. Welcome to the mysterious world of Physics!

And let us not forget other branches of science — pure mathematics, chemistry, biology and biochemistry, genetics and many more. All these fields are in ferment and the distinctions between functional areas are breaking down. Complex linear programming problems have been solved

by DNA computers leading to speculation that organic computers, vastly more powerful than their silicon based counterparts, may soon be among us. Quantum computing is looming in the background. Even the merest exposure to what is happening “out there” in different fields will cause you to gape with wonder. Hold on to that feeling of awe, that amazement at where human thought has reached. You too will push the boundaries. That is what this course is all about.

Bohm, David – *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*; Ark Paperbacks, Boston 1983

A renowned physicist and collaborator of Einstein, Bohm makes the point that scientists are too hung up on a fragmented world view in which thought and matter are separate and distinct and the thinker is different from what he thinks about. He postulates that the universe is an unbroken whole in which any element contains within itself the totality of the universe. He also explicitly discusses consciousness which is a subject most scientists shy away from. Reading level 2 with frequent jumps to 3.

Capra, Fritjof – *The Tao of Physics*; Shambala, 1975

With the cult success of this book imitators swarmed in and there is now a “Tao” of everything from leadership to cooking. The author, a scientist in his own right, gives an overview of quantum physics and muses philosophically on its implications. It is well written and you do not have to possess much of a scientific background to understand it. He is particularly good at drawing and explaining parallels between Eastern mysticism and modern physics. You may also wish to explore his co-authored book, *Belonging to the Universe*. Reading level 1 to 2.

Casti, John L. – *Paradigms Lost: Images of Man in the Mirror of Science*, William Morrow, 1989

Casti, a mathematician by training, discusses deep questions such as “What is the true nature of mankind?” He considers quantum reality, extraterrestrial intelligence and the origin of life. In each case he presents opposing viewpoints and the evidence for each and then puts on his judicial hat and plops on one side or the other. A particularly neat feature of this book is that Casti presents the social context in which many famous scientists worked and shows how their political and other beliefs contributed to their findings. Reading level 1, occasionally 2.

Dyson, Freeman – *Disturbing the Universe*; Harper & Row, 1979

A physicist at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, Dyson worked with many of the most famous names in the field including Oppenheimer and Feynman. The title of the book comes from a T. S. Eliot poem and serves to illustrate the breadth of the author’s interests. He muses on many topics from inter-galactic colonization to nuclear and biological weapons and has a keen feel for political reality. His description of war years at Bomber Command in England is particularly worthwhile. Reading level 1 to 2.

Greene, Brian – *The Elegant Universe*; Vintage Books, 2000

A marvelous exposition of the unexplained mysteries of physics with an especially lucid discussion of relativity. If Einstein’s famous discovery still leaves you bemused, this book will give you understanding. The author is a strong proponent of String Theory and he explains how

this may well be the theoretical underpinning for the much sought after ‘theory of everything’. Reading level 1, very occasionally 2.

The Fabric of the Cosmos; Space, Time and the Texture of Reality, Alfred A. Knopf, 2004

A phenomenal book that gives you more insights into modern science and specifically quantum mechanics and astrophysics. He shows you how small anomalies in the real world have led to new theories that completely overthrew old scientific paradigms. This is a book that will make you gasp with awe at the power of the human mind, and the wonder of the universe. Science, especially physics, has never been so enthralling. Reading Level 1, sometimes 2.

Gribbin, John and Martin Rees – Cosmic Coincidence: Dark Matter, Man and Anthropic, Cosmology; Bantam, 1989

A science writer and a physicist take you on an intriguing tour of some of the most revolutionary ideas to emerge from science: the particle zoo; black holes; cosmic strings; gravitational lenses; Copenhagen and Many Worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics; and much more. Clear writing. Reading level 1 to 2.

Heisenberg, Werner – Physics and Beyond; Harper & Row, 1971

The debate is raging again about whether Heisenberg, head of the Nazi equivalent of the Manhattan Project, was a courageous scientist who sabotaged the effort or an incompetent manager who fell on his face. There is no doubt that he was one of the greatest physicists of all time and his uncertainty principle is a cornerstone of our understanding of the universe. He muses

on politics, history, religion and other topics and reports on his conversations with other scientific greats like Einstein, Bohr and Schrodinger. Reading level 2.

Jahn, Robert G. and Brenda J. Dunne – Margins of Reality; HBJ 1987

A former Dean of the School of Engineering at Princeton University and a NASA consultant Jahn had a towering reputation which did not prevent vociferous attacks when he chose to investigate, using rigorous scientific methodology, subjects which were taboo then and are still largely so. The subtitle of the book is The Role of Consciousness in the Physical World and he documents the results of his experiments showing that consciousness and matter interact in measurable ways. Reading level 2 with gusts of 3.

Morowitz, Harold J. – Cosmic Joy and Local Pain: Musing of a Mystic Scientist, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1987

A Yale professor of biophysics muses on his field during a sabbatical and while on his sailboat in Hawaii. Many simple, and some quite complex, topics in science – the importance of water in organic life, energy flow and entropy – are made clear in simple language. Reading level 1.

Newberg, Andrew, Eugene D’Aquill and Vince Rause – Why God Won’t Go Away; Brain Science and the Biology of Belief, Ballantine, 2001

Mystics in many traditions speak of powerful experiences of unity, of merging with the universe, of becoming one with the cosmos. Most persons dismiss such descriptions as metaphorical. But what if they are not? Modern science has provided

us with ever more powerful tools to map the brain's neuron activity. The authors report on studies that show that there is, indeed, such a state of merging and it is associated with a unique brain map. Neurotheology is a new discipline and it poses interesting questions such as "Did God create the Brain or did the Brain create God?" Reading level 1, sometimes 2.

Pagels, Heinz R. – *The Cosmic Code: Quantum Physics as the Language of Nature*, Simon and Schuster, 1982

Pagels, former president of the New York Academy of Sciences, does a pretty good job of explaining how quantum physics evolved from Newtonian physics. He clearly explains the experimental anomalies of the latter, which forced the "creation" of the former. He also does an excellent job of describing the individual contributions of the great physicists who flourished in the 1920s and how the theoretical work of each tied in with that of others and cumulatively evolved a fundamental shift in physics. Reading level 1, frequently 2.

Penrose, Roger – *The Road to Reality: A Complete Guide to the Laws of the Universe*, Alfred, A. Knopf, 2004

A great physicist and professor of mathematics at Oxford, Penrose provides a panoramic view of the evolution of physics and mathematics. He shows you the subtle interplays between the disciplines and puts historic rivalries between scientists into context. It encompasses everything from quantum particles to multiple universes. The author does make heavy use of mathematics and his language is not always lucid. The book is more than a thousand pages long. Much of it is reading level 3.

Randall, Lisa – *Warped Passages: Unraveling the Mysteries of the Universe's Hidden Dimensions*; Harper Collins, 2005

Because she is good looking Randall has been referred to as the "hottie" of physics which makes light of the fact that she is the first tenured woman theoretical physicist at both MIT and Harvard. She provides an excellent description of the state of physics and describes Einstein's contribution in clear detail. She does a great job of explaining concepts like super-symmetry and Higgs mechanisms and the excitement is clear when she talks about her own work on string theory. And I love the fables that begin some chapters. Reading level 1 but frequently 2. Very occasionally 3 as well.

Schrodinger, Erwin – *What is Life? And Mind, and Matter?*, Cambridge University Press, 1969

A Nobel Prize winning physicist ponders on the implications of his discoveries. Fate and free will; science and religion; the physical basis of consciousness; subject-object differentiation; and more. Reading level 2, sometimes 3.

Schwartz, Jeffrey M. and Sharon Begley – *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity, And the Power of Mental Force*, HarperCollins 2002

The mind can shape the brain. What you intensely, deeply visualize can leave a permanent imprint on your brain. Many traditions say this, but until now you had to take it on faith. Now there is proof. Brain maps reveal that thinking does indeed create changes in brain waves. Also, the brain can rewire itself. The implications are profound and provide scientific rationale for the mental exercises propounded by religious teachers, sports coaches and many, many others. Reading level 1.

Talbot, Michael – *Beyond the Quantum: God, Reality, Consciousness in the New Scientific Revolution*; Macmillan, 1986

Well written book that explains recent scientific experiments and why they are important. True, he selects only experiments that further his point of view, but they are fascinating anyway. His thesis is that science will one day explain, or at least accept, mysticism and the paranormal and explores why so many scientists oppose them viscerally. Reading level 1 to 2.

Wilbur, Ken (editor) – *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the Worlds Great, Physicists*; New Science Library, 1984

Collection of writings from a pantheon of Nobel Prize winners: Heisenberg, Schrodinger, Einstein, de Broglie, Pauli, Planck and others. The book makes the case that, contrary to New Age thinking, contemporary physics does not “prove” mysticism. Nevertheless, every one of these giants was a mystic. It attempts to explore why. Fascinating reading as the towering figures of modern science reveal their personal beliefs and world views. Reading level varies from 1 to 3.

Zukav, Gary – *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*; William Morrow, 1979

Wu Li is supposedly the Chinese word for physics. This is in the same tradition as Capra’s Tao of Physics and is very readable. The discussions of philosophical quandaries like whether Schrodinger’s cat is alive and the implications of the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen experiment are well done. The last chapter, which deals with the limits of science, is fascinating. Reading level 1 to 2.

Business and management

The business world we live in is changing and the pace of this change is accelerating. The multi-layered corporation with its autocratic hierarchy is unsuited to the new information era spawned by cheap computing power. People, and not machines or structures, are the key to an organization's long-run prosperity. Jack Welch, former chairman of General Electric, puts it as well as anyone, "The only way I see to get more productivity is by getting people involved and excited about their jobs. You can't afford to have anyone walk through a gate of a factory, or into an office, who's not giving 120%." His particular solution, which involves relentlessly raising the bar and subjecting employees to sometimes brutal treatment, may or may not be the best one, but it certainly has gained widespread attention and approbation. There are other companies that are also changing their organizational structures and processes to take account of the new reality. They are grappling with the problems of how, exactly, do you empower workers and what should you do to get them to take ownership of problems. Consultants and academics are documenting the physical and psychic costs of continuing with "old" ways. Just emerging is the recognition that there are physical and psychic costs of doing things in "new" ways. Herewith a small sampling of business and management books that you might find worthwhile. If you find any book particularly appealing, be sure to look up others by the same author. You will notice that I have an expansive notion of what constitutes a business or management book.

Albrecht, Karl – *The Only Thing That Matters*; Harper Business 1992

Albrecht has written or co-authored many books on customer service and this is one of his better ones. The consumer seeks the best "value" not quality or low price. He explains how to ensure that you get and remain close to the customer. Illuminating anecdotes that make points very clearly. Reading level 1.

Alexander, Col. John B., Maj. Richard Groller and Janet Morris; – *The Warrior's Edge*, Avon, 1990

Alexander is a former Special Forces commander who led hundreds of search-and-destroy missions in Southeast Asia. He also studied meditation at Buddhist monasteries and helped bring visualization and mental techniques into the training programs of the US Armed Forces. He is now a consultant to the Army and a leading proponent of non-destructive warfare. The book teaches you how to get a mental edge and trust your intuition. Reading level 1.

Alsop, Ronald J. – *The 18 Immutable Laws of Corporate Reputation*; Free Press 2004

Alsop is a veteran Wall Street Journal reporter who begins with the unarguable premise that an impeccable reputation is an invaluable corporate asset. He then talks about how to establish and sustain such a reputation. There is a lot of usual stuff such as great customer service, fixing problems right the first time and so on. What makes it valuable are the innumerable anecdotes that come from Alsop's day job. The examples make his points come alive and are useful guides to both what you should do and should not do. Reading level 1.

Argyris, Chris – *Flawed Advice and the Management Trap*, Oxford University Press, 2000

The subtitle of this book is “How Managers Can Know When They’re Getting Good Advice and when they’re not” and that is what the book is about. Argyris always has penetrating insight – if you have not read his other books, do so now – and he is superb at uncovering hidden agendas. He clearly demonstrates the true feelings behind what is said and done and how the discrepancy affects organizational effectiveness. He also points out that there is more chaff than wheat in most consultant recommendations. Reading level 1.

Autry, James A. and Stephen Mitchell – *Real Power: Business Lessons from the Tao Te Ching*; Riverhead Books, 1998

Autry was the CEO of the magazine division of the Meredith Corporation which consisted of several powerhouses such as the Ladies Home Journal. Since retiring, he has become a thoughtful exponent of the softer side of management focusing on such themes as fulfillment, creation of a healthy work environment and spiritual development. He writes simply on important topics such as what is “control” and do you really need to do it. Good stuff, good quotes. Reading level 1.

Badaracco, Joseph L., Jr. – *Defining Moments: When Managers Must Choose between Right and Right*; Harvard Business School, 1997

Ethical dilemmas in business do not always involve clearly right and wrong paths. They are frequently choices between principles, which are both “right”. A single mother with an ailing child is forced to leave work early on numerous occasions. Is it “right” to cut her some slack? Is it also “right” to

fire her because her already overworked team mates are having to pick up that slack? Badaracco gives a framework to analyze such conflicts and talks you through its implications. Reading level 1.

Baker, Wayne E. – *Networking Smart*; McGraw-Hill, 1994

I have already described my views on networking earlier in this syllabus. This said, this is one of the better books on the subject. Baker analyzes and categorizes the types of networks that exist in organizations, their usefulness in different situations from providing support to members in trying times like downsizing to promoting team work and shared responsibility. He also has excellent tips on how you fit into networks and how to create personal ones at your place of work. Reading level 1.

Bennis, Warren – *On Becoming a Leader*; Addison-Wesley 1989

A professor of management and a former university president Bennis has written many books on leadership and I am not sure that this is the best one. He asserts that leaders are made, not born and that leadership cannot be taught, it has to be learned. He dissects the modern business environment and lists the essential qualities a leader has to have (integrity is one of them). Reading level 1 to 2.

Bianco, Anthony – *Rainmaker: The Saga of Jeff Beck, Wall Street’s Mad Dog*, Random House, 1991

Investment bankers, of course, have been known to stretch the facts. In fact, I am amazed that no ‘fairness opinion’ has yet won an award for creative fiction. Even in this milieu, Jeff Beck stood out by fabricating everything from educational credentials

to an exemplary, if totally fictional, war record. Bianco is a Business Week writer who does a superb job chronicling Beck's rise and fall. The bigger value is in the peek this book gives into what life is really like in big prestigious banks. Dated but still accurate and very well written. Reading level 1.

Block, Peter – *Stewardship*; Berrett-Koehler, 1993

Consultant and author, Block espouses the notion of stewardship to replace the policing attitude of our institutions. He defines a patriarchy as an organization that is focused on control, consistency and predictability. Responsibility for strategy lies with top management. He suggests partnership as an alternative where there is the right to say "no", joint accountability and absolute honesty. Interesting ideas. Reading level 2.

Byham, William C. and Jeff Cox – *Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment*, DDI Press, 1988

A self-published book that became a million copy best-seller, this book helped propel Byham's firm to great consulting success. Written as a fable it talks of managerial behaviors that squelch initiatives (Sapp!) and how to change them so that workers feel empowered (Zapp!). Amusing and well-written but still has substance. Lot more difficult to do than it indicates. Reading level 1.

Byrne, John A. – *Chainsaw: The Notorious Career of Al Dunlap in the Era of Profit at Any Price*; HarperBusiness, 1999

A very well researched book into Al Dunlap and his history of turning companies around. Most of the book focuses on Sunbeam – a public fiasco of the first magnitude – but the author also casts serious doubt on Dunlap's other "accomplishments"

pointing out, for example, that it was luck – and inept due diligence by Kimberly Clark – that prevented Scott Paper from being an equal failure. Many lawyers, accountants, consultants, investment bankers and other service professionals conspired with Dunlap to keep his balloon from deflating due to complex factors ranging from greed to fear. The wonder is not that the debacle happened, but why it took so long to happen. There are no heroes in this book and the author does an admirable job of probing the weakness of our business culture. Reading Level 1.

Cassidy, John – *How Markets Fail: The Logic of Economic Calamities*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009

Superb review of the economic theorists who propagated the idea that markets are "efficient" and the "hidden hand" magically transforms private self-interested actions into public good. Points out the fallacies in assumptions and how widespread acceptance of these ideas led to deregulation and distorting incentives including exorbitant compensation. Especially good explanation of how individuals acting rationally can lead an economy to collective ruin. Reading level 1.

Champy, James – *Reengineering Management*; HarperBusiness, 1995

Half of the team that gave you Reengineering the Corporation, Champy took time off to ponder the consequences of what he helped unleash. This book is the result. It is a thoughtful examination of the "soft" side of business, of traits that managers must possess if their companies are to thrive as wholesome entities, not as cancerous growths. It encourages questions like "What kind of culture do we want?" and "What is this business for, anyway?" Lots of examples. Reading level 1.

Champy, James and Nitin Nohria – *The Arc of Ambition*; Perseus Books, 2000

Ambition can create prodigious achievement. The authors trace the accomplishments of a plethora of individuals from Garibaldi to Jack Welch and link it to how a persistent vision would not let them be. They examine the roots of ambition and explain how you can use it to your advantage. They also caution against letting it wax into hubris – Al Dunlap is a classic, unbeloved, example. Excellent examples from history, business, science, fiction, military and other places. Reading level 1.

Chappell, Tom – *The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and the Common Good*; Bantam, 1993

He founded Tom's of Maine, built it up into a thriving company and then was wracked by questions like does success in business automatically mean giving up personal values? He searched many places including Harvard Divinity School. What is trust and how do you build it? How will workers handle autonomy and how can you help them? Refreshingly candid discussions of how the authors views on such topics evolved. Reading level 1.

Charan, Ram and Noel M. Tichy – *Every Business is a Growth Business*, Times Business, 1998

Two noted consultants and academics make the point that attitude and mind set, and not environment or circumstances, determine growth and success. They stress the importance of organizational continuity – does the “leader” have a succession plan in place? – and constant redefining of the market from the customer's perspective. Great anecdotes. Reading level 1.

Cialdini, Robert B. – *Influence: Science and Practice*; Allyn and Bacon, 2001

Cialdini is a psychologist, but he has written what may be one of the very best marketing books around. His research interest is how persuasion happens, how one person or entity can get another to do something he/it wants. He has isolated six powerful principles by which this happens and there is much variety in each. Many business examples and lots of pointers for further research. Reading level 1.

Cleary, Thomas –

***Thunder in the Sky: On the Acquisition and Exercise of Power*, Shambala, 1993**

***Zen Lessons: The Art of Leadership*, Shambala, 1989**

Cleary, who holds a Harvard doctorate in East Asian languages, is best known for his translation of *The Art of War*, and has also translated dozens of other ancient Chinese works. Both of these books provide fascinating insights into leadership and the exercise of power from ancient practitioners well versed in the subject. Reading level 1.

Cohan, William D. –

***The Last Tycoons: The Secret History of Lazard Freres & Co*; Doubleday, 2007**

***House of Cards: A Tale of Hubris and Wretched Excess on Wall, Street*; Doubleday, 2009**

***Money and Power: How Goldman Sachs Came to Rule the World*, Doubleday, 2011**

The first book is about the impossible machinations of the French family that owned Lazard and the role played by prominent Americans like Felix Rohatyn and how Bruce Wasserstein finally won a bitter battle. The second is about history and final days

of bear Stearns and was very hastily brought out. Neither book is anywhere near being a classic but both do a good job of giving you a feel for the men who are titans of finance at the apex of social and political power. You are left wondering why the press – and we – revere these persons instead of crossing the road when we see them coming on our side.

The third book is a tome that tells you all you wanted to know about Goldman but were afraid to ask. Cohan explicitly asks if Goldman is better than everyone else or has it merely found ways to win time and again by cheating. He does not really answer the question but gives you more than enough data – including profiles of senior executives past and present and blow by blow accounts of actions taken during the sub-prime loans generated financial crisis – for you to make up your own mind.

All three books are at reading level 1.

Conley, Chip – *Peak: How Great Companies Get Their Mojo from Maslow*, Jossey-Bass, 2007

Conley is an entrepreneur who took a run-down hotel in a seedy part of San Francisco and turned it into the must-go destination for rock stars. Then he built Joie de Vivre Hospitality into the largest chain of boutique hotels – each has a different theme – in San Francisco. But his vision is to use business to make the world a better place. The book has three parts and the focus of one is on employees, the next on customers and the last on shareholders. For each, he shows how to raise the level of consciousness. Simple, but very powerful and he walks his talk. He took no salary for years when the travel industry fell off the cliff after 9/11. Reading level 1.

Covey, Stephen R. – *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*; Simon & Schuster, 1989

It was on the paperback bestseller list for more than three years. Makes very good points such as “Every public victory is preceded by a private victory” and that you generally succeed when you “begin with the end in mind”. Unfortunately the language is labored and you have to plow through it. It would benefit greatly from the attention of a Reader’s Digest book editor. Reading level 2.

Cowan, John – *Small Decencies*; HarperBusiness, 1992

***The Common Table*; HarperBusiness 1993**

Musings on life and work by a businessman, consultant and a parish priest. In the tradition of Robert Fulghum, as noted in the publisher’s blurbs, but true nevertheless. There are personal anecdotes cleverly turned into lessons for corporations in a warm and non-patronizing way. Take a small dose a day. Reading level 1.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly – *FLOW: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*, Harper & Row, 1990

FLOW is a state of intense absorption where the distinction between you and the work you are doing practically disappears. Time appears distorted with hours feeling like minutes or vice versa. Peak performers achieve this state regularly and it has been extensively studied in champion athletes and sports figures as well as performers in the arts. University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has researched the phenomenon in other occupations and explored the conditions under which FLOW can be achieved by practically anyone. Extraordinary creativity routinely occurs in the flow state. You may also wish to explore *The Evolving Self* by the same author.

Inamori, the legendary founder of Kyocera, puts it beautifully, “I often tell a researcher who is lacking in dedication...unless he is motivated with determination to succeed, he will not be able to go past the obstacles...When his passion, his desire, becomes so strong as to rise out of his body like steam, and when the condensation of that which evaporated occurs...and drops back like raindrops, he will find his problem solved.” Reading level 1.

DePree, Max – *Leadership is an Art*; Dell, 1989

The retired chairman of furniture maker Herman Miller, Max has long been noted for innovative management practices. For example, he instituted a silver parachute for employees at his company so that they would be protected if they lost their jobs as a result of a hostile takeover. He outlines his philosophy of the covenant between a company and its workers. Most companies are nowhere near it and not headed in that direction either. Reading level 1.

Duhigg, Charles – *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, Random House, 2012

Duhigg postulates that a big, really big, chunk of what we do every day is really a habit and not a conscious action. Each habit has a cue, the action and a reward. You can use this framework to change habits by identifying relevant cues and substituting different actions that give you the same – or similar – rewards. So, if you snack at work determine the ‘reward’ you are seeking. If it is to stop boredom, then take a quick five minute walk. Duhigg also talks about ‘keystone’ habits that improve a range of seemingly unrelated behaviors. If you start exercising you also eat healthier. You also charge less on your credit cards and procrastinate less. Fascinating reading. Reading level 1.

Farson, Richard – *Management of the Absurd: Paradoxes in Leadership*, Simon & Schuster, 1996

Psychologist, educator and businessman, Farson has a penetrating insight into what is happening in today’s business world. He illustrates his points with pithy sayings such as “The opposite of a profound truth is also true”, “People we think need changing are pretty good the way they are” and “Organizations that need help most will benefit from it least”. He is humorous but deadly serious and illustrates his point of view well. Reading level 1.

Feiner, Michael – *The Feiner Points of Leadership*; Warner Business Books, 2004

Feiner was the head Human Resources honcho at Pepsi Cola and now teaches one of the most popular courses at Columbia Business School. He presents fifty “laws” of great leadership distilled from his observations over decades in the corporate world. Makes a strong case for integrity and remaining true to your values in the context of success in the executive suite. Reading level 1.

Fox, Justin – *The Myth of the Rational Market: A History of Risk, Reward and Delusion on Wall Street*; Harper Collins, 2009

Wall Street is driven by unbridled greed, it is true, but underneath that is a theoretical underpinning that many titans cite as justification for their actions. Foremost among these is the efficient market hypothesis that holds the market is always right. The actions of millions of “rational” investors trying to outsmart each other will ensure that the stock market will always value shares fairly. That myth has taken a drubbing. Fox provides a history of modern finance, describes with rich personal details the figures who came up with the powerful

ideas that dominate markets and points out the flaws of both person and idea. Reading level 1.

Goldsmith, Marshall, Beverly Kaye and Ken Shelton – *Learning Journeys*, Davies-Black Publishing, Palo Alto, CA, 2000

A bevy of bestselling authors, consultants and trainers share personal stories about the event in their lives that was most significant and the lessons they learned from it. Warren Bennis, Stephen Covey, Jim Collins and Goldsmith himself are some of the contributors. Some accounts are absolute gems and reveal wisdom, compassion and the way to growth. Reading level 1.

Goldsmith, Marshall – *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: How Successful People Become Even More Successful*, Hyperion, 2007

Marshall is perhaps the world's leading executive coach and he has distilled a lifetime's learning into this book. Successful persons tend to forget that there are many things they do which are dysfunctional and turn others off. They are successful despite this. Marshall points out the most common flaws of hugely successful persons and shows you how to identify and eliminate them from your persona. There is no question that you, too, have flaws such as attempting to "win too much". Read this book to find out what else you are guilty of.

Grant, Adam – *Give and Take: A Revolutionary Approach to Success*, Viking, 2013

The youngest tenured full professor at the time of this book, Grant categorizes people as 'givers' if they are oriented to helping others, 'takers' if they instinctively take help from others and

'matchers' if they balance their taking and giving. Surprisingly, 'givers' are both at the bottom and top of the success scale and Grant explains exactly how and why. You can learn how to use his insights to further your own career. A bit verbose but he has excellent ideas. Reading level 1.

Greene, Robert – *Mastery*; Viking, 2012

Greene also wrote *The 48 Laws of Power* and he brings the same writing style to this book. There are lots of biographies – very well written – that illustrate how a person became successful by deploying the trait being discussed. Thus Benjamin Franklin had many misadventures early in life because of his lack of understanding of the motives of others. He dedicated himself to correcting this and became a master of social intelligence who repeatedly converted enemies into allies. Excellent prelude to a discussion of how an ability to relate deeply to others is needed for success. Reading level 1.

Hammer, Michael and James Champy – *Re-engineering the Corporation*; HarperBusiness, 1993

Another long time dweller on the bestseller lists which made the authors highly successful consultants. They advocate a fundamental redesign of work processes that will produce quantum leaps of productivity with an actual decline in resources used, and give several case studies. Unfortunately, "re-engineering" has become a buzzword and a cloak for massive, frequently indiscriminate, layoffs. Reading level 1 to 2.

Hammer, Michael – *The Agenda*; Crown Business, 2001

The sequel to *Re-engineering the Corporation* in which the author admits that it was no silver bullet.

This time he talks a great deal about “process”. You have to put systems in place that make it easy for a customer to do business with you and deliver overwhelming value. He also advocates breaking the boundaries between you, your suppliers and your customers. Others – Jack Welch comes to mind – have said this earlier but Hammer says it particularly well. Not quite as good in terms of showing exactly how to do what is prescribed. Still, it does make good points. Reading level 1.

Handy, Charles – *The Hungry Spirit*; Broadway Books, 1998

A British consultant with a blue chip client list, Handy has a take on business that exposes its pompous self-contradictions. He muses on technology, the excesses of capitalism and the growing evidence that markets do not always produce optimum allocations. His ruminations on the ethics of compromise and the purpose of profits are thought provoking. You might also wish to look up his other books, such as *The Age of Paradox*. Reading level 1.

Hanson, Marlys and Merle Hanson – *Passion and Purpose: How to Identify and Shape the Powerful Patterns that Shape Your Work/Life*, Pathfinder Press, Alameda, CA. 2002

Hanson’s thesis is that we all have inherent motivational patterns that show up early in life and are dependably persistent. The trick to living a life of fulfilled potential is to understand our unique motivations and work so that they are used. There is a multi-step process recommended that involves identifying occurrences that gave you a sense of accomplishment from the earliest memories you have, analyzing them to detect patterns and then reshaping your life to make use of what you have discovered. Reading level 1.

Harvey, Jerry – *The Abilene paradox and other Meditations on Reality*; Lexington Books, 1988

Despite being a management professor Jerry Harvey writes clearly and with wit. His essays examine the fundamental assumptions on which many management practices are based, and find them faulty. He is particularly good at exposing hypocrisy and the euphemisms used to cover them up. Read the first essay and at least some of the others. The Abilene Paradox is also available as a video and you should watch it if you get a chance. Reading level 1.

Hawken, Paul – *Growing a Business*; Simon & Schuster 1987

Co-founder of the very successful mail-order gardening firm Smith & Hawken he has an unusual take on business. He clearly emphasizes that a successful business is an expression of a deep feeling welling up from the founder(s). This guiding principle is what shapes the business and makes it grow. Lucid discussions and some quite contrary assertions such as money is secondary when starting a business. The author has since become a speaking celebrity. Reading level 1.

Heider, John – *The Tao of Leadership: Leadership Strategies for a New Age*; Bantam, 1986

A clinical psychologist, Heider is a long time student of the Tao Te Ching and has translated the spirit very well into modern management dilemmas. For example: “The wise leader knows that there are natural consequences for every act. The task is to shed light on these natural consequences, not to attack the behavior itself. If the leader tries to take the place of nature and act as judge and jury, the best you can expect is a crude imitation of a very subtle process. At the very least, the leader will

discover that the instrument of justice cuts both ways. Punishing others is punishing work.” Reading level 1.

Heifetz, Ronald A. and Marty Linsky – *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading* – Harvard Business School Press, 2002

One of the better books on leadership. The authors are faculty members at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government and have many decades of experience with major companies, government agencies and senior executives. They point out that true leaders do not find solutions as much as they create and hold the space in which others feel comfortable functioning and seeking and coming up with alternatives. With luck one or more of these alternatives will work better than what is already in place. Reading level 1.

Johnston, David Cay – *Perfectly Legal Portfolio*, Penguin Group, 2003

The subtitle of this book is “The covert campaign to rig our tax system to benefit the super-rich and cheat everybody else”. That says it all. The author is a Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist for the New York Times and makes extensive use of stories that he has filed. If you are poor you pay taxes. If you are middle class you pay more taxes. If you are wealthy, you hire a good tax attorney and pay proportionately much less. If you are super rich, you frequently pay nothing at all. Not to the government that is. You do pay the legion of accountants, attorneys and financial advisors who dream up convoluted mechanisms to disguise income so that it does not have to be declared. Works for corporations and for individuals. Johnston explains in highly readable prose exactly

how this is done. You will weep for our democracy. Reading level 1.

Kahneman, Daniel – *Thinking Fast and Slow*; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011

I read many articles by Kahneman and his colleague, Amos Tversky, while I was doctoral student and they ignited a love for behavioral economics. Tversky passed away before he could share in the Nobel Prize awarded to Kahneman and the book is dedicated to him. Excellent recounting of the many ways in which our thinking is biased and often without our knowledge. Sample: If you can easily recall from memory the names of persons over the age of 60 who divorced, you will assume that large numbers of persons over that age actually divorce. Reading level 1.

Komisar, Randy with Kent Lineback – *The Monk and the Riddle*, Harvard Business School Press, 2000, 2001

Software executive, angel and iconoclastic thinker, Komisar is a firm proponent of the “big idea” that should permeate the very being of a company. This big idea springs from the values and vision of the founder(s) and he stresses that the company should define its business in terms of where it is going and what it is becoming, not merely in terms of what it is. Written in the form of a fable where a young would be entrepreneur – Lenny – has an idea for a business to alleviate the pain of persons who have lost a loved one. In the pressure to raise funding for his venture he jettisons the original idea in favor of what – in his opinion – will make a quicker profit. His partner finally takes steps that bring him back to the original idea and this gets him the funding he needs. Reading level 1.

Langley, Monica – *Tearing Down the Walls: How Sandy Weill fought his Way to the Top of the Financial Pyramid and then Nearly Lost it All*, Free Press, 2002

A wonderful account of how Sandy Weill rose, fell and rose again and came to almost J. P. Morgan like prominence in the financial world. Really good glimpse into what happens in the world of high-level mergers and corporate governance as well as how human foibles play themselves out in a larger arena. I cannot decide if Langley is being hagiographic or tongue-in-cheek when she describes Weill's characteristics. Gluttony, for example, becomes love of fine food and drink. He slashes benefits for employees while treating himself to top of the line Gulfstream private jets. Would you want to be him? Reading level 1.

Lewis, Michael – *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*, W. W. Norton, 2010

The Doomsday Machine is the Wall Street created system for generating subprime loans, manipulating credit agencies to give them triple "A" ratings and then palming them off on unsuspecting and naive "investors". The question one of the characters asks but cannot answer is "Why did these guys walk away with \$100 million bonuses when they should have been hung, drawn and quartered?" Will leave you angry at the colossal stupidity and venality of the guys – and they are mostly guys! – Who run our biggest financial institutions?

Lucht, John – *Rites of Passage at \$100,000+; Viceroy Press, 1997*

This book is a gem. Lucht is a headhunter, or in polite parlance an executive recruiter, and there is little about the business that he does not know. He shares this knowledge generously with wit and

passion. There is an excellent exposition on the similarities and differences between contingency and retainer recruiters. There are many, many useful tips on how, if unemployed, you can become speedily employed. He also provides revealing glimpses into the mores of large corporations. Reading level 1.

Mackey, John and Raj Sisodia – *Conscious Capitalism – Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*; Harvard Business Review Press 2013

Mackey is the Founder and CEO of the Whole Foods Market and Sisodia is a professor at Babson College and author of *Firms of Endearment*. The book postulates that capitalism and business can cooperate to produce results that benefit all stakeholders – employees, customers, shareholders, vendors and society. Good arguments and lots of instances of how specific companies handled tricky situations. Bit weak on reasons explaining how shareholders benefit. Reading level 1.

Maister, David H, Charles H Green and Robert M Galford – *The Trusted Advisor*, The Free Press, 2000

This book is incredibly helpful for entrepreneurs and service providers – sometime these are the same! – but also has lots of useful content for executives looking to get ahead. It breaks down the elements of trust – client focus, constantly finding new ways to help, acting like a real person, etc. – and shows you how to earn the trust that is the capital of great customer relations. Reading level 1.

McDonald, Lawrence G and Patrick Robinson – *A Colossal Failure of Common Sense: The Inside Story of the Collapse of Lehman Brothers, Crown Business, Random House 2009*

Written by a relatively junior trader, this book gives an account of the frenzied, step on the gas and the devil take the hindmost atmosphere that let Lehman to stuff itself with sub-prime mortgages up to the gills. It tells of the saner heads that warned of the coming apocalypse and how they were ignored and forced to leave. Does not give the views of CEO Fuld and President Gregory and why they did what they did but does excoriate them, perhaps justifiably. Somewhat disjointed but a good read. Reading level 1.

Mintzberg, Henry – *Managers not MBAs; Berret-Koehler, 2004*

At last, someone who points out that the emperor has no clothes and, indeed, never had any. Mintzberg is a management professor at McGill University and makes the case that our business schools are churning out technically overqualified, cerebrally gifted and morally deficient automatons who know nothing about how a business really works and also do not know that they know nothing. Others have made the same point but Mintzberg is an ‘insider’ so his data is stronger and his anecdotes more telling. Reading level 1.

O’Boyle, Thomas F. – *At Any Cost: Jack Welch, General Electric and the Pursuit of Profit, Vintage Books, Random House 1998*

A former Wall Street Journal reporter chronicles the many ways in which GE under Jack Welch systematically used hard-nosed tactics to achieve its extraordinary stock market success. There is a seamy side to this success including possibly illegal

and certainly unethical corporate actions — verbal commitments disavowed, pension funds raided, customers given kickbacks and competitive price collusion. GE wins court battles using overwhelming legal firepower but the questions remain. Well written and well documented. GE pulled out all the stops to squelch this and largely succeeded. The points made about GE culture are very relevant and coming to light in the wake of the company’s declining share price and Welch’s own well publicized marital problems. Reading level 1.

O’Neil, John. R. – *The Paradox of Success; Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1993*

The subtitle of this book is When Winning at Work Means Losing at Life. A distinguished psychologist and consultant O’Neil has run across more than his share of dysfunctional overachievers. He relates their tales along with analyses of why they became that way. There are descriptions of warning signs and suggestions to prevent you from traveling the same route. Serious issues treated sensitively. Reading level 1.

O’Shea, James and Charles Madigan – *Dangerous Company; Times Business, 1997*

The authors look at all of the major consulting firms and their individual legacies. There have been some spectacular success stories and quite a few fiascos, and the authors cover them all with engaging openness. Particularly useful is their insider’s description of the culture of major firms such as Bain, Boston Consulting and McKinsey. Since these firms, between them, boast a majority of large companies as clients you learn a great deal about how decisions are made at upper echelons. Reading level 1.

Owen, Harrison – *Riding the Tiger: Doing Business in a Transforming World*, Abbot Publishing, 1991

A consultant who practices his trade on six continents, Owen pioneered Open Space Technology, a method of holding meetings that calls for little preparation and no preset agenda and is nevertheless fearsomely productive. An astute observer of the business scene he has some penetrating comments on the change now racking that scene. Like it or not we are in this turmoil together and “...he who rides the tiger does not always choose when to get off.” Reading level 1 to 2.

Partnoy, Frank – *Infectious Greed: How Deceit and Risk Corrupted the Financial Markets*; Times Books, 2003

The author is a Law School professor and has a keen insight into how the evolution of trading instruments combined with human foibles and lack of regulation to give us spectacular fiascos such as Long Term Capital Management, Enron and WorldCom. If changes are not made now, much worse could follow. Reading level 2.

Pfeffer, Jeffrey – *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*; Harvard Business School Press, 1998

A Stanford Business School professor makes the case that financial success is best assured by treating people as a valuable asset instead of merely paying lip service to the notion as most companies do. Excellent case studies of such companies as SAS which flourish by creating nurturing environment for their workers. Reading Level 1.

Raghavan, Anita – *The Billionaire’s Apprentice: The Rise of the Indian-American Elite and Fall of the Galleon Hedge Fund*; Business Plus, 2013

A fascinating account of how prosecutors were able to prove that billionaire Raj Raratnam manipulated insiders to provide him confidential information that he used to juice his trading returns. Rajat Gupta, the former three time head of consulting giant McKinsey was one of the stooges and also earned a prison sentence. A sad tale of greed and akrasia. Also a page turner as good as any thriller. Reading level 1.

Ray, Michael – *The Highest Goal*; Berrett-Koehler, 2004

The subtitle of this book is the “Secret that Sustains You Every Moment” and it is very appropriate. The author states that each of us has a goal, one that can give every action and every moment of everyday a deep meaning and all of life is a quest to find this goal and work towards it. It is a powerful concept, and the author gives you methods to find your goal. Good exercises. Reading level 1.

Ray, Michael and Rochelle Myers – *Creativity in Business*, Doubleday, 1986

Michael is the Stanford Business School marketing professor who was a pioneer in teaching creativity in a business school. The book contains many business anecdotes – now somewhat dated – and is very entertaining, but reading it like a novel will not do you much good. Practice the exercises he suggests, particularly those relating to the VOJ (voice of judgment) and in chapters 4 and 6. Reading level 1.

Ray, Michael and Alan Rinzler (editors) – *The New Paradigm of Business*, Jeremy Tarcher, 1993

Sponsored by the World Business Academy, an organization devoted to fostering responsible change in business, the book is a selection of articles and readings by businesspersons, consultants, academics and journalists. The themes are cooperation, ethical responsibilities of business and business as a vehicle for social transformation. Reading level 1 to 2.

Reichheld, Frederick F. – *The Loyalty Effect*; Harvard Business School Press, 1996

A Bain & Company consultant, Reichheld makes a persuasive case for loyalty-based management. He explicitly considers the lifetime value of customers and methods of increasing it. He extends the notion to employees, vendors and other relevant stakeholders and even further to consider loyalty to values and principles. Excellent case studies. Reading level 1, very occasionally 2.

Rolfe, John and Peter Troob – *Monkey Business: Swinging Through the Wall Street, Jungle*; Warner Books, 2000

Both authors are MBAs from top schools and joined well-known investment banks in pursuit of fame and fortune. The scales fell from their eyes and they figured that a “tell all” book could lead to the same outcome. Our financial powerhouses are not pretty places and this book tells you why. Both authors have a good eye for the illustrative anecdote. Be warned that the language is sometimes risqué. Reading level 1.

Rosen, Robert H. and Paul Brown – *Leading People*; Viking, 1996

The authors identify eight principles of leadership such as vision, trust, creativity and integrity and give case studies of leaders – mostly group executives of companies with an occasional government or not-for-profit thrown in – who are exemplars of each. Some of these cases are pretty good but the few pages devoted to each precludes depth. You don’t quite get to know how a company lauded for its creativity does on integrity. However, it does get you thinking. Reading level 1.

Schaffer, Robert H. – *High-Impact Consulting: How Clients and Consultants can work Together to Achieve Extraordinary Results*; Jossey-Bass 2002

This is one extraordinarily worthwhile book and I also like its predecessor, *The Break Through Strategy*. The author’s thesis is that most consulting projects fail because the consultant focuses on what needs to be done. The consultant almost never looks at what the client is able or willing to do. The correct way to proceed is to match what should be done with what the client can realistically do given human and organizational constraints. Lots of tips and a strategy for how this can be done. It is written from the viewpoint of a consultant but is equally – or even more – useful for an executive trying to change things from the inside. Reading level 1.

Schwartz, Peter and Blair Gibb – *When Good Companies Do Bad Things*, John Wiley, 1999

Legions of well-known companies – Union Carbide, Shell, Nike and Nestle for example – have been guilty of actions that have aroused broad public

ire. Why do these ethical lapses occur, and is there any way of putting in place mechanisms to prevent them from happening? The authors take a remarkably balanced approach, neither castigating business as evil nor waxing rhapsodic over the benefits brought to third world countries by their practices. They believe that the serious negotiations of the future will be between NGOs and multinational companies as the only two entities that have truly global perspectives. Reading level 1 to 2.

Semler, Ricardo – *The Seven-Day Weekend: Changing the Way Work Works*, Portfolio, Penguin Books, 2004

This is the guy who wrote *Maverick*, also a best seller. Semler runs a company called Semco in Brazil and it has sales of more than \$200 million. It is also highly profitable and follows such totally unconventional practices as letting employees set their own working hours. Semler believes that in hypercompetitive markets the only way to win is to give up control to well nurtured employees. He also believes that an important function of a company is to help employees grow in diverse ways. When, oh when, will the rest of the world catch up with him? Reading level 1.

Senge, Peter M –

***The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*; Doubleday, 1990**

An MIT professor of organizational theory, Senge has also enjoyed a long tenure on the bestseller list and has just co-authored a field book which shows you how to turn your moribund organization into a learning one. He plugs a systems approach to solving problems so that today's solution does not become tomorrow's problem. Erudite and

thoughtful, he has many important points to make including the explicit recognition of how our mental models influence “reality” and the importance of gaining personal mastery. The writing is somewhat verbose, but stick with it. Reading level 2 to 3.

***The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*; Doubleday, 1994**

This book is co-authored with Richard Ross, Bryan Smith, Charlotte Roberts and Art Kleiner and tells you how to actually apply the theories propounded in the earlier book. It is simply written and chock-full of useful exercises, case histories and practical tools. It is a thick tome so take your time going through it and selecting what will be of most use to you. This is an excellent reference manual and lists great resources. Reading level 1.

***The Dance of Change*; Doubleday 1999**

Same co-authors as the Fieldbook with George Roth as an addition. Same comments as for the Fieldbook. More recent examples of companies in the middle of change and more thoughts on the change management process. Reading level 1.

***Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*, Society for Organizational Learning, 2004**

This book is co-authored with C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski and Betty Sue Flowers. The authors interviewed more than a hundred leading figures involved in organizational change and present a synthesis with many quotes. The focus is not just on how to make change happen, but on making sure that it is a nurturing change that benefits both the individual and the organization. Respect for the Universe is a strong subtext throughout. Reading level 1.

Sheth, Jagdish and Andrew Sobel – *Clients for Life: How Great Professionals Develop Breakthrough Relationships*; Simon & Schuster, 2000

The authors posit that the best consultants have ongoing – perhaps lifelong – relationships with clients and are consulted on a wide range of issues, even issues that are outside their expertise. Their advice is always valued and frequently heeded. Examples are Aristotle for Alexander, Cardinal Richelieu for King Louis XIII, Harry Hopkins for Franklin D. Roosevelt and Thomas More for King Henry VIII. There are also more recent business examples. The advisor needs a special blend of empathy, depth of understanding and integrity and the authors define the qualities and how to develop them. Reading level 1.

Sisodia, Rajendra S, David B. Wolfe and Jagdish N. Sheth – *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose*; Wharton School Publishing, 2007

Sisodia et al identify some 30 companies that customers love passionately and their performance blows away stock market averages. These are the Firms of Endearment and include names like Timberland, trader Joe's and Toyota. Sisodia is not afraid to use the Love word. The companies care about more their employees and have a mission that is larger than the bottom line. Think of other companies that should be on such a list and invest in them for the long haul. Reading level 1.

Sorkin, Andrew Ross – *Too Big to Fail: The Inside Story of How Wall Street and Washington Fought to Save the Financial System – and Themselves*; Viking 2009

Sorkin spoke to hundreds of key players, reviewed confidential notes and emails and has put together a blow-by-blow detailed picture of what actually happened in the financial meltdown of 2008. Why did the Government let Lehman fold while stepping in to save AIG? There was no grand conspiracy – just a bunch of confused and scared bankers and regulators trying desperately to handle a crisis largely caused by their own actions in previous capacities. Even scarier – we will have a repeat of this on a larger scale because humongous self-interest is preventing the structural changes we so badly need. A page turner despite its 550 page length. Reading level 1.

Stewart, James B – *Disney War*; Simon & Schuster, 2005

An excellent book about executive shenanigans at the company that Walt built. Painstakingly researched by a former Wall Street Journal reporter the book makes you a fly on the wall in conference rooms where momentous decisions are taken. The pettiness, greed and sheer obtuseness of some of our corporate titans is laid bare with a scalpel. You will wonder how supposedly intelligent directors, charged with looking out for shareholder interests, ever permitted such antics. Reading level 1.

Stoll, Clifford – *Silicon Snake Oil*, Anchor Books, 1995

The author is one of the pioneers of the Internet and plenty computer literate. He makes a searing case that computerization has gone too far and now detracts from the quality of life. He points out the many deficiencies of cyberspace and documents

how the push to computerize schools is likely to produce even more illiterate and innumerate graduates than today's schools do, but at greatly increased cost. His arguments are compelling but he pushes some of them a little too far. Judge for yourself. Reading level 1.

Sugarman, Joseph – *Advertising Secrets of the Written Word: The Ultimate Resource on How to Write Powerful Advertising Copy from One of America's Top Copywriters and Mail Order Entrepreneurs*, DelStar Books, Las Vegas, NV 1998

Joe Sugarman is the copywriting wizard who wrote those incredibly entertaining full-page advertisements for high-technology gizmos. The company he founded, JS&A, was wildly successful and the precursor to others such as The Sharper Image and DAK Industries. He is also the guy behind the BluBlocker sunglasses. These books are a distillation of the marketing lessons he learnt in a lifetime of entrepreneurship and he is incredibly candid. He tells you what worked and why and what didn't work and why. Lots of real examples. Reading level 1.

Templeton, Sir John – *Discovering the Laws of Life*, Continuum Press, 1994

Templeton is the mutual fund czar who founded the mutual fund family that bears his name and retained his honor while building an enormous fortune. Not an easy task. In this book he reveals the deeper principles by which he steered his business career and invites you to do the same. They apply to your personal life as well. Do not be fooled by its simplicity and apparent naivete, there is much wisdom here. Reading level 1.

Tichy, Noel M. with Eli Cohen – *The Leadership Engine*, HarperBusiness 1997

Noel is a professor at the University of Michigan business school and director of its Global Leadership Program. He takes you through the guts of many major organizations such as General Electric and Ameritech and dissects their culture. The chapter on values is particularly good and the appendix, a handbook on how you can create leaders in your turn, has much food for thought. Tichy's thing is that you should have your own "teachable point of view". I concur. Reading level 1.

Tichy, Noel M. and Stratford Sherman – *Control Your Destiny or Someone Else Will*, Doubleday, 1993

Both authors are intimately familiar with General Electric and its charismatic leader, Jack Welch. They take you behind the scenes and show you what happened when Welch took over the reins from Reginald Jones, and why. What was the reason that one of America's biggest and most profitable companies was literally turned upside down and inside out, the human cost of such turmoil and how the spectacular and well-documented productivity increases came about. You may like or abominate Welch, but it is indisputable that he set a trend in motion and many, many companies are doing likewise with varying degrees of success. Read this book to find out what and why. Reading level 1 to 2.

Wessel, David – *In Fed We Trust: Ben Bernanke's War on the Great Panic*, Crown Business, Random House, 2009

Wessel gives a brief history of how the Federal Reserve was founded in 1913 and the political

maneuvering that gave it its present structure. Most of the book deals with the financial meltdown of 2008 and the frantic efforts of Bernanke, Paulson, Geithner and Wall Street titans to “save” the world. You get the sense of the urgency, the late night phone calls, the desperate meetings as domino after domino threatened to fall bringing down the entire edifice of modern economies. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, AIG, IndyMac, CitiGroup, the list is endless. Why was Bear Stearns rescued while Lehman was allowed to go down the tubes? This book tells you who knew what, when but we may never know when they did and what they did. Reading level 1.

Zohar, Danah and Ian Marshall – *Spiritual Capital: Wealth We Can Live By*, Berrett-Koeller, 2004

A husband and wife team make the case that big business and capitalism, as currently practiced, are creating soul-deadening environments for millions and are unsustainable systems. She defines Spiritual Capital as the amount of spiritual knowledge and expertise available to an individual or culture. Examples make this clearer: When Merck decided to proceed with development of a drug to combat river-blindness and give it away to impoverished sufferers; when Coca-Cola, in India, offered its distribution system to the government to distribute polio vaccine to remote rural areas, they are accumulating Spiritual Capital. The final chapter is a vision of how the world can be transformed if this concept was widely used. Good concept. Writing could be livelier. Reading level 1, frequently 2.

Mind Over Matter

There is an entire genre of books that basically postulates that you can create whatever you want by thinking about it. You can also change yourself, eradicating undesirable traits and inculcating positive ones. This genre is growing at an exponential pace, perhaps as a result of increasing frustration and inability to cope with the rapid changes taking place in the world today in all dimensions from social mores to business practices. Many, but not all, of these books have a religious/spiritual underpinning and are deliberately inspirational. A few would lodge in the 'self-help' section of giant bookstores. Do not look down your nose or scoff at them. I know chief executive officers of NYSE companies who swear by some and the exercises they suggest. You may well find something here that is highly relevant either in itself, or as a springboard for further growth. Many of these books have been reprinted several times by different publishers. The publishers listed are either the original, or very early, ones.

Dyer, Wayne W. –

***Manifest Your Destiny: The Nine Spiritual Principles for Getting Everything You Want;* HarperCollins, 1997**

A popular speaker and author, Dyer has other books you may wish to explore including *Real Magic* and *Wisdom of the Ages*. This book is a good manual on how you can use mental forces to create a physical reality. Good tips on how to harness the power of the subconscious mind and the whole has an explicitly spiritual underpinning which is quite common in this entire genre. Reading level 1.

***The Power of Intention: Learning to Co-create Your World Your Way;* Hay House, 2004**

This book is an excellent summary of all that the author has been saying for years, but the exposition is more lucid. He explains how each of us creates our world through our inner dialog and how we can change this dialog to produce better results. Many chapters have a "Five ideas for implementing the suggestions of this chapter" section at the end and this is valuable. Definitely one of his better books. Perhaps even his best. Reading level 1.

Fisher, Mark – *The Instant Millionaire;* New World Library, 1990

It is a slim volume and written as a fable in which a young man seeks the secret of wealth from an elderly millionaire mentor. It discusses the power of focused thought how to master your subconscious and many similar topics in an easy, convincing style. Many homilies such as, "Always remember that at a certain height there are no clouds. If there are clouds in your life, it's because your soul has not soared high enough. Many people make the mistake of fighting against their problems. What you must do is raise yourself above those problems once and for all. The heart of the rose will lead you above the clouds, where the sky is forever clear. Don't waste your time chasing the clouds, They will unceasingly reappear..." Reading level 1.

Gawain, Shakti – *Creative Visualization;* Bantam, 1982

An introduction and workbook for using mental energy to transform your life. There are many powerful affirmations and visualizations along with

tips on meditation. The startling success of this book catapulted the author to New Age cult status and she promptly started giving workshops and lectures to large audiences. If you do explore this work be sure to do the exercise on establishing your own sanctuary. Reading level 1.

Hill, Napoleon – *Think and Grow Rich; Many publishers; try to get the Original Version, Restored and Revised, Aventine Press, 2004*

Industrialist Andrew Carnegie, who may have been the world's richest man at the turn of the century, commissioned Hill to study the lives of the world's richest and most successful men and come with a "success formula" that others could apply in their lives. He surveyed dozens of the top leaders of his time including Theodore Roosevelt, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, Clarence Darrow and Thomas A. Edison and published his findings in a series of articles and papers. This particular volume has become a cult classic and is one of the all-time bestsellers. A better book is the thicker tome *The Law of Success*. Reading level 1.

Katie, Byron – *I Need Your Love – Is That True?*, Harmony Books, 2005

Katie is one of the many authors who report having a sudden awakening experience that literally changed her life. She was deeply unhappy before and wonderfully fulfilled after. Her first book – *Loving What Is* – was a best seller. In this book she focuses on relationships and points out that many of them become toxic because of the heavy demands we place on them to satisfy our own desperate needs. Reading level 1.

Maltz, Maxwell – *Psycho-cybernetics; Prentice-Hall 1960*

A plastic surgeon, Maltz was amazed at the psychological complications that were tied up with physical imperfections whether real or imagined. He found that his scalpel did not merely change persons' faces, they changed their psyches as well and transformed many run down hacks into spirited chargers. He elaborates on what you can do to take charge of your life using well-tested psychological principles that make heavy use of autosuggestion. Reading level 1.

Peale, Norman Vincent – *The Power of Positive Thinking; Prentice-Hall, 1952*

For half a century Peale was the beloved pastor of New York's Marble Collegiate Church and an inspiration to generations of his congregation. Still selling briskly after more than forty years this book catapulted the author to preeminence as the confidant of presidents and the spiritual mentor of many movers-and-shakers. Simply and powerfully written it calls for enlisting the help of Jesus Christ to solve a variety of human problems. Reading level 1.

Ponder, Catherine – *The Dynamic Laws of Prosperity; Prentice-Hall, 1962*

Another book very much along the lines of *The Power of Positive Thinking*. In fact the author has been referred to as "the Norman Vincent Peale among lady ministers." It also talks about "prosperity laws" and how to apply them in your own life. Good sections on goal-setting and how to develop an attitude of abundance. Strong Christian religious undertone. Reading level 1.

Roman, Sanaya and Duane Packer – *Creating Money*; H. J. Kramer, 1988

This book was supposedly transmitted to the authors by a pair of “beings of light” who dwell in the higher dimensions. I have a problem with this but that is my hang-up. It need not be yours. It is simple to read, well written and contains many exercises that absolutely do work to help you on the stated goal of achieving wealth. There are two catches: 1) You must have an underlying world view that is compatible with the exercises prescribed, and 2) The time frame can sometimes be a very long one. Read the introduction and the first three chapters. If you are not strongly attracted to it, drop the book. It will not work for you. Reading level 1.

Vitale, Joe – *Spiritual Marketing: A proven 5-step Formula for Easily Creating Wealth from the Inside Out*; 1stBooks, 2002

A slim, self-published volume, this book is shot through with typographical errors, grammatical excess and sophomoric bromides. There are frequent references to the authors’ friends who are miracle-workers, one and all. Despite its faults – and they are legion – the author makes some very good points on wealth consciousness and how to achieve it. You may well find benefit in his simple, sincere style. This book became an unheralded and underground best seller and was picked up by Amazon.com and other mainstream distributors. Reading level 1.

Wattles, Wallace D. – *The Science of Getting Rich or Financial Success through Creative Thought*; Reprinted Icen Books, 2002

One of the early classics, this book is still highly relevant. First published in 1910, it is one of the clearest expositions of the Law of Wealth that I have come across. It is a powerful law and it works. And I will not say what it is because the purpose of this introduction is to inspire you to get the book and find out for yourself. Reading level 1.

Life changing books

This is a loaded title for a section, and I have chosen it deliberately. What, exactly, is a life-changing book anyway? If a precocious high-school student reads a textbook on aerodynamics and, being inspired, subsequently becomes an aeronautical engineer, does that make it a life-changing book? If a young social misfit reads *Mein Kampf* and rises to head a supremacist group, does that make it a life-changing book? Whether the answer is yes or no depends on the perspective from which the question is asked. Life-changing books come in many flavors.

The books in this section are life-changing in the sense that they help you find answers to life's deeper questions: Why are we here at all? Where are we going? etc. This section will be particularly relevant to you if you have been gnawed by a question that won't go away "Is this all there is to life?" There is a substratum to life on earth, a moral and spiritual bedrock as it were, that gives stability, direction and purpose. You have to discover it on your own and learn how to use its power. Some of these books may help you on your journey of self-discovery.

The principal texts of the world's great religions, such as the Bible, the Bhagavad Gita, the Koran and the Dhammapada are certainly sources of succor and strength. They have not been included here because they are already well known enough in their own right. The books listed, while they may spring from a particular tradition, have a broad appeal and a powerful message. Read many of them but be warned that mere reading, even careful reading, is fruitless. You will only benefit if you "grok" them.

For those of you not familiar with Heinlein's delightful work *Stranger in a Strange Land* here is how one of the characters explains the term: "... 'Grok' means to understand so thoroughly that the observer becomes part of the observed — to merge, blend, intermarry, lose identity in group experience....If I chopped you up and made a stew, you and the stew, whatever was in it, would grok — and when I ate you, we would grok together and nothing would be lost and it would not matter which one of us did the eating." The concept itself is quite difficult to grok! Helpful hint: do not rely too much on your analytical mind. The deeper, life-altering, meaning is always revealed intuitively.

Be humble when you read any of these books because there is deep wisdom there. If you find feelings of incredulity or disdain rising, stop immediately. There are two reasons for this: First, if such emotions arise you will assuredly not be able to grasp what the book has to offer so you might as well not waste any time. Second, at some later time in your life the message in that book may be precisely what you need. Why preclude yourself from such help by forming a negative impression now? Happy grokking!

No readability scores have been assigned to any of these books. They are generally simply written but have to be understood at many deep levels. Some books have been translated by more than one person and published by more than one firm. Some of these editions differ quite markedly from each other. Feel free to select the one that suits you best.

Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad – *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal (Deliverance from Error)*

In W. Montgomery Watt’s (tr.) *The Faith and Practice of Al-Ghazali*; Kazi Publications, Chicago, 1982

Born in eleventh century Persia, Al-Ghazali gave up a career as a distinguished academic to become a wandering ascetic. Widely acclaimed as the greatest Muslim after Muhammad he makes a case for higher forms of human apprehension than the cognitive levels of normal functioning. He absorbed the philosophical texts and trod the way of the mystics. He presents his synthesis in simple language and deep conviction.

Augustine of Hippo, St. – *Confessions*; Tr. R. S. Pine-Coffin, Penguin 1961

One of the early great leaders of Christianity, Augustine was a libertine deeply wedded to physical pleasure till his conversion at age thirty two. This is a personal account of his search for truth, his wrestling with his libido and other passions, his repentance of his early ways and the consecration of his life to Jesus.

Dass, Ram – *Be Here Now*; Lama Foundation, 1971

Formerly known as Richard Alpert, Ram Dass was a professor of psychology who was fired from Harvard because of his highly public experiments with psychedelic drugs. His subsequent peregrinations took him to India where he found his master and settled down to drug-free spiritual practice. The first part of the book is a brief autobiography. The guy has a Ph. D. from Stanford and is well aware of the mental games we all play, particularly academics. The third part consists of plain language

essays on a variety of topics such as money and right livelihood, getting straight, the rational mind, etc. There are some great quotes in this section. The middle part is the kernel of the walnut – a series of cryptic statements about how life’s odyssey really works, all richly illustrated with new age graphics. This will either make immediate and profound sense to you, or it won’t. If it does, stick with it. If not, move on and don’t worry about it.

de Mello, Anthony – *Contact With God*; Loyola University Press, 1991

A Jesuit priest, who passed away unexpectedly in 1987, de Mello achieved international renown for the workshops he conducted for both priests and laypersons. This book was published posthumously from his retreat notes and deals with how to use prayer as a powerful and effective means of bringing a spiritual presence into your life at all times, and also why you should strive to do this. You may also wish to explore *A Call to Love*, which is a series of meditations, and *Awareness*, which was compiled, from workshop lectures.

French, R. M. – *The Way of the Pilgrim, The Pilgrim Continues His Way*; Ballantine, 1974

Nobody knows who the Pilgrim was or much about his antecedents. Written in Russian, the manuscript was discovered years after his death and first published in 1884. The first English edition came in 1930. He was not only unknown but also uneducated. He was crippled in one arm. He was dirt poor all his life and frequently destitute. Yet his touching account of his unrelenting search for enlightenment has raw power that has inspired countless others. And, despite his penurious outward circumstances, he found the “peace which passeth all understanding” by using a simple

device. Read it to find out what and how and try to do likewise.

Goldsmith, Joel – *The Art of Meditation*; George, Allen and Unwin, 1957

A mystic himself, Goldsmith takes you by the hand and shows you how to meditate in simple, uncomplicated steps. Note that I said “simple”, not “easy”. Whether you find it easy or impossibly difficult depends on the strength of your intent. Goldsmith is unambiguous about the process, the experience and the fruits.

Hahn, Thich Nhat – *The Miracle of Mindfulness*; Beacon Press, 1975

A Vietnamese Zen master, who now lives in exile in France, Thich Nhat Hahn’s writing is both gentle and insistent. He well knows human foibles and the spirit of compassion is palpable. The book contains anecdotes and exercises designed to help you practice mindfulness, the eastern skill of being awake and fully aware. As common in Buddhist traditions, breath is the vehicle used to bring you to mindfulness. The exercises will bring you relaxation, peace and eventually self-awareness.

Ignatius of Loyola, St. – *Spiritual Exercises*, Tr. Thomas Corbishley, P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1963

A Spanish nobleman, Ignatius of Loyola left court life to enter the army. Recovering from severe wounds suffered at the battle of Pamplona he read several books by and about the early saints and underwent a remarkable conversion that led to his hanging up his sword at the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat. He entered priesthood, founded the Jesuit order and was its first superior-general. While practicing austerities and meditation he

underwent mystical experiences which formed the basis for this book. These are powerful contemplative exercises.

Kempis, Thomas A. – *The Imitation of Christ*, Tr. by Betty I. Knott, Fontana, 1963

A German-born Dutch religious in the fourteenth century, relatively little is known about Thomas of Kempis. Even the attribution of this work to him has been contested. It is a powerful and simple interpretation of the teachings of Jesus and the attitude needed to benefit from them in daily life. Immensely practical, it does not dwell on theological points. It goes instantly to the heart of man’s predicament: How to gain happiness and freedom from suffering by learning the Truth.

Lawrence, Brother – *The Practice of the Presence of God*, H. R. Allenson, Ltd., London

Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, a footman and soldier, uneducated and lowborn, entered a Carmelite monastery in seventeenth century France. By the time he died at age eighty he was known as Brother Lawrence and deeply revered for his saintliness. The latter trait shows through in this book, particularly in the spiritual maxims and gathered thoughts. Practical, devotional and inspirational.

Maimonides, Moses – *The Guide for the Perplexed*, Tr. by M. Freidlander, Dover, 1956

Born in Cordova in the twelfth century Maimonides became a physician in the court of Saladin as well as one of the most influential philosophers of his day. The Guide reconciles scriptural texts with the findings of the science of its time. There are lucid

expositions of topics such as the impossibility of ascribing any positive attributes to God. While this is quite worthwhile, it is heavy reading.

Nikhilananda, Swami – *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, NY, 1942

Ramakrishna was the untutored nineteenth century mystic and sage who proclaimed, through personal experience, that the endpoints of the world's major religions were identical. The best western account of his life and times is Christopher Isherwood's *Ramakrishna and his Disciples*. This book is a translation of a Bengali work that recounts details of his conversations with his disciples and visitors. Much of Ramakrishna's teachings were through parables.

Osborne, Arthur, Ed. – *The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Messrs. Rider & Co., London

Ramana Maharshi was the Indian saint introduced to the West by Paul Brunton in *Search in Secret India*. An exponent of the philosophical system of Advaita Vedanta, he espoused the short, direct solution to the human predicament – self enquiry. Steady and continuous investigation into the nature of the mind transforms the mind and resolves it into its source. Read *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by the same author first. If that makes a deep intuitive appeal to you, follow up with this book.

Palmer, G.E.H., Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware, Tr. And Ed. – *Philokalia*, Faber and Faber, 5 Volumes

These are the writings of the early church fathers compiled by St. Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth. They were men of deep spirituality who found simple powerful ways to bring the presence of God into everyday life. Springing as they do from personal experience, their writings are deeply moving. The *Philokalia* was the only book the Pilgrim carried apart from the Bible.

Singer, Michael – *The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself*, Noetic Books, 2007

In his younger days Michael had a spiritual experience that awakened him and his life was different from that point on. This is one of the very best books I have come across that clearly explains how your mind keeps you in thrall and what consciousness is and how to deal with your unruly mind. Read it in small doses. Highlight extensively. Refer to often. This slim book is a keeper.

Teresa of Avila, St. – *Autobiography*, Tr. and Ed. by E. Allison Peers, Image Books, Doubleday 1959

She was in her late teens when she entered a Carmelite convent in Spain in 1533. A series of visions helped her find her life's work helping reform the movement and bringing it back to austere ways and its spiritual roots. The book is a moving description of her trials and tribulations, early doubts and how she always found strength when she needed it most.

Paradigm busters

Thomas Kuhn is the person who popularized the notion of a paradigm, an internally consistent framework in which we function whether in science, medicine, politics or any other field. Out-of-the-box thinking, the kind that produces truly revolutionary solutions to intractable problems, is simply the breaking of these powerful mental models. Sometimes, very rarely, the unsuitability of a particular paradigm is realized in an instant. Recollect the scene in the movie Gandhi when communal tensions were running high and bereaved victims were set to engage in retaliatory violence. Gandhi's quiet admonition, "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind," effected an instant transformation. In the West, notions of justice are inextricably linked with retribution. The truth councils of South Africa turned this concept on its head and helped large numbers of people, of all races, come to terms with the horrific occurrences of the recent past. It was an imperfect and incomplete process, but it, too, represents a paradigm shift. This section lists several books that defy conventional thinking in mainstream circles. Some of them have excellent ideas that have perhaps been extrapolated too far. Others have not gone far enough. Many of the books in other categories, particularly "Life Changing books" and "the New Physics," are also paradigm busters.

Abraham, Jay – *Getting Everything You Can out of All You've Got: 21 Ways You Can Out-Think, Out-Perform and Out-Earn the Competition*; St. Martin's Press, 2000

Jay Abraham is a marketing genius. This genius is not as well-recognized as it deserves to be. In part this is because he loudly and frequently proclaims his expertise and is thus discounted by

the discriminating. He has incredibly profound and useful marketing insights and has published them in many reports that are not commercially available. See a sample of his stuff at www.abraham.com. He also has a finely nuanced understanding of how spiritual principles affect wealth and how it is built. This book is not the best he has to offer, but it is still well worth reading, especially the last chapter. Reading level 1.

Brunton, Paul – *A Search in Secret India, Red Wheel/Weiser, 1990*

Paul Brunton was a journalist on a quest and visited many parts of the globe. *A Search in Secret Egypt* is an earlier companion volume. The nature of his quest and the insistent questions that drove him may resonate with some of you. His observation is keen and his descriptions powerful. His matter of fact recital of some exceedingly strange experiences may leave some of you gasping. Suspend judgment and focus on the lessons he learned and would like to pass on. Reading level 1.

Gallwey, Timothy W. – *The Inner Game of Tennis*; Bantam Books, 1974

There is the tennis that you play on the court. And then there is the tennis you play in your head. The latter is much more important and greatly influences the former. Excellent tips on how to break out of bad habits in strokes of all kinds. Break out of them effortlessly by substituting new good habits. The same techniques work as well in life. A classic and it is easy to understand why it became a bestseller. Reading level 1.

Jaworski, Joseph – *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*; Berrett-Koehler, 1996

Jaworski is a successful lawyer from a distinguished family in the profession. His father was the Watergate Special Prosecutor. This book is a chronicle of his journey from hard charging, high living attorney to a thoughtful exponent of the principles of relationships and interconnectedness. He gives interesting accounts of how he came to realize that we create the world in which we live and how there is an underlying unity in the universe, which embraces animate and inanimate matter. Reading level 1.

Kauffman, Stuart – *At Home in the Universe*; Oxford University, 1995

A MacArthur Fellow and a Santa Fe Institute professor, Kauffman is a renaissance scientist, flitting easily between physics, biology and the history of science. He makes a powerful case that evolution by natural selection, the essence of Darwinism, is only a part of reality. Complex entities, from megalopolises to mega corporations, “self-organize” according to rules of complexity theory that are only beginning to be understood. There is profound hope for solving many of humankind’s most intractable problems if this is true. In any event, the book is fascinating reading. Reading level 2.

Kennedy, Dan – *The Ultimate Success Secret*, Kimble and Kennedy Publishing, Austin, TX, 1999

This is a slim self-published book. The binding is poor, the pages aslant, the font varies from page to page and the general production is of very poor quality. There are also typos galore, grammatical mistakes and virtually every other fault you can find in a book. Despite this the book is a gem. The

author has had little formal education but has both keen observation and penetrating insight. He bootstrapped his way to financial success and has an impeccable reputation as a marketing wizard. This book is part “how-to” and part personal philosophy and well worth your while. Reading level 1.

Kohn, Alfie – *Punished by Rewards*; Houghton-Mifflin, 1993

Our entire society is based on the concept of rewards and incentives. Teachers hand out stickers to kindergartners. Human Resources vice presidents agonize over merit pay raises. Best sellers advise managers to catch employees doing something right and then praise them. Kohn argues that this is a fundamentally flawed approach because punishment and reward are two sides of the same coin. In his view rewards rupture relationships, discourage risk-taking and actually reduce intrinsic motivation. He also propounds alternatives. Lots of footnotes and references. Reading level 1, frequently 2.

Korten, David C. – *When Corporations Rule the World*; Berrett-Koehler, 1995

We operate under the assumption that liberal democracy, as we understand it, is the “best” form of government and the prescription to salvation for third world countries as well as fallen communists like the many countries released by the fall of the USSR. Korten, a former Harvard Business School professor, asserts that the market system spawned by this form of government is actually responsible for much of what ails humanity. Institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are captives of the system and perpetuate it to the detriment of entire countries and peoples. Corporate colonialism has replaced the other kind and is greatly exacerbating inequality of all kinds. Many footnotes and references. Reading level 1.

Lakoff, George – *Don't Think of an Elephant!*; Chelsea Green Publishing, 2004

Be warned that Lakoff is highly partisan and his Republican bashing could greatly irritate supporters of that US political party. He is a professor of linguistics and illustrates, in a wonderfully lucid way, how the language in which we describe a problem shapes our views of it. Though he never uses the term, this is a book about mental models and how they are formed and how they can be foisted on a gullible public by shrewd manipulators. Entertaining and revelatory. Reading level 1.

Morehouse, David – *Psychic Warrior*; St. Martin's Press, 1996

In the cold war era the CIA funded a top secret psychic espionage program. Morehouse was one of the small number of trained psychics who were part of that program and he recounts his tales of the rigorous training and double blind tests of validity. His story is that he broke philosophically with the CIA because something as miraculous as remote viewing was a gift to humankind and he did not like it being used solely as an espionage tool. Facing court martial for improper disclosure of classified material, he was discharged from the army and generally harassed. Researchers at other institutions, such as the Princeton Engineering Anomalies Laboratory, have independently corroborated much of what he says – in terms of results obtainable. Morehouse's account is self-serving in some ways and you might want to look up Jim Schnabel's *Remote Viewers* for a journalist's perspective of the same events. Reading level 1.

Phillips, Michael – *The Seven Laws of Money*; Shambala, 1993

Phillips has had a checkered career in and out of corporate life. He was a bank executive and one of the persons who helped set up what is now Master Card. Takes a hard, candid look at some of our dilemmas regarding money and also posits some unusual rules that govern the money in our lives. See if you can relate to this: "The treadmill is a common example. People work hard to provide themselves and their families with worldly goods, new and better toys, better appliances. Its something we joke about so often – keeping up with the Joneses. Yet the process of working for more money so consumes our time and is considered so valid by our peers that we never stop to consider our values, our priorities." If this strikes a chord, read the book. Reading level 1.

Postman, Neil – *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of, Show Business*; Penguin, 1985

Postman, like McLuhan before him, makes the case that the media is the message and that television, by its very nature, has eliminated reason and logic in our political debate. Attention spans are short and the types of involved debates that took place between Lincoln and Douglas – great examples here! – cannot even be conceived of today. Nor, when so much stress is on physical attractiveness, can someone like William Howard Taft, the many chinned, 300 pound 27th President of the USA even hope to be a serious contender regardless of the power of his ideas. Unfortunately the writing is dense, though Postman will probably say that this is precisely his point – we are incapable of using language with the facility of a literate 19th century citizen, the kind who would spend hours listening to the Lincoln-Douglas encounters. Reading level 2, frequently 3.

Robbins, John – *The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life, And Our World*; Conari Press, 2001

The author is the son of the co-founder of Baskin Robbins and thus heir to one of the Great American Fortunes. The book is a searing indictment of factory farming as well as the treatment of animals generally. Factual and fact-based, the book makes the case that our food industry, especially the meat-poultry part of it, is destructive of your health and well-being. Throw in the moral dimension as well and the boat is truly foundering. He also lays out economic and environmental reasons for a change in our diet away from animals as food. Compelling presentation. Reading level 1.

Segal, Suzanne – *Collision with the Infinite: A Life Beyond the Personal Self*, Blue Dove Press, 1996

As she boarded a bus in Paris in 1982 this hitherto unremarkable Jewish girl experienced a profound shift in consciousness wherein her sense of personal self simply disappeared. Stuff continued to happen in her life, childbirth, divorce, multiple affairs and so on but there was no “I” to whom it happened. The last chapter where she explains how we are all an integral part of the vastness that is ever full and sentient is what makes this a truly worthwhile book. She died of a brain tumor in 1997 and may have lost some of her clarity towards the end. No matter. Her journey is instructive and the description of what it means to be “no self” is fascinating and inspiring.

Shroder, Tom – *Old Souls: The Scientific Evidence for Past Lives*; Simon & Schuster, 1999

Shroder, a Washington Post journalist, reports on the work of Dr. Ian Stevenson, professor at the University of Virginia, who has documented more than two thousand cases of reincarnation. Quite a skeptic when he began Shroder traipsed behind the good doctor in remote parts of the world and personally witnessed his research procedures and fieldwork. He found the evidence overwhelming and there were cases on many continents. Now he too echoes Dr. Stevenson’s refrain, “Why?” Why will the scientific community still not accept such findings? Why is there reluctance to even study the subject more closely given the immense amount of groundwork that has already been done? Scientists have open minds, right? Or do they? Reading level 1.

Singer, Peter – *Writings on an Ethical Life*; HarperCollins 2000

A collection of essays from many of his previous works, this book will make you think. Singer is the poster child for animal rights and he decries ‘speciesism’ or the unthinking assumption that human life is more sacred than any other. He also has unconventional views on abortion, poverty and how to alleviate it and a host of similar topics. When Princeton offered him a professorship, wealthy donors like Steve Forbes threatened to withhold support. He certainly arouses strong feelings. His logic is unassailable and he lays his arguments on clearly articulated assumptions. Reading level 1.

Thought provokers

These are books that pose questions and provide solutions that can have very deep meaning. Quite possibly some of these belong in the life-changing or paradigm buster categories. In any case they will force you to confront the inner life that most of us tend to shy away from contemplating.

Allen, James – *As a Man Thinketh*; Grosset & Dunlap, 1980

It will take you less than an hour to go through this slim volume, but it may well take a lifetime to implement the simple methods he suggests and reap their full harvest. The Path to Prosperity and The Way of Peace are companion volumes and equally good. It shows you how the inner world you create with your thoughts eventually manifests as the outer world that you experience. Reading level 1.

Barian, Mark – *The Roar of the Ganges*; Eshwar, India, 1999, Available from the bookstore at www.arshabodha.com

Barian was a successful computer entrepreneur with a big house and all the trappings of the American Dream. He became a monk in a classic Indian tradition with a lifelong vow of poverty. This book is recounting of how this transformation occurred, but it is much more than that. It is also a lucid explanation of concepts such as the true nature of happiness and how it can be achieved. He has a wry sense of humor and makes his points with pithy stories. This book is a real gem.

Bettger, Frank – *How I raised myself from Failure to Success in Selling*, Prentice-Hall 1947

This book is a classic and has been reprinted

many times. Reveals how the author, from modest beginnings, became hugely successful in a competitive field. There are many life lessons here about building confidence, how to approach life and how to craft your own future instead of being a pawn of fate. Wonderfully inspiring. Reading level 1.

Boldt, Laurence G. – *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*; Arkana, 1993

The subtitle of this book is A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design and it is that and more. The best book, by far, that I have come across on how to identify what your strengths are, how to visualize your ideal job and how to go about bringing it into existence. Hundreds of inspiring quotes and dozens of thoughtful checklists. If you go through this book with care, it will assuredly be life changing in addition to thought provoking. Reading level 1.

Bornstein, David – *How to Change the World*; Oxford University Press, 2004

This is a book about social entrepreneurs and, in particular, about Bill Drayton and Ashoka. In the Ashoka model, a rigorous screening process identifies persons who have come up with innovative solutions to some pressing social problem. Overwhelmingly these persons arise from those affected, deeply and personally, by the problem. If the solutions are scalable and the social entrepreneur exceeds high bars for personal dedication and ethical behavior, he becomes an Ashoka Fellow and receives a three year stipend that frees him from earning a living while he further develops his idea. More than a thousand Ashoka Fellows of both sexes are quietly improving the lots of millions of persons around the world. Reading level 1.

**Coelho, Paulo – *The Alchemist*;
HarperCollins, 1993**

This is easy reading, but it is profound and has more layers than an onion. It is written like a parable – a form of exposition to which I am addicted – and talks about a shepherd boy who sets out to discover a great treasure and the strange personages who help him along the way. I hope that this book will inspire you to reach for your Personal Legend. You will understand when you read it. Reading level 1.

Fleischman, Paul R. – *Cultivating Inner Peace*; Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam, 1997

The author tries to deliver on the title by defining “inner peace” and outlining simple steps that can be taken to reach the state where the noise and violence is all outside you. He makes reference to powerful role models such as John Muir, Walt Whitman, Gandhi, Thoreau and Tagore and draws lessons from their privations and methods of dealing with them. Reading level 1.

**Fox, Matthew – *The Reinvention of Work*,
Harper, San Francisco, 1994**

A defrocked Dominican priest, Fox is a cult-figure in his own right. He has written a thoughtful treatise on the meaning of work as opposed to jobs. Here is a quote: “...jobs are to work as leaves are to a tree. If a tree is ailing the leaves will fall. Fiddling with leaves is not going to cure an ailing tree; just as one cures an ailing tree by treating its roots, so we cure the crisis in work by treating the root meaning and purpose of work.” Drawing on the experience of mystics from all parts of the globe and tying it to a modern framework he offers an alternative vision of the definition of work, the compensation of work and its infusion with ritual and healing. Reading level 1.

Frankl, Victor E – *Man’s Search for Meaning*; Pocket Books, 1984

There are many editions of this book. Just pick one that is revised and updated. Frankl lost most of his family in Nazi concentration camps and wondered why, in such horrific conditions, some persons blossomed beyond belief while others sank into a morass of depression and self-pity. Deeply compassionate he recognizes that guards, too, could be victims and details the risks some took to be kind to their charges. How many concentration camp inmates would be capable of saying: “It is apparent that the mere knowledge that a man was either a camp guard or a prisoner tells us almost nothing. Human kindness can be found in all groups, even those which as a whole it would be easy to condemn.” And what is it that gives meaning to life? Read the book to find out. Reading level 1.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon – *Wherever you go, There You Are*, Hyperion, 1994

A beautiful title, and the statement is indisputable. Kabat-Zinn is a stress reduction specialist with the University of Massachusetts Medical Center and talks about action, patience, simplicity, trust, generosity and similar topics. Chapters are brief and there are exercises at the end of many. Reading level 1.

**Kapleau, Philip – *Zen: Dawn in the West*;
Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1980**

Founder of the famous Zen center at Rochester, Roshi Kapleau made Zen accessible to Americans by stripping away the cultural outgrowths while retaining the essence. This book contains discourses, dialogues, answers to questions, letters and commentaries on texts. He gives practical instructions on such matters as what are

unwholesome thoughts and how should one get rid of them. His earlier book, *The Three Pillars of Zen*, is a classic and also worth perusing. Reading level 1.

Kornfeld, Jack – *A Path with Heart*, Bantam, 1993

Trained as a psychologist, Kornfeld has a deep appreciation of the human predicament. He talks about spiritual practice, the difficulties inherent in the path and methods of coping with them. The language is simple and the meditation exercises quite powerful. Good explanations of such phenomena as the “dark night” mentioned by St. John and descriptions of altered states. Reading level 1.

Krishnamurti, J. – *Think On These Things*; Harper & Row, 1964

An excellent compilation from public talks given by Krishnamurti in many settings. He fields questions on ambition, attention, and simplicity of life, self-discipline and like topics. He is penetratingly lucid and rather sharp at times but always unconventional. His goal is to break you out of mental stupor and his discourses on the nature of mind and thinking do a fine job of this. Reading level 1.

Lavenia, George – *What You Think is What You Get: Realizing Your Creative Power and true Potential*; Earth Foundation, 1997

Another of those books that tell you that you create your world and everything in it. That you are responsible for anything in your life that is not working well and can change it at will. What makes it different is the simplicity of exposition and the power of the examples and the quotes, sayings and meditations. Savor it like a fine wine and spend hours following each train of thought it opens up. It will be time well spent. Reading level 1.

Millman, Dan – *Way of the Peaceful Warrior: A Book that Changes Lives*, H J Kramer/New World Library, 2009

A reprint of the 1984 classic, this is an account of a gifted gymnast who came across a shadowy mystic called Socrates who ran a gas station close to the University of California at Berkeley. Millman was on the gymnastics team there and an Olympic contender but was quite far from personal mastery. The book is about how Socrates led him on a journey of inner discovery. Absolutely fascinating and there is much wisdom here. Reading level 1.

Needleman, Jacob – *Money and the Meaning of Life*; Doubleday Currency, 1991

Money is the great taboo in our society. We scramble after it and animatedly discuss what ballplayers, celebrities and chief executives make. We do not ever discuss what money means to us, what compromises we make in life in our own quest for it and how big a place it occupies in our thinking and actions. Needleman, a philosophy professor, discusses such topics as the limits of material happiness and whether money can buy love. This book will help you accept and come to terms with money in your own life. Reading level 1.

Sennet, Richard – *The Corrosion of Character*; W. W. Norton, 1998

This is a series of essays and reports on interviews with bakers, barmaids and advertising executives. There are ruminations on the nature of work and time in our new post-industrial economy and how the advantage of flexibility may perhaps be more than overshadowed by the loss of a sense of purpose. Many questions, few answers, but then the author does not believe that there are any easy answers. Reading level 1.

Shore, Bill – *The Cathedral Within*; Random House, 1999

A social entrepreneur himself, Shore talks about the need to give back, to do something that benefits society, to find meaning in one's life. Great cathedrals, such as the one in Milan, survive for centuries. This is because "Somehow, it had been both communicated and understood that it wasn't just that building a truly great cathedral would require everyone to share their strength, but rather that everyone sharing their strength would result in a truly great cathedral." Many stories of remarkable individuals who have inspired such effort and a great list of others. Reading level 1.

Thurman, Robert – *Inner Revolution*; Riverhead Books, 1998

A onetime Buddhist monk, personally ordained by the Dalai Lama, Thurman is now a professor at Columbia University and a mini celebrity in his own right. He has done as much as anyone to focus attention on the plight of Tibet and the atrocities it has been subjected to. In this book he argues that the "cool revolution" launched by the Buddha, as opposed to revolutions that involve violence and bloodshed, is a model worth emulating and a phenomenon that is still far from having run its course. He tellingly makes the point that military prowess cannot be equated with greater civilization and presents an alternate vision of how governments and citizens can relate to each other. Reading level 1.

Tolle, Eckhart – *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment*, New World Library, 1999

The story goes that Tolle, at age 29, underwent a profound spiritual experience that destroyed his previous identity and plunged him into an inward journey that led to enlightenment. There are certainly well documented instances of something

similar in spiritual literature, but don't waste your time trying to figure out if this is 'true'. Focus on whether what he says is helpful to your journey. He has much to offer and the discussions of psychological time and the havoc it can wreak are profound. It has become a best seller and well deserves to. Reading level 1.

Ullman, Robert and Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman – *Moments of Enlightenment*, MJF Books, Fine communications, NY, 2001

This book was previously published as *Mystics, Masters, Saints and Sages*. Enlightenment is a goal in many traditions and many are the travelers who have arrived there. Each serves as a unique beacon that appeals to still others. This book is a collection of the enlightenment experiences of several masters ranging from the supremely well-known such as the Buddha, St. John of the Cross and Ramana Maharshi to the relatively unknown such as Suzanne Segal and A. H. Almaas. In most cases the accounts are in their own words and the cultural contexts come across clearly. Reading level 1.

Walsch, Neale Donald – *Conversations with God: Book 1*; Putnam 1996

It purports to be a conversation with the Big Cheese — the author poses the questions and transcribes answers, which appear automatically. It has been on the New York Times bestseller list for nigh on two years. Despite these two strikes against it, it has profound insights into the nature of human suffering, life and liberation. Particularly good explanation of how thought leads to manifestation. Reading level 1.

Other

And now we come to the catch-all category for books that don't fit into any of the other groupings. Some of these are general interest books. Some are literary masterpieces that have deep lessons embedded in the story line. Some are just plain funny or moving or able to play on your heartstrings in some manner. They are all worth reading.

Grisham, John – *The Street Lawyer*; Doubleday, 1998

This is one of Grisham's better potboilers. The protagonist is a hard-nosed workaholic attorney with an Ivy League degree and well on his way to making partner in a white shoe firm. Peculiar circumstances bring him cheek by jowl with the Washington D.C. underclass and cause some serious soul searching. Entertainingly presented with well-drawn characters. The questions the protagonist grapples with may well have some relevance for you. Reading level 1.

Mehta, Rave – *The Inventor: The Story of Tesla*, Helios Entertainment, 2012

This is actually a graphic novel about Nikola Tesla, one of the greatest inventors of the nineteenth century and a former employee and contemporary of Thomas Edison. Edison, while undoubtedly a prolific inventor, had a dark side and this is revealed here in the ongoing battle he had with Tesla. Edison championed direct current (DC) and Tesla demonstrated that alternating current (AC) was more efficient and cheaper. Edison electrocuted several animals – including an elephant in full public view – to 'prove' that AC was dangerous. Tesla prevailed in this battle. Fascinating reading. Reading level 1.

Wodehouse, P. G. – *Leave it to Psmith*, Many editions. Try the one by Overlook Hardcover 2003 but others also work.

Many, including myself, believe Wodehouse is one of the greatest humorists of all time. There are few persons who will leave you with such belly bursting gales of laughter. Do not read this book on trains or planes unless you are OK with fellow travelers looking askance at you and silently questioning your mental stability. On a more serious note, evaluate the mental models used by Psmith and his cheery insouciance when faced with the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. This is the spirit to cultivate and I cannot recommend this cultivation highly enough. Reading level 1.

Zander, Rosamund Stone and Benjamin Zander – *The Art of Possibility*, Penguin Books, 2000

Benjamin Zander is a conductor, so passionate about music that he literally sways audiences into rapture. He is legendary for his pre-concert lectures where he educates his audience about the music about to be played. He also offers to refund the admission of any member who is not emotionally moved. This is the kind of conviction that permeates this book. You, too, can be equally passionate about what you do. This book shows you how. Reading level 1.

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“STS-130 exhaust cloud engulfs Launch Pad 39A” by NASA/Sandra Joseph and Kevin O’Connell – NASA. Licensed under Public domain via Wikimedia Commons.

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Defense.gov News Photo 100805–F–7552L–211 – Commander of the International Security Assistance Force Gen. David H. Petraeus center U.S. Army talks with U.S. soldiers of the 2nd BattalionPublic Domainview terms Staff Sgt. Bradley Lail, U.S. Air Force – www.defense.gov

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“Hiker overlooking from top of hill”, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service