



Recommended Reads

*A curated reading list for leadership,
personal growth, and team excellence*

18
Books

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Suggested Reading Order

Books grouped by theme and relevance to one another



Recommended Reads

Phase 1- 1st Quarter Mindset & Positivity	Phase 2- 2nd Quarter Purpose & Character	Phase 3- 3rd Quarter Relationships & Influence	Phase 4- 4th Quarter Team & Org Leadership
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who Moved My Cheese?2. The Positive Dog3. The Energy Bus4. The No Complaining Rule5. The Shark & the Goldfish	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Seed2. Season of Life3. Inside Out Coaching4. Courage Required5. Living in the Daze of Deception	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How to Win Friends & Influence People2. Love Works3. The Carpenter4. Soup	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Training Camp2. The Five Dysfunctions of a Team3. Extreme Ownership4. Traction

Start with Phase 1 to build a strong mindset foundation before progressing through relationships, purpose, and organizational leadership.

The Energy Bus

10 Rules to Fuel Your Life, Work, and Team with Positive Energy

Positivity & Leadership

By Jon Gordon

SUMMARY

A business fable following George, a manager whose life is falling apart, as he is guided by Joy — an upbeat bus driver — through 10 transformative rules for fueling your life and team with unstoppable positive energy. The story teaches leaders how to overcome negativity, unite people around a shared vision, and build a culture where everyone drives together toward success.

Excellence & Performance

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

Through the story of Martin, an undrafted NFL wide receiver fighting for a roster spot, Gordon reveals the habits, mindset, and character traits that separate elite performers from the rest. The "best" aren't just physically gifted — they love what they do, are coachable, bring positive energy, commit to constant improvement, and put the team first. A must-read for athletes, coaches, and leaders seeking a competitive edge.

The No Complaining Rule

Positive Ways to Deal with Negativity at Work

Culture & Mindset

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

When Beth, a company executive, faces a personal health crisis and a negativity epidemic at work, she discovers a powerful "No Complaining" policy that transforms her organization. Gordon provides practical tools for eliminating toxic complaining, replacing negative energy with positive solutions, and building a workplace culture rooted in hope, gratitude, and forward-thinking communication.

Resilience & Change

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

A short, powerful parable contrasting a goldfish — dependent on being fed — with a shark that proactively hunts for opportunities. When change and adversity hit, Gordon shows readers how to shift from a reactive mindset to a proactive one, embracing uncertainty as a chance to grow, adapt, and thrive rather than fear and survive. Perfect for navigating organizational disruption.

Team Culture

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

Nancy, a new CEO of a struggling soup company, learns that the secret ingredient to business success is the same as the secret to great soup: a culture built on caring, communication, and connection. Through conversations with her team and a wise mentor, she uncovers a recipe of authentic leadership behaviors that nourish trust, morale, and high performance across the entire organization.

Purpose & Meaning

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

When Josh takes a leave of absence to rediscover his passion, he sets off on a journey through various encounters that challenge him to find his true purpose. Gordon weaves together themes of calling, perseverance, and servant-hearted work to show that lasting happiness comes not from what you achieve but from why and how you do what you do — work as a mission, not merely a means.

The Positive Dog

A Story About the Power of Positivity

Mindset

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

In this charming animal fable, Bubba the negative dog meets Matt, a relentlessly upbeat dog who teaches him to focus on the good in life. Through daily practices like gratitude, optimism journaling, and acts of kindness, Bubba's outlook is transformed. Gordon packages powerful positive psychology tools in an accessible, engaging story ideal for teams looking to shift culture and individuals seeking daily encouragement.

The Carpenter

A Story About the Greatest Success Strategies of All

Excellence & Character

By Jon Gordon

S U M M A R Y

Michael, a struggling CEO, discovers wisdom from an extraordinary carpenter named Jacob who reveals that true success is built on a foundation of love, craftsmanship, and serving others. The carpenter metaphor illustrates that the quality of our work reflects the quality of our character, and that the greatest leaders are those who build something of lasting value through excellence, integrity, and genuine care for their people.

9 Inside Out Coaching

How Sports Can Transform Lives

Purpose-Driven Coaching

By Joe Ehrman

S U M M A R Y

Former NFL star Joe Ehrman offers a deeply personal and philosophically rich exploration of what coaching should really be about. Drawing on his own journey through loss, addiction, and spiritual transformation, Ehrman argues that coaches carry an extraordinary responsibility: to help young people discover who they are and become who they were created to be. A powerful manifesto for transformational, relationship-first coaching at every level.

Communication & Relationships

By Dale Carnegie

S U M M A R Y

First published in 1936 and still remarkably relevant, Carnegie's landmark book distills timeless principles for building genuine connections, winning trust, and motivating others. Covering techniques for making people feel valued, avoiding arguments, leading without resentment, and inspiring change — this is the foundational manual for anyone in a people-facing role who wants to lead through respect and empathy rather than authority alone.

Servant Leadership

By Joel Manby

S U M M A R Y

As former CEO of SeaWorld and Herschend Family Entertainment, Manby draws on both his Christian faith and hard corporate experience to make a bold business case for love-driven leadership. He identifies seven practical expressions of love — patient, kind, trusting, unselfish, truthful, forgiving, dedicated — and demonstrates how each principle produces measurable results in employee engagement, guest satisfaction, and profitability.

Who Moved My Cheese?

An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and Life

Change Management

By Spencer Johnson

S U M M A R Y

A deceptively simple parable about two mice and two little people navigating a maze in search of cheese — a metaphor for what we want in life. When the cheese moves, their responses reveal four fundamental attitudes toward change: denial, fear, adaptation, and anticipation. One of the best-selling business books of all time, it delivers a clear message: anticipate change, let go of old thinking, and embrace the unknown with curiosity rather than fear.

Team Dynamics

By Patrick Lencioni

S U M M A R Y

Through the story of Kathryn Petersen, a new CEO facing a fractured executive team, Lencioni identifies the five root causes of team failure: absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results. Each dysfunction builds on the last, creating a pyramid of team failure — and his model provides concrete strategies for building the vulnerability, healthy debate, and collective focus that drive truly cohesive teams.

Organizational Systems

By Gino Wickman

S U M M A R Y

Wickman introduces the Entrepreneurial Operating System (EOS) — a practical framework for aligning and executing on your business vision. Through six key components (Vision, People, Data, Issues, Process, Traction), EOS helps leadership teams get clarity on where they're going, put the right people in the right seats, and build the discipline and accountability needed to gain traction and execute consistently. Essential for scaling organizations.

Character & Purpose

By Jeffrey Marx

S U M M A R Y

Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Jeffrey Marx revisits his childhood mentor, legendary NFL player Joe Ehrman, now coaching high school football in Baltimore. Ehrman's approach shatters traditional notions of masculinity — replacing toughness with tenderness, competition with service, and winning with love. A beautifully written account of how one coach's transformational philosophy reshapes boys into men of character, purpose, and genuine compassion.

Accountability & Leadership

By Jocko Willink & Leif Babin

S U M M A R Y

Drawing from their experience leading SEAL Team Three in some of the deadliest combat of the Iraq War, Willink and Babin articulate a philosophy of radical personal accountability: there are no bad teams, only bad leaders. Every problem is the leader's problem. From battlefield decisions to boardroom strategy, they translate 12 combat-proven leadership principles into actionable tools for building high-performance teams that own their outcomes regardless of obstacles.

Courageous Leadership

By John Richie

S U M M A R Y

Richie challenges leaders to move beyond comfort zones and make the bold choices that truly matter — in their organizations, families, and communities. Drawing on personal stories and practical wisdom, the book examines the specific moments where courage is required: difficult conversations, unpopular decisions, standing for truth, and leading through failure. A rallying call for men and women ready to step up and lead with conviction.

Living in the Daze of Deception

How to Discern Truth in a Culture of Lies

Truth & Discernment

By Josh Hibbs

SUMMARY

In an era of cultural confusion and moral relativism, Hibbs provides a biblical and practical guide to recognizing and resisting deception in everyday life. Covering topics from media manipulation to spiritual falsehoods, the book equips readers with a framework for critical thinking, anchored in scriptural truth, that can expose misleading narratives and restore clarity of thought, character, and conviction — both personally and as a community.