

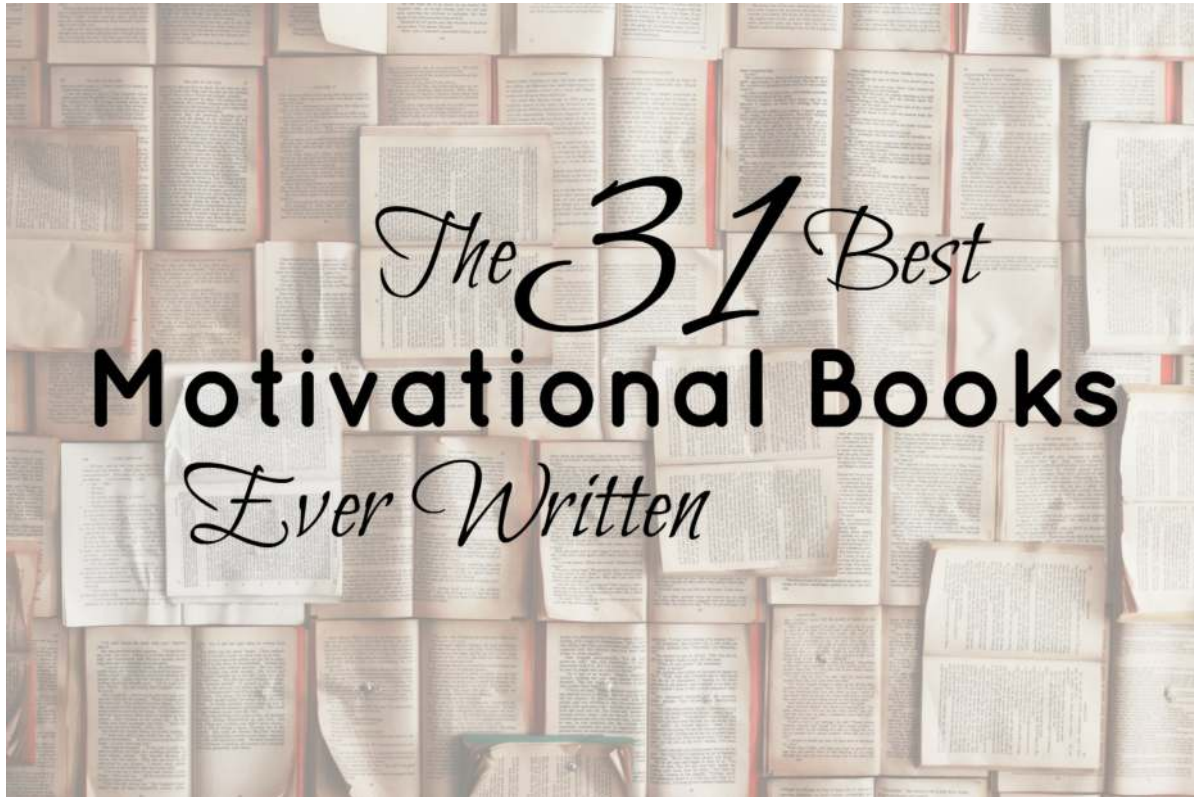
Four Minute Books

The 31 Best Motivational Books Ever Written



31 Fiction & Non-Fiction Classics That Will Unleash Your Inner
Greatness

The 31 Best Motivational Books Ever Written



The 31 Best Motivational Books Ever Written Will Make You Great

 fourminutebooks.com/motivational-books/

Do you know that glowing feeling you get after you finish the last couple pages of a really inspirational book?

You know, that sense of wonder, the goosebumps, the moment when your creativity seems to know no limits and you imagine yourself facing all of your challenges – **and succeeding**.

I think you should have that feeling more often.

Recently, when I was scouring the web for motivational books, none of the lists I found really made me want to pick up one of their books, mostly because:

- I knew all the books already,
- the books were only for a specific demographic (entrepreneurs, women, etc.), or
- they didn't even tell me why the book was going to motivate me in the first place.

What's more, every single list I found was limited to either fiction or non-fiction books only. So I thought: "Why not create one with both?"

To keep it fair and square, I limited myself to **include only books I either have read, or am currently reading**. This way I make sure I only present you with books I have a solid understanding of, and, which are, to my best, 25 year old knowledge, utterly motivating.

After digging deep (and I mean *really* deep, I even called my Mum), I've come up with a list of what I believe to be **the 31 best motivational books ever written**, that'll unleash your inner greatness.

For every book I've included:

- title
- author
- year of publication
- an image of the cover (with a link to the book on Amazon)
- number of copies sold
- a curious fact
- a summary
- the best quote from the book
- a shareable image with the quote
- why it's so motivational
- two ways to share the book, depending on whether you've already read it, or not

...and of course a link to read its summary right here on Four Minute Books. For the fiction books I've included Amazon links, since I only read non-fiction for this site.

Note: Don't be surprised to see quite a few children's books and books for teenagers. Since I'm only 25 years old, I

still remember a lot of those. Plus, kids are the most motivated human beings on this planet. As adults, we've lost most of that lighthearted, curious, motivational mojo, and these books are a great way to get it back.

Now, without further ado, enjoy what I think are the top 31 motivational books of all time!

The 31 Best Motivational Books Ever Written

To make navigating this post super easy, you can jump right to any book that sparks your interest from the table of contents below. Below the box containing each book, you'll find a "back to top" link to come back up here and pick the next one ☰

Fiction books:

- #1: [The Alchemist](#)
- #2: [Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#)
- #3: [Pippi Longstocking](#)
- #4: [Artemis Fowl](#)
- #5: [The Adventures of Tom Sawyer](#)
- #6: [The Little Prince](#)
- #7: [Measuring the World](#)
- #8: [The Da Vinci Code](#)
- #9: [A Christmas Carol](#)
- #10: [The Hunger Games: Catching Fire](#)
- #11: [Inkheart](#)
- #12: [The Great Gatsby](#)
- #13: [Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet](#)
- #14: [The Richest Man in Babylon](#)
- #15: [Around the World in 80 Days](#)

Non-fiction books:

- #16: [Managing Oneself](#)
- #17: [Choose Yourself](#)
- #18: [The War of Art](#)
- #19: [Start with Why](#)
- #20: [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#)
- #21: [When I Stop Talking You'll Know I'm Dead](#)
- #22: [The Happiness of Pursuit](#)
- #23: [Rich Dad Poor Dad](#)
- #24: [The Dip](#)
- #25: [Sam Walton: Made in America](#)
- #26: [The 4-Hour Workweek](#)
- #27: [So Good They Can't Ignore You](#)
- #28: [The Miracle Morning](#)
- #29: [Zero to One](#)
- #30: [The Power of Less](#)

Hidden Bonus:

- #31: [Secret Bonus Book](#)

Book #1 - The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

Title: The Alchemist

Author: Paulo Coelho

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1988

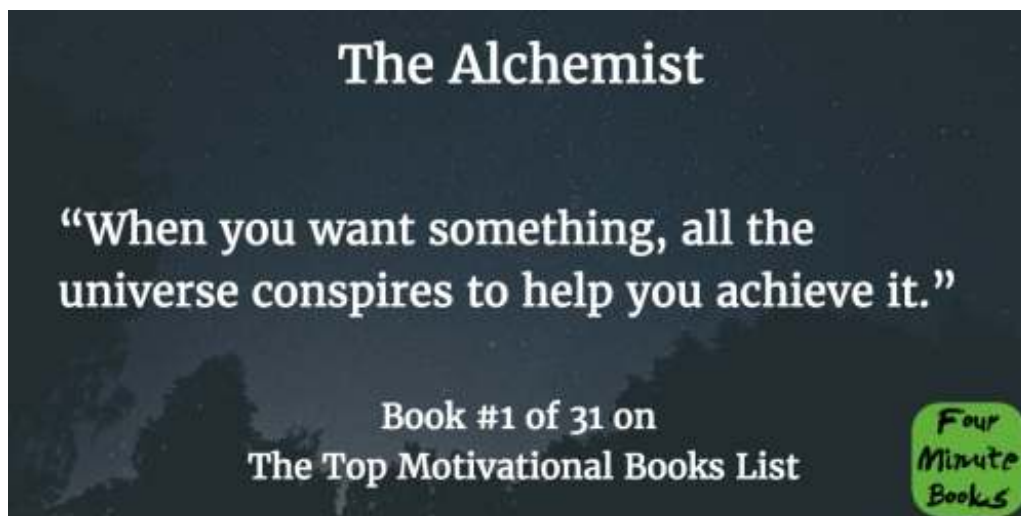
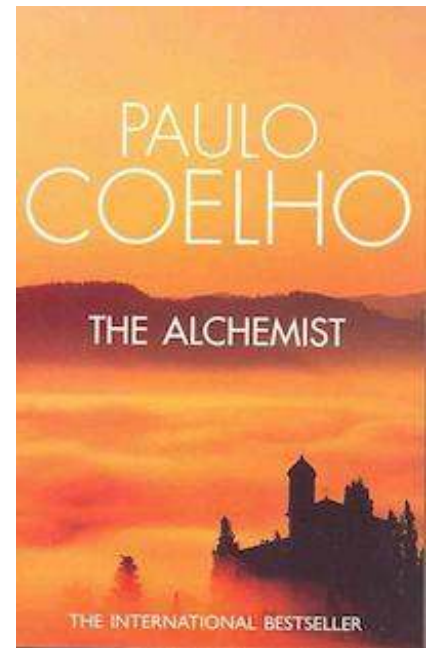
Number of copies sold: ~65 million

Curious fact: The book has been translated into 80 different languages, making Paulo Coelho the Guinness World Record holder for being the most translated living author in the world.¹Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/09/04/the-almchemist-paulo-coelho-oprah_n_5762092.html

Best quote from the book:

When you want something, all the universe conspires to help you achieve it.

Summary: A young shepherd boy in Southern Spain has the same dream about a hidden treasure in Egypt, over and over again, which eventually leads him to investigate it. He learns that one day, everyone finds out what their destiny is and that it requires passion and desire to make your destiny become a reality. Along the journey to find the treasure he meets new and strange people, some of which become his friends and touch his heart. The combined teachings of his companions finally lead him to a realization that is much bigger than even the treasure itself.



Why is it such a motivational book?

The book's core theme is **destiny**. This is combined with many mysterious characters and deep, thoughtful lessons, often in the form of riddles and puzzles. Yet, the book uses such plain language, that anyone can understand it. That's how this book constantly speaks to your curiosity, without making you feel overwhelmed. It's impossible to put down, leaves you with a sense of wonder and gratitude about the world and gives you an incredible **drive to explore your own destiny**.

I remember finishing it in very few sittings, over the course of which I started going to bed at 9 pm (even though I was studying abroad in the US at the time, with 5 party animals as roommates), waking up at 5, watching the sunset,

walking around in the nearby forest a lot, and beginning to think about what I really want out of life. That's the power the book has: **it makes you think**. A lot.

Book #2 - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Title: Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

Author: Joanne K. Rowling

Type: Fiction

Published in: 2000

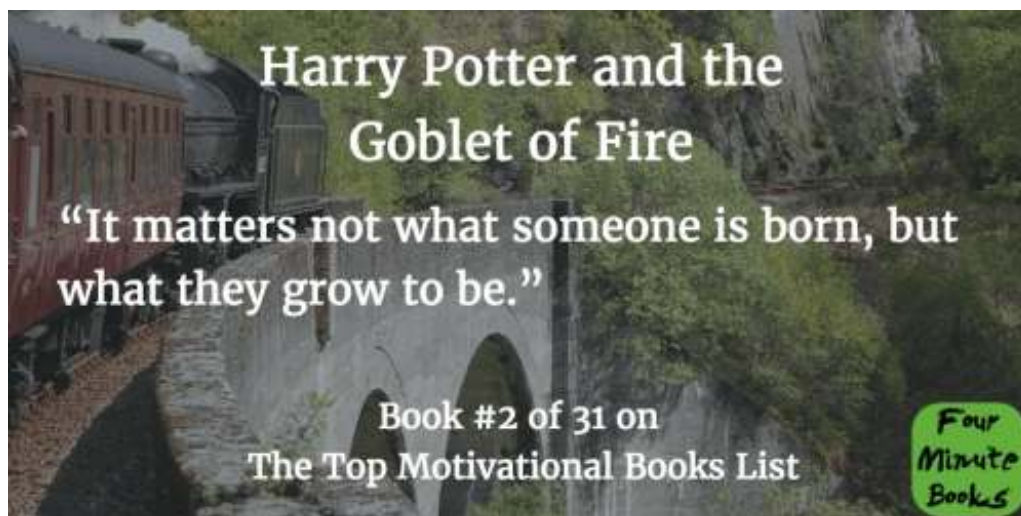
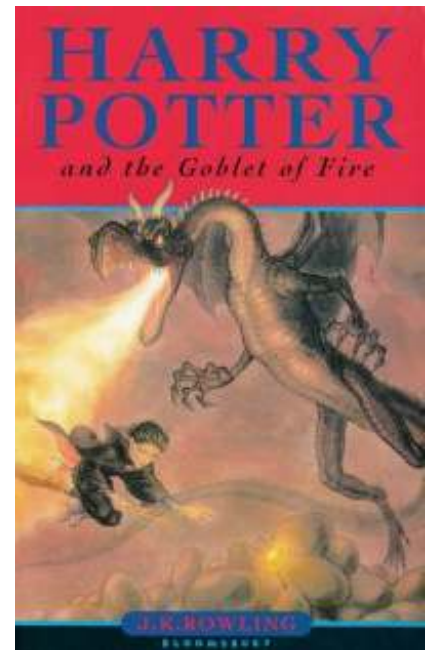
Number of copies sold: ~55 million

Curious fact: J.K. Rowling changed her mind about the title – twice. Until 12 days before it was published, the already publicized working title was “Harry Potter and the Doomspell Tournament”.²Source: <http://www.ew.com/article/2000/08/04/harry-potter-and-goblet-fire>

Best quote from the book:

It matters not what someone is born, but what they grow to be.

Summary: In his fourth year at Hogwarts, the school hosts the legendary Triwizard Tournament, for the first time in 202 years, where three wizards from three schools compete in grueling trials for fame and glory. Technically too young to compete, Harry mysteriously ends up as the fourth participant, and soon has to face challenges he doesn't feel remotely ready for. With luck, friends, bravery and skill he perseveres until the end, only to find he finally has to take responsibility not only for who he is, but also for the entire wizarding world.



Why is it such a motivational book?

First, I'm a huge Harry Potter nerd, so sue me. That said, the reason this book stands out to me among the series, is that it lets Harry go through a pivotal transformation. In the first three books, he sort of stumbles into things, and, by looking out for himself, somehow ends up saving the day. While he's thrown into cold water in this book once again, he makes the decision to stop trying to be normal, and instead **takes responsibility**. This is a crucial part of seeing

him succeed in all the tournament challenges, which, by the way, are much tougher than all of the things he faced in the three previous books combined.

This is a book about the things in life worth fighting for, not only because Harry finds love for the first time, but also because things become (deadly) serious. For teens, this is an identity-shaping books, but I've re-read it multiple times over the years, because it teaches you that there's always a choice between what is right, and what is easy, and makes you want to take responsibility for taking the path you feel is right.

Book #3 - Pippi Longstocking by Astrid Lindgren

Title: Pippi Longstocking

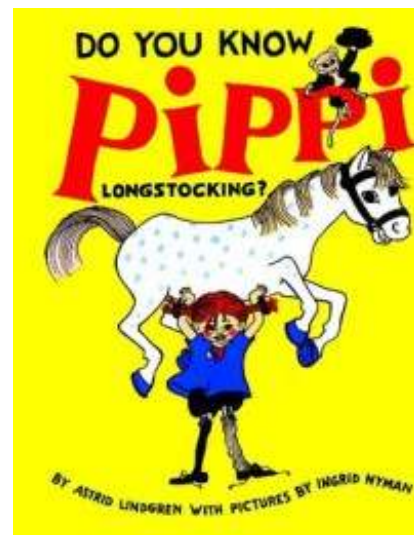
Author: Astrid Lindgren

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1945

Number of copies sold: ~80 million (series total for 3 books + 3 picture books)

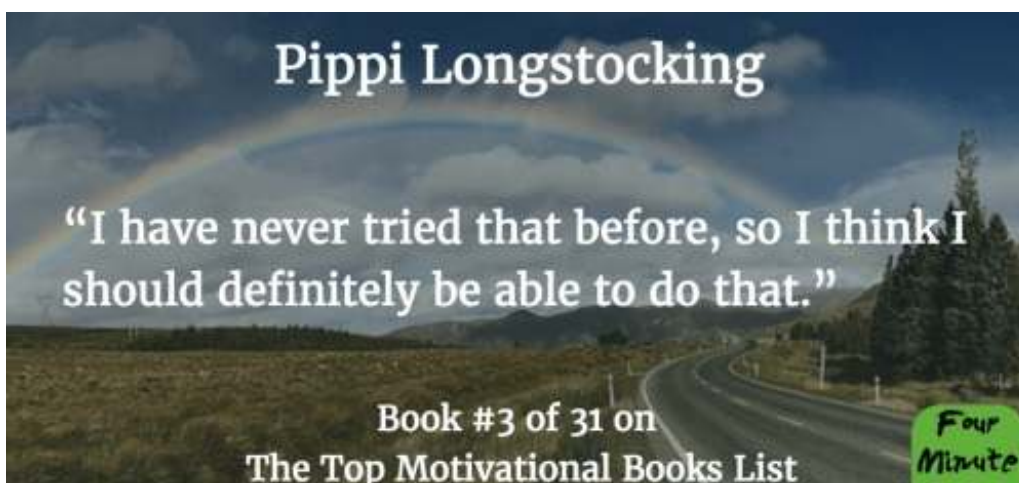
Curious fact: The main character in Stieg Larsson's 3-book series of Millennium novels is based on what he believed to be an adult version of Pippi Longstocking. The series has sold 80 million copies – just as many as the Pippi Longstocking books. ³Source: <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/the-mystery-of-the-dragon-tattoo-stieg-larsson-the-worlds-bestselling-and-most-enigmatic-author-20110105?page=5>



Best quote from the book:

I have never tried that before, so I think I should definitely be able to do that.

Summary: Pippi Longstocking is an estimated 9 years old (though no one knows for sure), has superhuman strength, and lives in a rainbow-colored house with her monkey, Mr. Nilsson, and her horse Old Man. She takes care of herself entirely, as her father, a famous seafarer, has been lost at sea for a few years, after dropping her off in the village, because he thought life at sea was too dangerous for her. Although Pippi has no manners, can't do math and neither read, nor write, she lives an extraordinary life, filled with adventures, mostly involving the neighbors' kids and shows that living by the world's rules is hopelessly overrated. She never ceases to shock adults, but is living proof that you can make the world what you want it to be, without fitting any template the world would call normal.



Why is it such a motivational book?

This is a Swedish book and much more widely known in Europe than overseas, so you might never have heard of Pippi and her stories. I especially loved the TV movies and series (1969 version) as a kid, because it made me believe that **anything is possible**. Even the intro song suggests it, among its lyrics are the words “two times three is four widewid and three makes nine.” The constant conflict between the adults, who try to get Pippi to conform to what they think is normal, and Pippi’s sheer intolerance for anything that doesn’t match her idea of fun, happiness and adventure, in which Pippi always comes out on top, really **makes you question a lot of the ideas we grow up with**.

Pippi refuses to grow up, and when you start to look at all the things you’ve slowly let go of and given up on over the years, you’ll see that maybe it might be time to bring ~~a little bit~~ a lot of that childish, inexperienced, unbiased, bold, let’s-do-it attitude back to your own life.

Book #4 - Artemis Fowl by Eoin Colfer

Title: Artemis Fowl

Author: Eoin Colfer

Type: Fiction

Published in: 2001

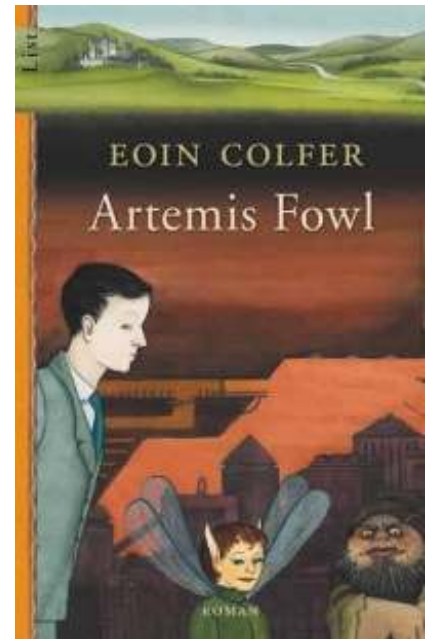
Number of copies sold: ~21 million (across all 8 books in the series)

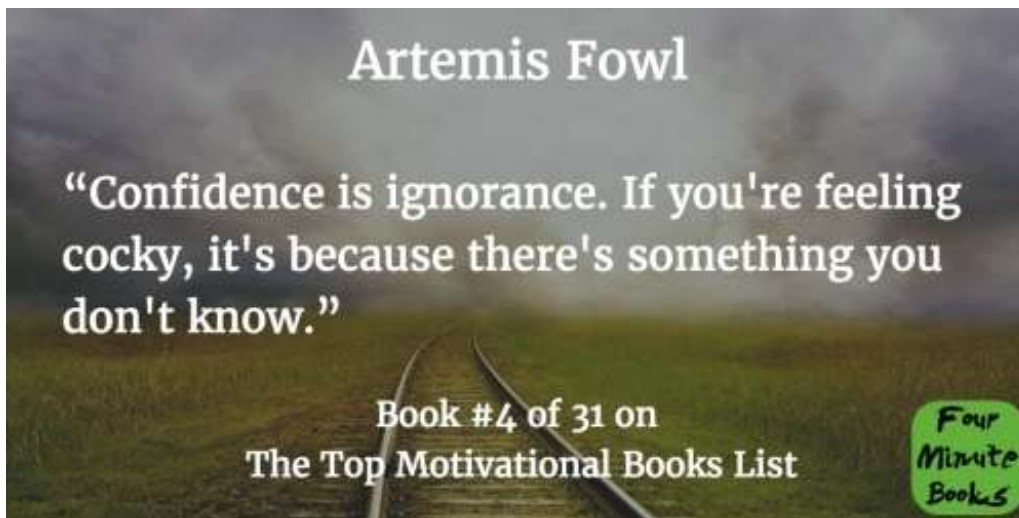
Curious fact: When asked to describe his own book series, Colfer needed only four words to hit the nail on the head, saying Artemis Fowl was “Die Hard with fairies.”⁴Source: <http://www.eoincolfer.com/artemis-fowl>

Best quote from the book:

Confidence is ignorance. If you’re feeling cocky, it’s because there’s something you don’t know.

Summary: Artemis Fowl is just 12-year old, but is already following in his father’s footsteps as a notorious, underground crime lord. Driven mostly by greed, he kidnaps a fairy police officer, in order to blackmail the fairies into giving him their gold. But as he gets to know his prisoner, it is slowly revealed that there is a deeper meaning behind his seemingly evil plan. The battle between good and evil is not as black and white, as it seems, and starts to transcend the borders of fairies vs. humans.





Why is it such a motivational book?

Some people called this “the new Harry Potter”, but that’s not what this is. To me it feels like mixing Wall Street, the 1980s movie, with Lord of the Rings. First, this book is motivating because of Artemis’s **vast accomplishments and genius thought patterns**, especially given he’s just 12 years old. Second, **it grounds you**, because above all, the book shows that Artemis is human, and therefore makes human mistakes. Greed and being torn between good and evil is something we’re all prone to, and even child prodigies are no exception.

Most importantly though, this book gives you one thing: **hope**. It makes you believe that there’s good in all of us, and that there’s something you can speak to in others, which is incredibly comforting. Especially when you’re trying, against all odds, to turn your dream into reality.

Book #5 - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

Title: The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

Author: Mark Twain

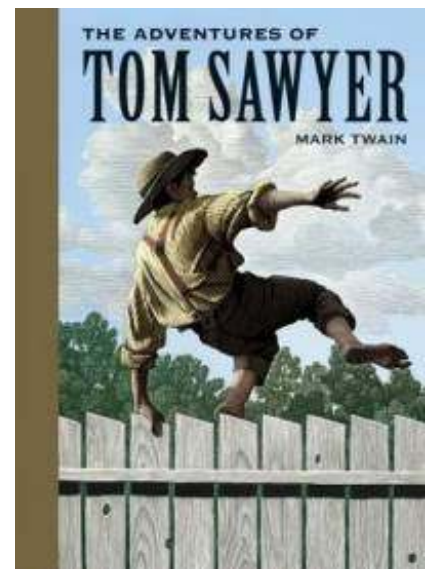
Type: Fiction

Published in: 1876

Number of copies sold: ~20 million (an estimate, since book sales weren’t tracked before 1895)

Curious fact: Although Tom is the main character of this book, he serves as a foil in Twain’s just as famous “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.” This means he’s introduced in the beginning of the book, and then only occasionally appears as a steady, stagnant figure, so readers can contrast him with the main character, Huck, and see how Huck has evolved from previous chapters.⁵Source:

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/huckfinn/characters.html>

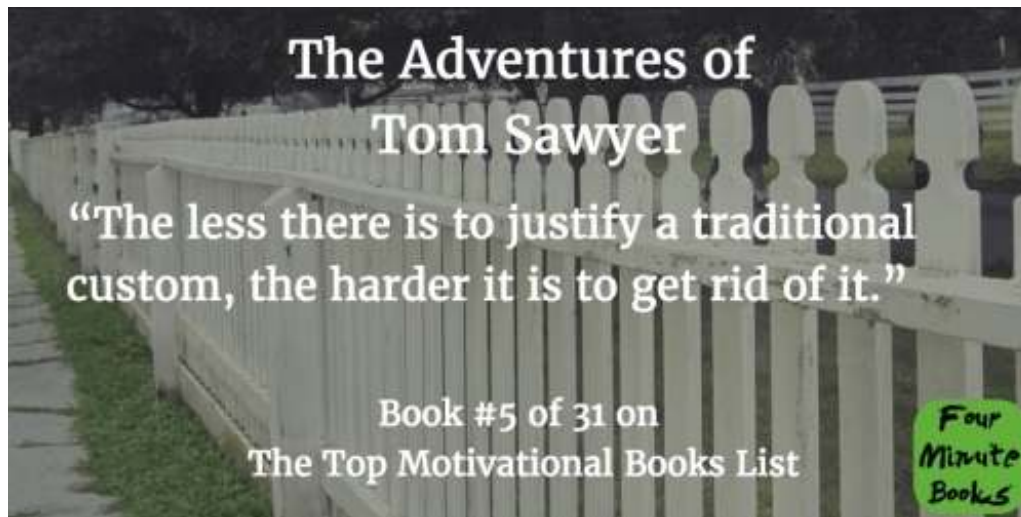


Best quote from the book:

The less there is to justify a traditional custom, the harder it is to get rid of it.

Summary: The book begins with the legendary white picket fence painting punishment, which Tom turns into a fun afternoon of hustling his friends out of their little treasures and belongings, in order to let them paint the fence for

him. He then courts his classmate Becky, witnesses a murder with his best friend Huck, becomes a lonely pirate on an island, returns to start a treasure hunt and gets himself and his crush into serious danger. Though he faces social and moral issues and crises all through his adventures, he's still led to the conclusion that his way of approaching things might not be so bad at all.



Why is it such a motivational book?

This book is another exercise in **creative thinking**. The fence story is worth the price of the book alone, but this goes deeper. In contrast to [Pippi Longstocking](#), Tom doesn't break or disregard the rules of society – he bends them. Being raised rather comfortably, compared to his best friend Huck, he tries to adhere to society's rules, but finds this increasingly difficult to unite with his own values. He learns that most of what our society suggests is actually hypocritical, and that there can be freedom in social isolation (=not giving a damn).

Therefore, this book not only gets your imagination juices flowing, it also makes you more effective, because you'll want to start to [take an 80/20 approach to life](#), follow conventions only, if they make sense, and thus become happier and likely better at what you do.

Book #6 - The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Title: The Little Prince

Author: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

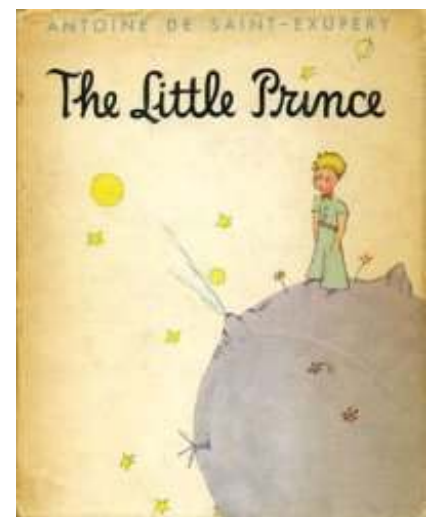
Type: Fiction

Published in: 1943

Number of copies sold: ~140 million, making it the third best-selling book of all time (in 250 languages)

Curious fact: Even though the name of the asteroid the prince claims to be from, B-612, was entirely made up, a real asteroid was named in honor of the book – 46610 Bésixdouze. 46610 means B-612 in hexadecimal notation and Bésixdouze is a French way of pronouncing “B six twelve.”⁶Source:

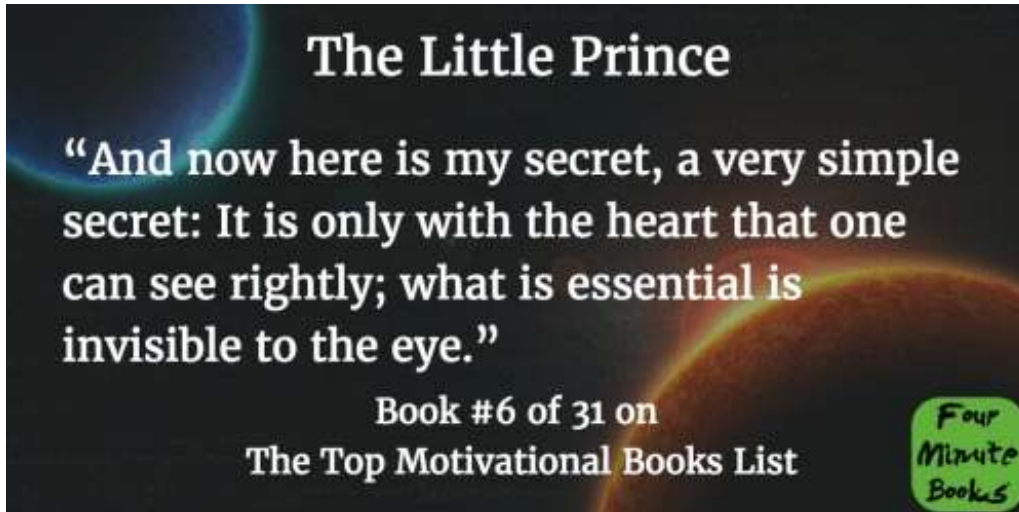
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/46610_Bésixdouze



Best quote from the book:

And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye.

Summary: After a short introduction the narrator ends up stranded in the desert, because his airplane crashes. He meets a strange little boy, who came to earth after traveling around the universe and exploring several asteroids. As the days go by and the narrator tries to fix his plane, the prince recounts stories from his travels and his former life on his own asteroid, which highlight and critique lots of elements of society, all the while showing the identity crisis many of us go through at some point, exactly because of those less-than-good parts of society.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Much like [The Alchemist](#), due to the philosophical and poetic nature of this book, many things won't seem to make sense as you read along – at first – and then **miraculously fall into place later on**. The gift of inspiration hides in so many places here, like the hand-drawn illustrations from the author, or simple, yet deeply profound sentences, which will almost stand out visually.

The beginning and end of this book make one key point: **you need to listen to your heart, in order to see the world clearly**. Everything in-between fuels this message, while giving you many other insights along the way.

Book #7 - Measuring the World by Daniel Kehlmann

Title: Measuring the World

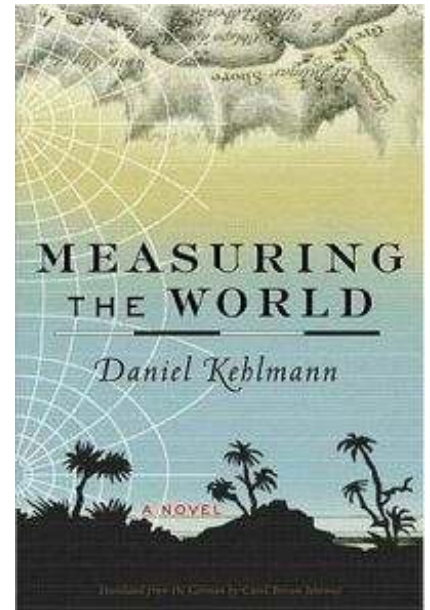
Author: Daniel Kehlmann

Type: Fiction

Published in: 2005

Number of copies sold: ~6 million

Curious fact: A German Humboldt biographer was lead astray by Kehlmann's fictitious description of the scientist, writing in an official treatise, that Kehlmann's novel "exactly reflects historical events."

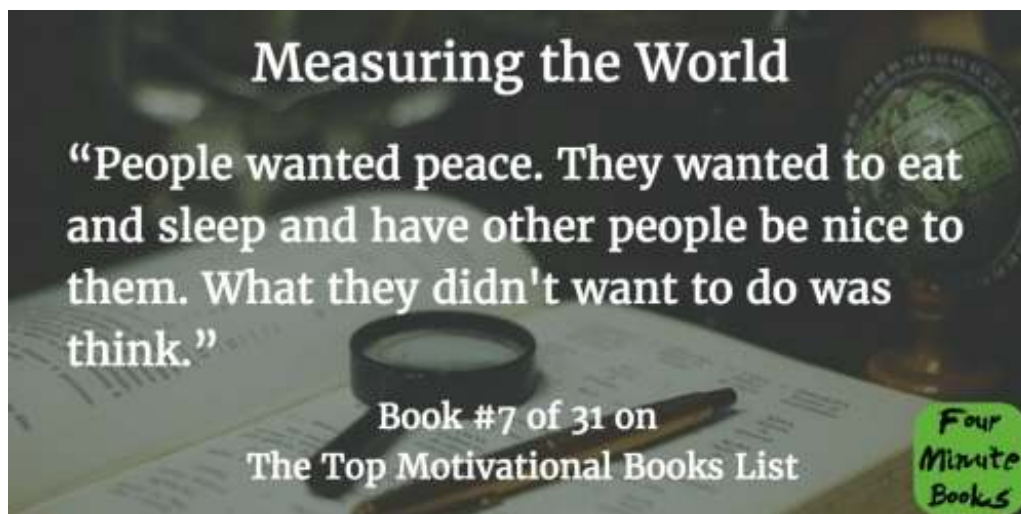


Oops!7Source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Vermessung_der_Welt#cite_note-8

Best quote from the book:

That was the moment when he grasped that nobody wanted to use their minds. People wanted peace. They wanted to eat and sleep and have other people be nice to them. What they didn't want to do was think.

Summary: This incredibly funny and ironic novel re-invents the lives of Carl Friedrich Gauß, famous German mathematician, and Alexander von Humboldt, biologist, adventurer, scientist and explorer. It does away with boring facts and figures, and quickly tells the stories of their discoveries, most of which with humorous (and made up) twists. The narrative perspective switches between the two, eventually having them meet and become long-term pen pals.



Why is it such a motivational book?

I'm 95% sure you've never heard of it before, because it's a German book and was only later translated and published internationally. Yet, there are several things that make this book inspiring and one of my favorites, which is what makes it all the more worth sharing with you.

One, much like [Artemis Fowl](#), this shows you that **even the greatest minds of our time make mistakes** and have

their quirks, so your own become less of an obstacle on your journey. Second, it teaches you to always question your actions and that finding the best way is a constant process, which **makes you fret less about adjusting** and changing your mind. Third, it shows you that **there's no wrong approach when trying to get what you want**. Some of us are introverts, like Gauß, and would prefer a quiet life at home with deep thinking, while others are happy to follow in Humboldt's footsteps and travel the world, meet people, and learn everything from experience.

Nevertheless, both of them share a huge urge to figure out the world and make it a better place. Some of that spirit is bound to rub off on you.

Book #8 - The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown

Title: The Da Vinci Code

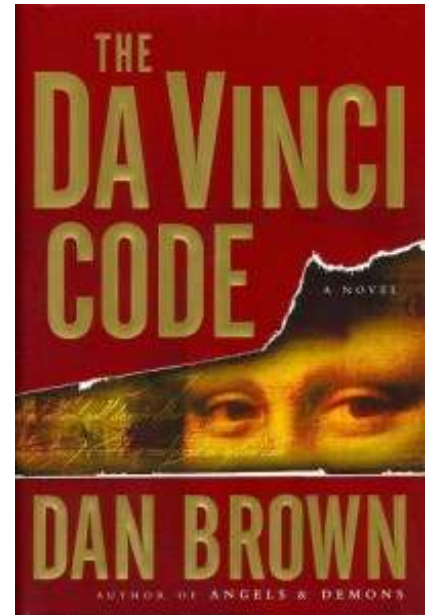
Author: Dan Brown

Type: Fiction

Published in: 2003

Number of copies sold: ~80 million

Curious fact: When sued for plagiarism by another author, the judge leading the case (and voting in Brown's favor), added his own little Da Vinci code at the beginning of the 71-page judgment ruling, saying he'd confirm if someone (correctly) cracked the code. This happened some time later, when a lawyer and writer for The Guardian approached the judge, received a few hints and then successfully deciphered the hidden

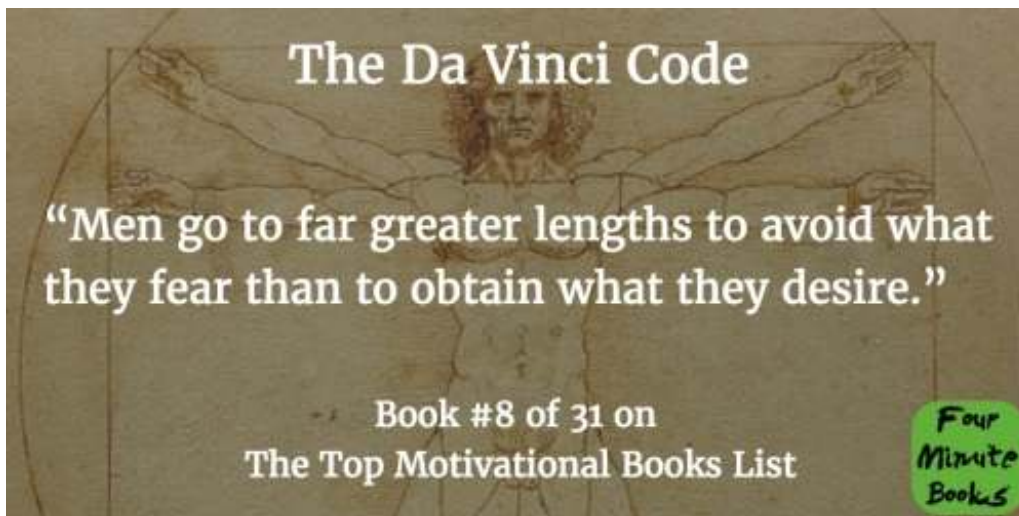


message.8Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/apr/28/books.danbrown>

Best quote from the book:

Men go to far greater lengths to avoid what they fear than to obtain what they desire.

Summary: When the curator of the famous Louvre in Paris is murdered, Harvard professor and expert in symbolism and cryptography Robert Langdon is called to help. Against the French police's efforts, who suspect Langdon to be the murderer, and thanks to the help of local police cryptographer Sophie Neveu, the two are soon lead to a safety deposit box at a bank, which contains a cryptex, yet another mysterious item containing more riddles and codes to crack. The chase after the seemingly religious killer, who seeks to find the Holy Grail for his master, leads them to Britain, Scotland and the point where friend can't be told from foe. They finally discover that there's a much bigger plot in progress, which might erase the world's most powerful church, and, as it comes full circle, brings them right back to the beginning.



Why is it such a motivational book?

First of all, don't watch the movie and then read the book. That's bad. Do it the other way around. Like [Measuring the World](#), this book speaks to the explorer in you. So many elements and figures are shrouded in mystery, that it not only **sparks your curiosity**, but also **makes you think hard** about the skill level one needs to figure out such mysteries.

I can't think of any other author's novels, which have more plot twists, sudden story turns and baffling endings, which are likely to leave you with an open mouth, but also get you to believe that fate's paths are inexplicable and that **the goals we fight for often require us to take a leap of faith**.

Book #9 - A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens

Title: A Christmas Carol

Author: Charles Dickens

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1843

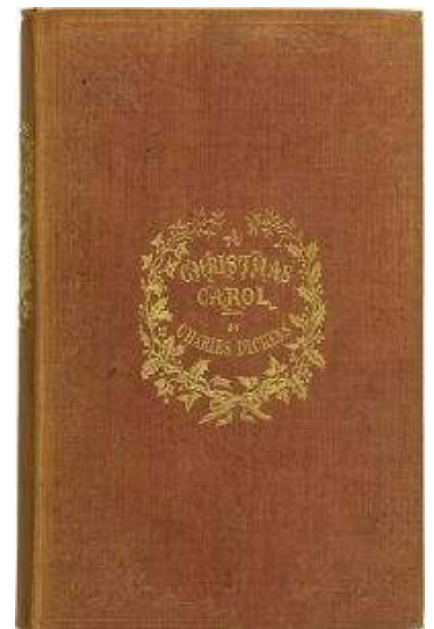
Number of copies sold: 6,000 copies in the first 5 days (which was huge, back then), by now millions of copies in thousands of variants and adapted forms, including thousands of movies, theater plays, public readings, radio programs, recordings and operas.

Curious fact: This book is the reason you say "Merry Christmas" today. The greeting with the word "merry" meaning jolly, happy or jovial, is dismissed by Ebenezer Scrooge at first, but eventually becomes his phrase of choice after his transformation. The book was instantly popular and Christmas was just establishing as an annual tradition again, so the phrase stuck – until today. Source: <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/merry-christmas.html>

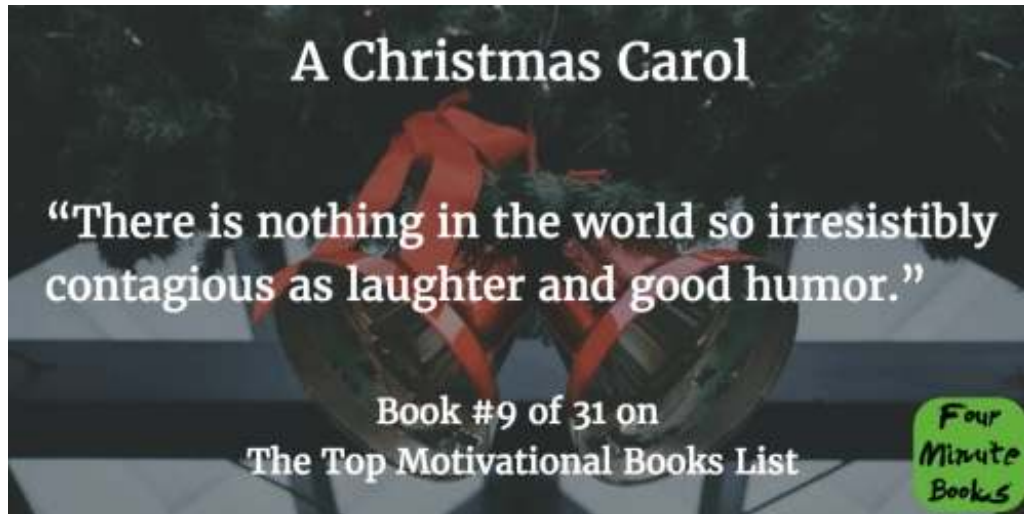
Best quote from the book:

There is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor.

Summary: Ebenezer Scrooge is rich beyond measure. Sadly, the only thing the old man is preoccupied with is



turning money into more money, which leaves him roaming the streets alone, clenching his fists, yelling at workers, children and the less fortunate. That night, the ghost of his former business partner appears, warning him of the terrible (same) fate he is about to suffer, if his habits of greed and selfishness don't change. He tells him that he'll be visited by the three ghosts of Christmas (past, present and future), which then take him on a tour of various Christmas scenarios. The grief and horror he witnesses transform him over night, and he decides not to waste another second and right his wrongs, feeling blissful at having been granted another shot at life.



Why is it such a motivational book?

I am exactly as sure that you've heard this story in one form or the other, as I am that you don't know [Measuring the World](#). This never gets old. The one thing, above all, that this book'll give you is **hope**. Hope, that it's not too late to chase your dreams. Hope, that the best days of your life haven't even happened yet. Hope, that there's good in everyone.

Here's a good thinking exercise: After you read the book, imagine what the ghosts would tell and show you, if they arrived at your doorstep this Christmas. Would they congratulate you? Or show you a future just as bleak as Scrooge's? This book is a wonderful **way to measure how virtuous the life you live actually is** and at the same time a great reminder that **it's never too late to struggle to get there**.

Book #10 - The Hunger Games: Catching Fire by Suzanne Collins

Title: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire

Author: Suzanne Collins

Type: Fiction

Published in: 2009

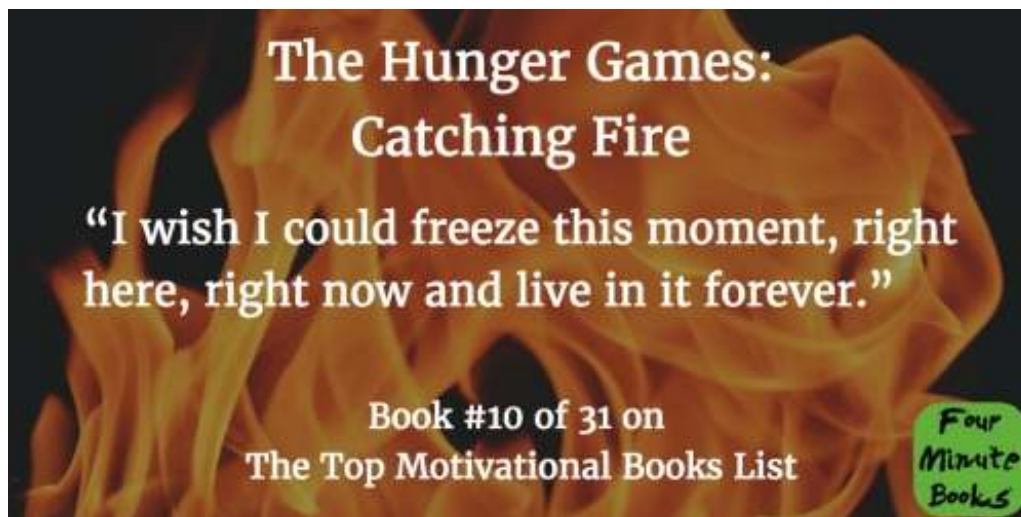
Number of copies sold: ~19 million just for this second book in the trilogy, total sales of the series are 65 million for the US alone.

Curious fact: Despite being published 20 years later than [The Alchemist](#), these books have sold just as many copies by today. Granted, it's a series, but this highlights the distribution power of the internet and, more specifically, the Kindle. By 2012, Collins was the best-selling Kindle author of all time, with almost one third of the top highlights coming from her books.¹⁰Source: <http://www.beyond-black-friday.com/2012/03/17/who-is-the-best-selling-kindle-author-of-all-time/>

Best quote from the book:

I wish I could freeze this moment, right here, right now and live in it forever.

Summary: After both Katniss and Peeta make it out of the 74th Hunger Games alive, they're supposed to visit all the districts of Panem on a victory tour. This instantly turns dark, as people seem to take inspiration in how Katniss broke the rules to make it possible for two people to win, instead of just one, and a rebellion dwells underneath the surface. To nip this in the bud, the Capitol comes up with a terrible twist: All participants for the next year's Hunger Games are to be drawn from a pool of previous victors, dragging Katniss and Peeta right back into the arena. Deadlier and trickier than ever before, the struggle for survival forces the tributes to join forces, and once again the grand scheme only unfolds to Katniss (and the reader) in the final pages of the book.



Why is it such a motivational book?

If anything, these books show you that **life is short**. Death is ever-present in them, lurking behind every corner. Katniss and Peeta must fight for the ones they love, including each other, all the time. There's a sense of urgency in this book, that you can't really shake, which **makes you want to get off your butt and do stuff**.

The reason I picked this book over the first one is that it's pivotal, similar to [Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire](#). Before, Katniss landed in the games by chance and had plenty of luck to help her get through. But fate sometimes

throws more than one terrible blow, so when she ends up as a participant again, the stakes and her approach change. Even when it seems there's no possible way to go on, Katniss always finds a way to persevere, and **if what you do matters, then so should you.**

Book #11 - Inkheart by Cornelia Funke

Title: Inkheart

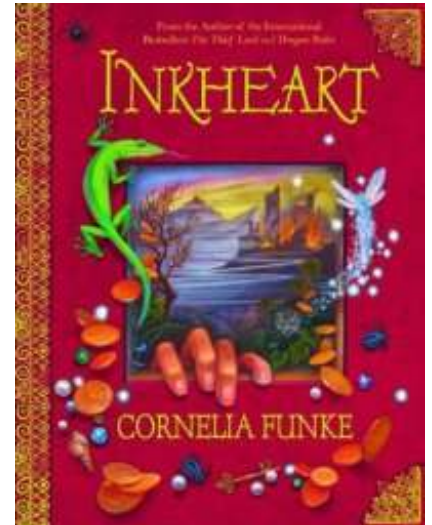
Author: Cornelia Funke

Type: Fiction

Published in: 2003

Number of copies sold: ~3 million worldwide

Curious fact: Cornelia Funke based Mo, one of the main characters of the book, on famous actor Brendan Fraser, whom she mailed a copy of the book, once it was established that a film would be produced. Fraser had no idea who she was, so the first thing he did was Google her. He eventually fell in love with the book himself and ended up taking the role of Mo in the movie.¹¹ Source: <http://movies.about.com/od/inkheart/a/brendan-fraser.htm>

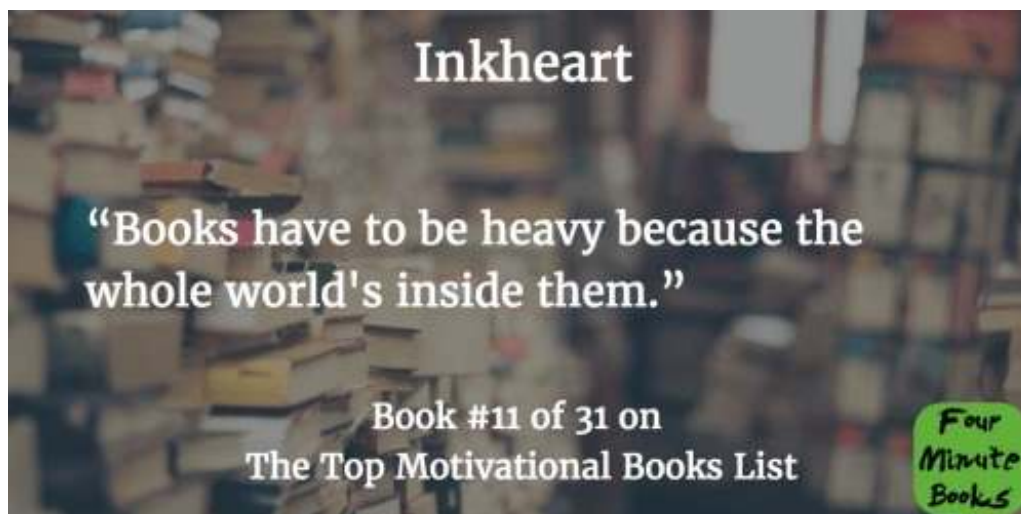


Best quote from the book:

Books have to be heavy because the whole world's inside them.

Summary: When Meggie spots a stranger in front of her father Mo's house, who's a bookbinder, weird things begin to happen. Dustfinger, as the stranger and apparently old friend of Mo is called, seems to be a troublemaker, whom aunt Elinor isn't happy to see, when the three arrive at her house full of books, where Mo has some work to do. Soon Meggie discovers that the perpetual presence of books in her life is no coincidence, as her father can make them come to life when reading out aloud.

His past mistakes with this incredible ability slowly start to catch up with the family when the evil Capricorn Mo once freed resurfaces, bringing everyone into great danger. As the story unfolds, Meggie learns she has inherited her Dad's ability, and must master it, if she wants to save everyone, all while discovering her family's history, including why her mother's been gone for 9 years...



Why is it such a motivational book?

A book about books. Perfect! I'm a strong believer that [the answer to any question is always in a book](#). Therefore, anything that'll make you pick up more books makes me happy. If anything, that's what this book does. It's not only an against-all-odds display of **astonishing perseverance**, but also reignites your spark of **consistent learning**.

If I had to describe this book in just two words, I'd say it's both magically human, while also humanly magical, truly **a tribute to readers all over the world**. You have to read it, to grasp it. Plus, I'm pretty sure since it's another book of German origin, you won't have heard of this before.

Book #12 - The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Title: The Great Gatsby

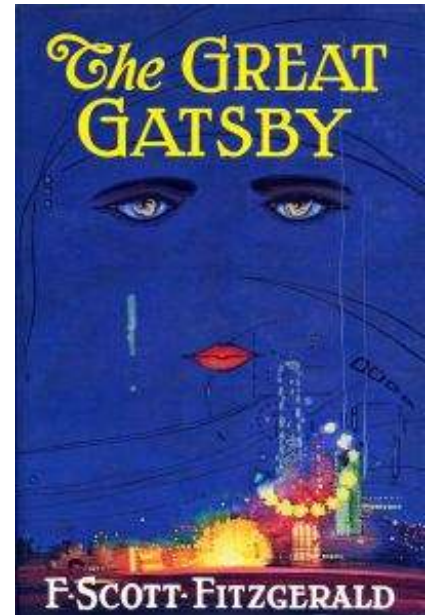
Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1925

Number of copies sold: ~25 million

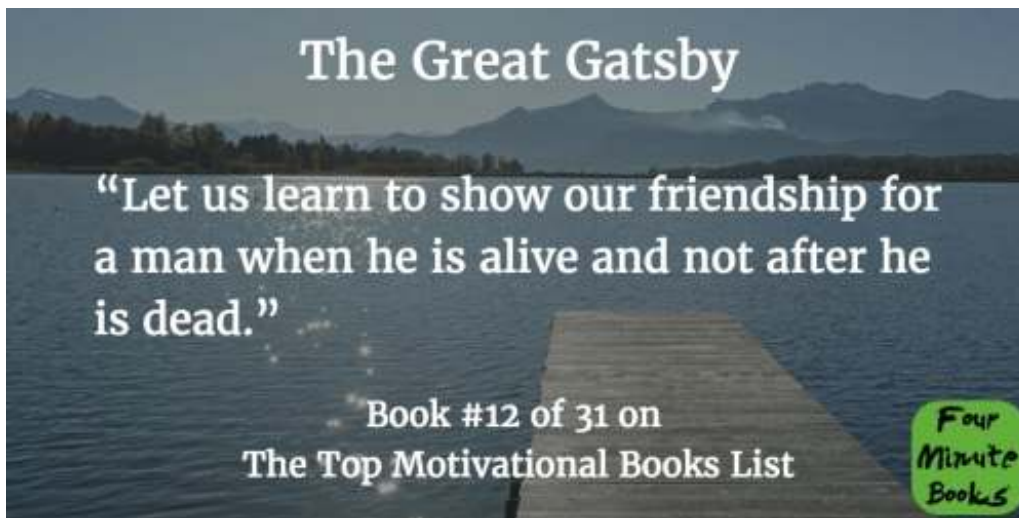
Curious fact: F. Scott Fitzgerald died believing he was a failure and that his work would be forgotten, since the book never sold well or made it past the image of "a contemporary piece" during his lifetime. 1942, only two years after he died, 155,000 copies of the book were distributed to soldiers in WWII overseas, boosting the book's public image (a great lesson in marketing to the right people, since two of the main characters are WWI veterans). A mere three years later the book was already believed to be a classic. Today it continuously sells 500,000 copies a year and is part of many school curriculums (including yours truly, I did a thorough analysis and presentation of the book in 12th grade).¹²Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/books/00/12/24/specials/fitzgerald-gatsby60.html>



Best quote from the book:

Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead.

Summary: In 1922, Nick Carraway takes a new job and moves to West Egg, a fictional village on Long Island. When he visits his cousin Daisy and her husband Tom, he meets the attractive, but cynical Jordan Baker, and soon finds out that the lavish lifestyle they all lead comes at many a terrible price, including infidelity, depression, alcoholism and identity crises. The mysterious millionaire owner of the mansion next door, Jay Gatsby, soon invites Nick to one of his extravagant parties, which Jay himself never attends. When Nick discovers they all have a shared history of romance, including his cousin Daisy and Jay, he tries to help reunite two estranged lovers, which ends in disaster.



Why is it such a motivational book?

When I picked this book to read it for a school project, I had entirely different expectations, and didn't understand many aspects of it as I read it the first time. Only when I started researching the book's themes, did I slowly get what it's about.

First and foremost, **it's an enormous warning sign**. You might get everything you've ever dreamed of in life, only to find it wasn't what you're looking for and doesn't make your life easier in the slightest. It shows you that there's plenty to be happy about right now and that you really have all you need. Plus, it'll help keep your feet on the ground once you reach whatever you define to be success for you.

Second, this is contrasted by the insane wealth the characters have amassed, though some un-earned or attained with illegal measures. The [2013 movie with Leonardo DiCaprio](#) will give you a good visual grasp of it. Feeling like [Artemis Fowl](#) for adults, this book will inspire you to **view life as a balancing act of human achievement and virtue**. Its motivational capacities are very subtle and not as obvious as in some of the other books on this list, but it still makes you want to do the right thing.

Book #13 - Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Title: Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet

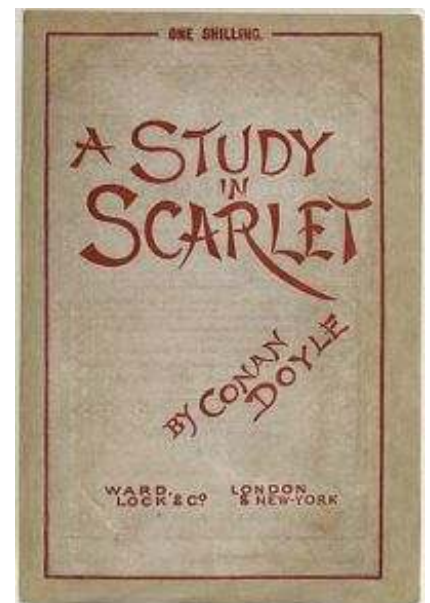
Author: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1887

Number of copies sold: ~60 million for the most popular book of the series '[The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes](#)', which contains 12 short stories, which puts this one (the first of only four full-length novels featuring Holmes) easily into the millions of copies sold as well.

Curious fact: When I ask you: "What are the tools of a detective?" you're likely to mention a magnifying glass as one of the first few items that come to mind. That's this book's fault. A Study in Scarlet was the first work of fiction to mention a magnifying glass being used as an investigative tool (even though Watson didn't understand it at the time he noted Holmes using it) – a symbol that's become a detective trademark and has been ever



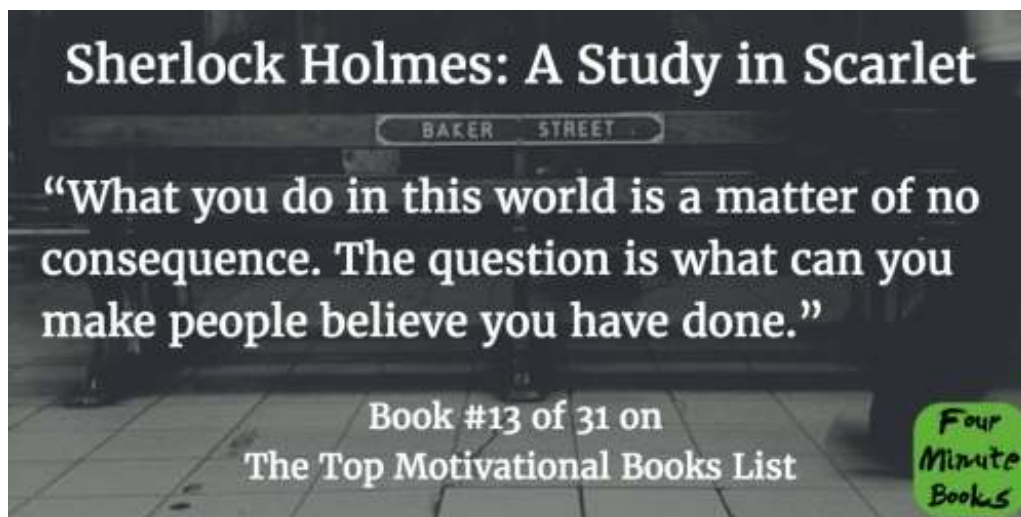
since.13Source: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/sherlock-holmes-and-the-tools-of-deduction-10556242/>

Best quote from the book:

What you do in this world is a matter of no consequence. The question is what can you make people believe you have done.

Summary: This book introduces Sherlock Holmes and his companion and biographer Dr. John Watson, starting off with them meeting via a mutual friend and deciding to share the flat at 221B Baker Street, in order to save money. Next to Holmes obvious quirks, like experimenting with drugs and playing the violin in the middle of the night, Watson notices many guests come and go, who turn out to be Holmes's clients.

When a Scotland Yard messenger arrives and requests help with a new murder case, Watson eventually persuades Holmes to investigate the crime scene and Holmes invites him to tag along. As the two analyze and interpret the odds and ends of the murder, the plot thickens and a second murder takes place. The hunt finds a sudden end in Holmes's apartment, with the second part of the novel explaining the entire story leading up to the murderer's malicious actions and capture, including how Holmes deciphered minute details and thus identified the suspect.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Really? Do I need to explain this? How can you *not* be inspired by Sherlock Holmes? This is the ultimate piece of fiction writing to show you the value of [deliberate practice](#), which **combines effort with thorough feedback analysis** to make you world-class at what you do. Yes, at first Sherlock's genius seems like something you can only marvel at from a distance, but the more you read, the clearer it becomes that **you can, and must, cultivate an intense focus to detail in your work yourself.**

If you're looking for a book to make you stop fretting and complaining about your work, so you can become a true craftsman on your journey to [10,000 hours of skill training](#), this is it. Also, Holmes's great sense of humor and irony shows you that you shouldn't take yourself too seriously, in spite of being an absolute professional.

Book #14 - The Richest Man in Babylon by George Samuel Clason

Title: The Richest Man in Babylon

Author: George Samuel Clason

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1926

Number of copies sold: ~2 million

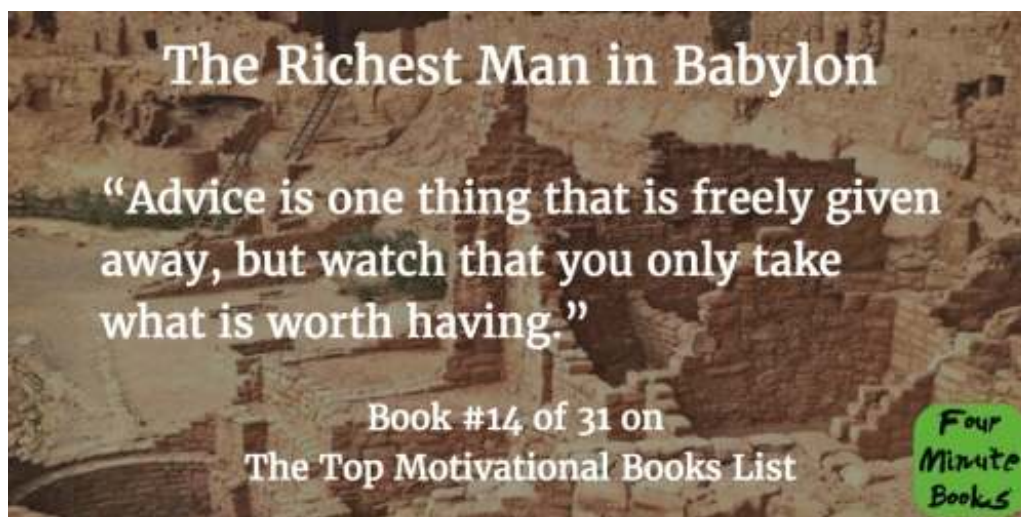
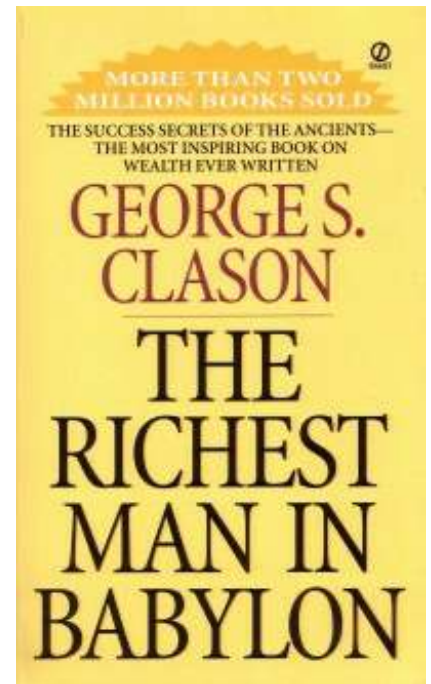
Curious fact: This book didn't really start as a book at all. Instead, Clason wrote a series of informational pamphlets, to educate readers about personal finance issues. Banks and insurance companies handed out the pamphlets (how's that for financial education by the way – today all you see is brochures for stupid products, which usually make the seller rich, and not you) and due to their popularity, the best ones were eventually bundled up and published as a book.¹⁴Source: <http://www.americandebtproject.com/2012/01/personal-finance-classics-book-review-the-richest-man-in-babylon/>

Best quote from the book:

Advice is one thing that is freely given away, but watch that you only take what is worth having.

Summary: Since the book is a collection of short stories, it's divided into 9 major parts, many of which have sub-chapters, the first and foremost being the story giving the book its title. It reveals how Arkad, the richest man in Babylon, owes much of his wealth to simply saving 10% of his income each year. This is followed by the "Seven Cures for a Lean Purse", a series of seven lessons on how to save money and "The Five Laws of Gold", which lay out a simple philosophy for investing.

Then, "The Clay Tablets from Babylon" draws lessons from the fictional translation of five ancient, Babylonian tablets by an English archeology professor. It turns out he used them to pay off his debts and save for his own retirement, a story he shares in a fictional letter. The other five parables are more singular in their nature and each hold one or two more lessons to be learned about building wealth.



Why is it such a motivational book?

This is probably one of the most compelling personal finance books of all time, due to **the power of storytelling**. Setting the lessons in this ancient context and disguising them as life lessons from an old, rich man, makes them

really seep into your brain. Most of the ideas repeat themselves, and since they're simple to begin with, **they stick**.

This is a book about [the power of habits](#), showing you that **incremental progress compounds**. So even if all you can do right now is take baby steps, by all means, take them. We often don't really feel in control of our finances, but actually we are (or at the very least, we can get it back). This is the book to [put you back in the driver's seat](#).

Book #15 - Around the World in 80 Days by Jules Verne

Title: Around the World in 80 Days

Author: Jules Verne

Type: Fiction

Published in: 1873

Number of copies sold: ~millions (?), sadly I could not find any source of how many copies this book has sold to date, but seeing there are hundreds of thousands of ratings and reviews online alone, I'm confident that sales numbers lie in the millions, especially given that the book has been translated into

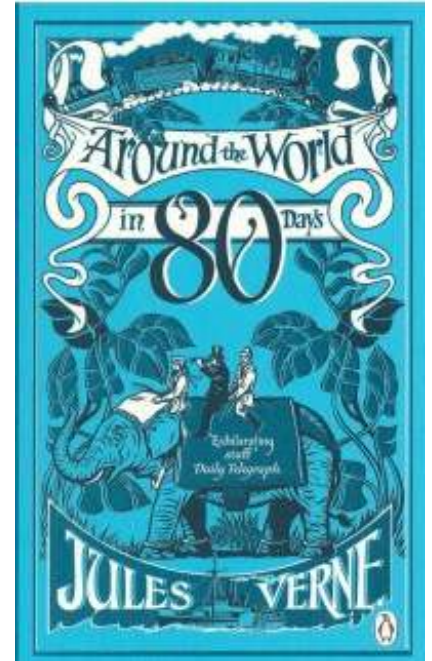
Curious fact: If you've seen any of the many movie adaptations of this book, you'll likely imagine the companions traveling in a hot air balloon. However, this isn't part of the book. The idea is brought up, but dismissed by the characters as being too dangerous. Yet, many book covers and movie posters today show a hot air balloon, and it's one of the few things most people know about the story, though technically wrong (and only owed to the fact that a 1956 movie went rogue and ran with this

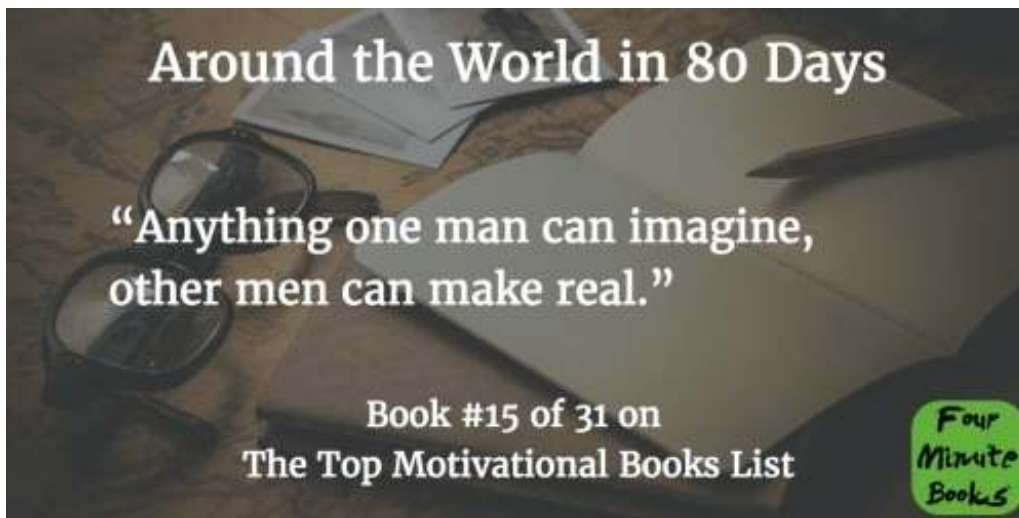
idea).¹⁵Source: <https://jedibyknight.com/2014/07/19/there-is-no-hot-air-balloon-in-around-the-world-in-eighty-days/>

Best quote from the book:

Anything one man can imagine, other men can make real.

Summary: Phileas Fogg is a rich English gentleman of the old school, with discipline like clockwork and few pleasures, one of which is engaging with his friends at the Reform Club. When his friends discuss an article in The Daily Telegraph, stating it is now possible to travel around the world in 80 days, thanks to a new railway line in India, he takes a £20,000 (£1.6 million today) wager and sets off with his newly hired valet, Jean Passepartout (whose last name translates to "passport"). Using mostly trains and steamboats, the two make new friends, face lots of setbacks, get lost, find each other again, and even gain an entire day (which eventually helps them win the bet), returning to London at the same time, exactly 80 days later.





Why is it such a motivational book?

This is a **book about possibility**. Until Roger Bannister [broke the four minute mark for running a mile in 1954](#), people thought it was impossible for more than a decade. Anything is impossible, until one man or woman does it. All of a sudden what's possible is redefined (someone else ran a mile in less than four minutes a month after Bannister). Sometimes we just need someone to step up, take charge and say: "Alright, this is worth failing at, so I'll do it." This book makes you want to be that person.

Also, this book shows you **the power of stakes**. This depends on your personality, but if the risk of losing something, like a big sum of money, gets your butt in gear, then maybe taking a bet up front might be what motivates you. For example, sites like [Go Fucking Do It](#) make it easy to put some money on the line in order to get yourself to make something happen.

Book #16 - Managing Oneself by Peter Drucker

Title: Managing Oneself

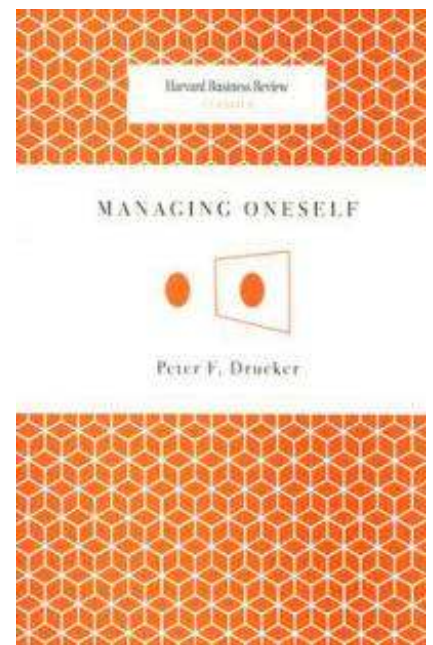
Author: Peter Drucker

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 1999

Number of copies sold: ~in the millions, since it was initially published in Harvard Business Review, which reaches a global audience

Curious fact: Drucker invented what would become the foundation of how we have been managing people for the past 50 years. It's called "management by objectives" and is based on setting concrete goals, to move forward in small increments. This has gotten him the name "the founder fo modern

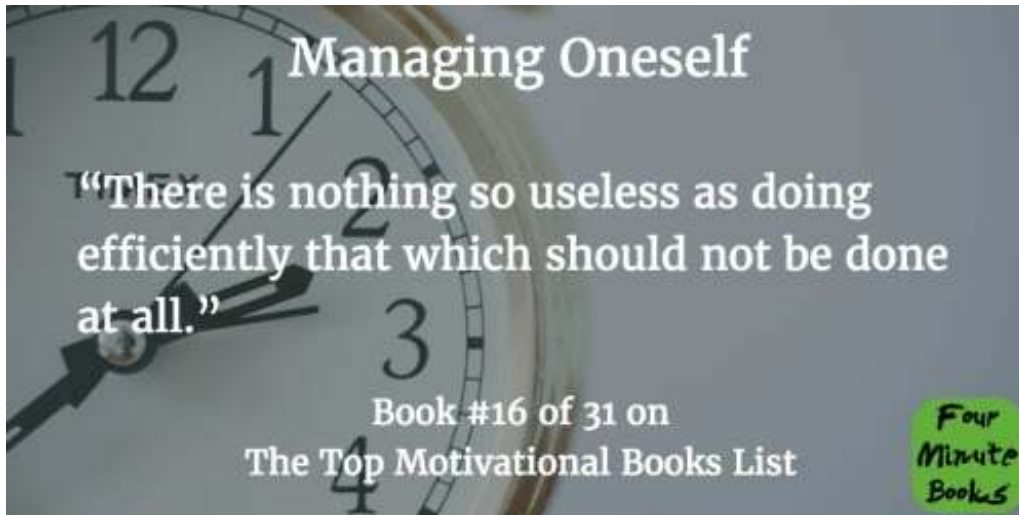


management."16Source: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2014/07/29/the-best-of-peter-drucker/>

Best quote from the book:

There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.

Summary: This might be the most concise book of all time. Peter Drucker has kept it so short and to the point that you can read it in less than an hour. It asks you a whole bunch of questions and gives you examples, so you can become self-aware about how you learn and work, and then directly apply that in your career. Some sections of the book are “What are my strengths?”, “How do I perform?”, “Where do I belong?”, “What is my contribution?” and “The Second Half of Your Life.”



Why is it such a motivational book?

You can read this in 45 minutes and take notes as you go along, which makes it **one of the most actionable books of all time**. I highly recommend listening to the audiobook, which is also 45 minutes long. I've listened to it multiple times on various car drives, and find I always learn something new. It's so motivational because it's very simple, even **just by thinking** about some of the questions from the book you become a lot smarter and aware of how you tick.

This book feels like a fog is lifted, and **your entire communication and thinking become clearer**, and you'll likely want to march into work the next day with some of the ideas from the book in hand, ready to improve the crap out of your career.

Book #17 - Choose Yourself by James Altucher

Title: Choose Yourself

Author: James Altucher

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2013

Number of copies sold: ~350,000 as of May 2015

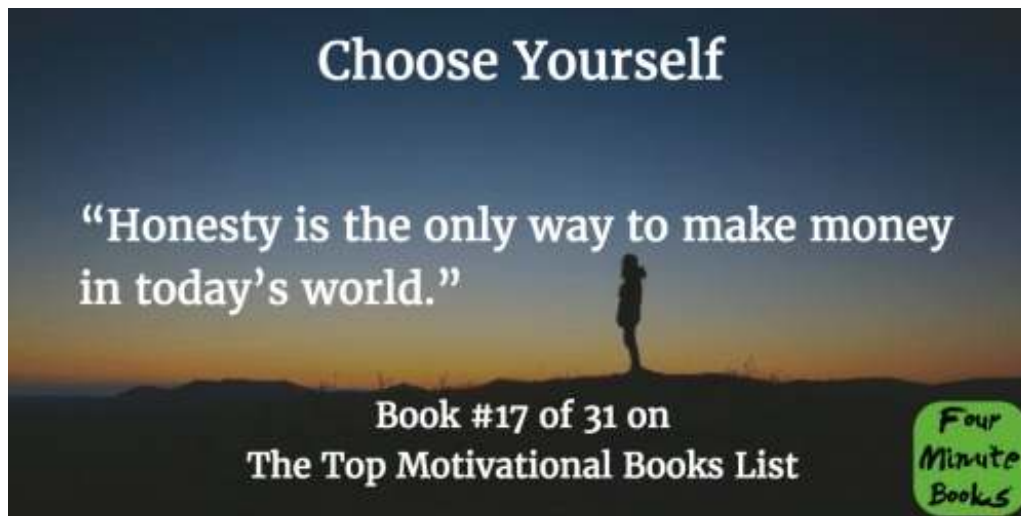
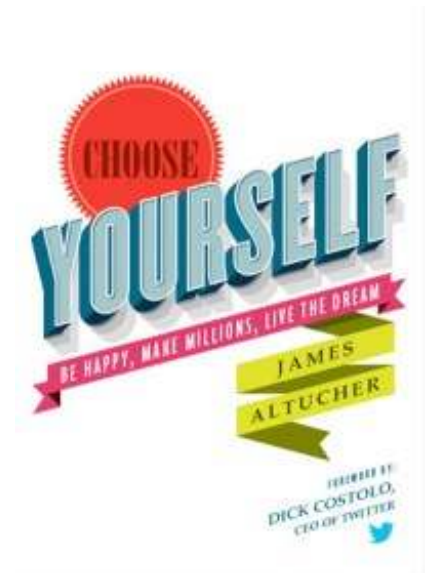
Curious fact: About 2 weeks before the official launch, James made the book available to buy via the digital currency Bitcoin – exclusively. It was the first book to be available ONLY via

Bitcoin.17Source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/james-altucher-choose-yourself-bitcoin-2013-5?IR=T>

Best quote from the book:

Honesty is the only way to make money in today's world.

Summary: The world as we know it is about to fade. Simple jobs are outsourced, automated, or filled with cheap temp staffers. A college degree no longer guarantees a safe career. Work, retirement, politics, it's all unstable now, because the middlemen are disappearing left and right. People can publish their own books, make their own TV shows and release their own music. Gigantic industries disappear over night – and all of this is great news. Now you can choose yourself. You don't need to be picked. You can pick yourself. James shows you how, both on the outside, and the inside.



Why is it such a motivational book?

James is one of the most openly vulnerable human beings ever, and it makes you relate to him instantly. Not only will you be able to **identify yourself with the book**, but also laugh a lot – James is funny. If you feel out of control, this book will show you that **the wheel of your life is in your hand**. James explains his simple daily practice, a few basic habits that'll make sure you're healthy and emotionally well. Then he lines up many practical ways to choose yourself, most of which you'll instantly want to try for yourself.

Book #18 - The War of Art by Steven Pressfield

Title: The War of Art

Author: Steven Pressfield

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2002

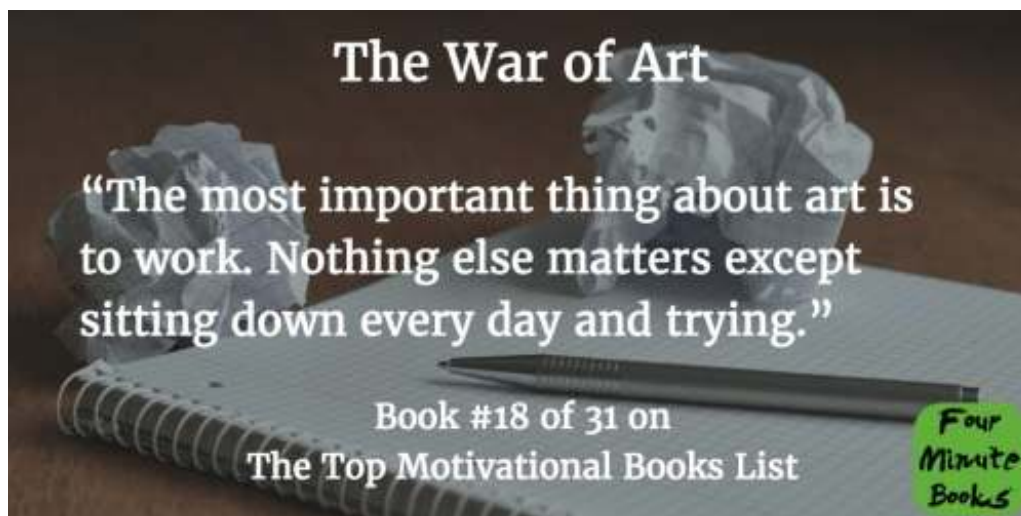
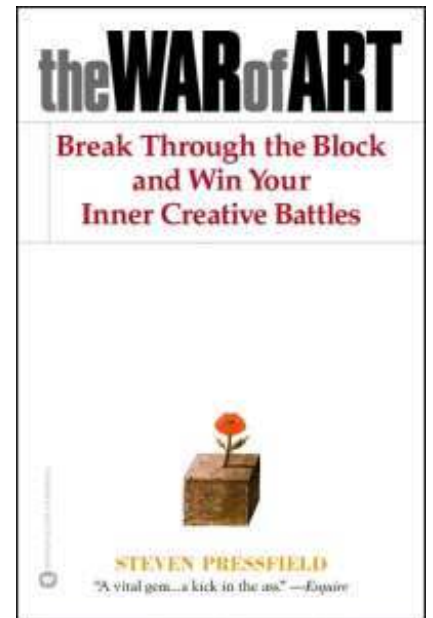
Number of copies sold: I'm assuming well over a million copies, based on all the ratings, reviews, and the time passed since publishing, but this is nothing more than an educated guess, since I couldn't find actual sales numbers.

Curious fact: Steven Pressfield is one of very few authors, who's had successful books in both fiction and non-fiction. His very first book, *The Legend of Bagger Vance*, was turned into a Hollywood movie starring Matt Damon, Will Smith and Charlize Theron in 2000.18Source: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0146984/>

Best quote from the book:

The most important thing about art is to work. Nothing else matters except sitting down every day and trying.

Summary: If you've ever tried to create anything ever, you have faced it. Writer's block, painter's block, talker's block, or whichever other creative block people face when they create what you were making. Steven Pressfield has written this with some tough love, and makes it a wake-up-call for artists. He introduces the universal concept of *Resistance*, which is mostly based on fear, and then helps you identify your biggest sources of procrastination, so you can cut them off at the source.



Why is it such a motivational book?

I like to think of Steven Pressfield as a friendly Spartan. Just as disciplined, but not out to kill you in any way. The anecdotes from his own struggles with writing make this book a must-read for aspiring writers, but even if arranging words isn't your craft, **this'll give you a solid kick in the butt**. You'll become **less anxious** about all those future problems and learn to focus on the process and creating every day. Before you know it, your small, daily habits will lead you to realize you're standing on a tall mountain of accomplishments.

Title: Start With Why

Author: Simon Sinek

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2009

Number of copies sold: Based on his Amazon rank, number of reviews for the book (>1,000) and his TED talk views, I expect this to have sold at least 100,000 copies (a very conservative estimate).

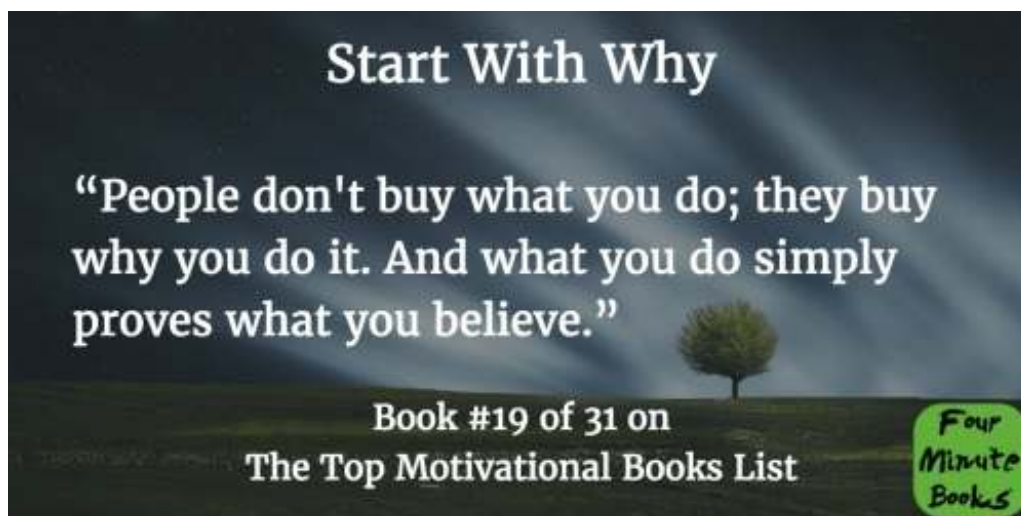
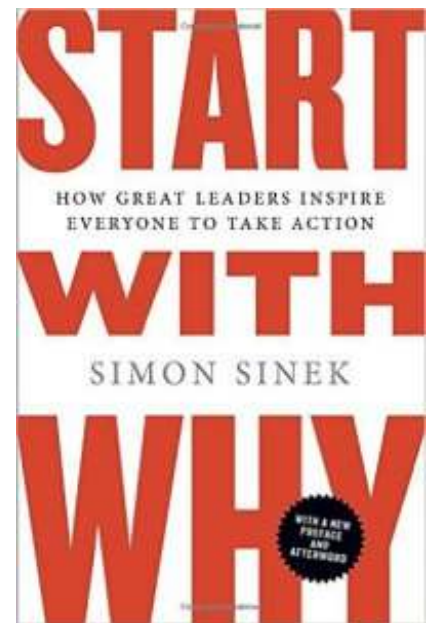
Curious fact: Long before writing the book, Sinek ventured to find his own why, because he was deeply unhappy, in spite of owning a very successful business. Once he did and told his friends, they'd all ask him to help them find their why too. For years, Simon said down with his friends and friends of friends, 1-on-1, for several hours, workshopping their why with them. Only when he was asked to speak and share his idea in front of more and more people, did he start thinking about writing a

book.¹⁹Source: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/omaidhomayun/2016/06/01/how-anyone-can-be-the-leader-they-wish-they-had-interview-with-simon-sinek/>

Best quote from the book:

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe.

Summary: The book first explains the status quo and how we currently live in a world that just assumes you know why anyone's doing anything and therefore instantly jumps to the carrots and sticks approach. Then Sinek introduces his idea of the golden circle and how we should communicate it from the inside out, in order to appeal to the way we're biologically trimmed to make decisions. Lastly, the book explains how you can start a movement to find those, who believe what you believe, and, through communicating your why clearly, figure out the how and the what of how you'll bring change to the world.



Why is it such a motivational book?

This book doesn't speak to your mind. It speaks to your **heart**. It's a business book, but it doesn't feel like one for even a second. It turns your view inward and makes you feel like you've been wandering the world upside down, talking to it through a megaphone you're holding backwards – and then **sets you straight while showing you how**

to hold the megaphone.

This book is **full of aha-moments** and the many examples help cement those, so you'll intuitively start approaching things from a purpose perspective a lot more often. This is a much more sustainable way to find motivation in your work, which is what makes this book so helpful in finding motivation that lasts.

Book #20 - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen R. Covey

Title: The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

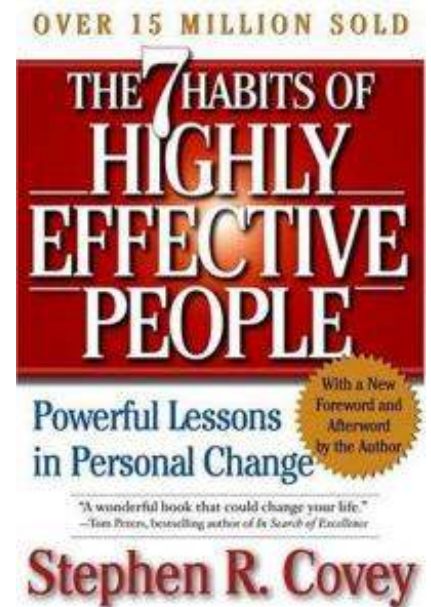
Author: Stephen R. Covey

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 1989

Number of copies sold: ~25 million

Curious fact: In 1992, Stephen Covey was at an event where most people were preoccupied with badmouthing Bill Clinton, who was running for president at the time. Covey didn't say a bad word, because "he might one day have a chance to influence him," and didn't want to show up as a hypocrite, in case he did. After winning the election, Bill Clinton called him a few months later, admitting he had read this book twice and wanted to incorporate the 7 habits into his presidency. Soon after, Covey visited Camp David and taught Bill Clinton some of his principles.²⁰Source: <https://hbr.org/2012/07/stephen-r-covey-taught-me-not>

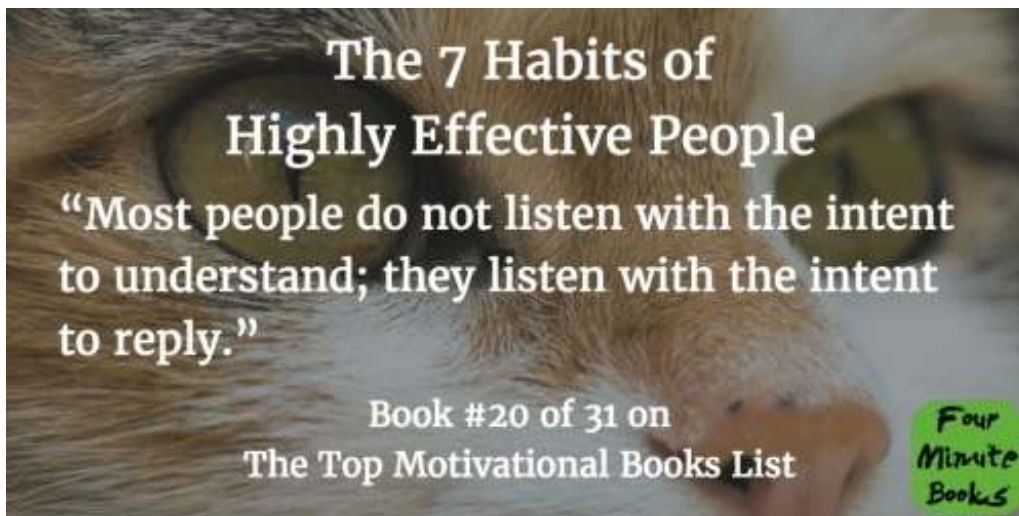


Best quote from the book:

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.

Summary: You might have guessed it, but the book describes 7 habits, which will make you a very effective person. However, there is a progression in the book, starting with the status quo, where your life *depends* on others. By acquiring the first three habits, you switch to an *independent* mindset and take control of your life. The second three habits then take it one step further and help you thrive in a world of *interdependence*, by improving the way you interact with others. The last habit stands alone, serving to renew your energy so you can improve at the other six. The 7 habits are:

1. Be proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think Win/Win
5. Seek first to understand, then to be understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the saw



Why is it such a motivational book?

Much like [Start With Why](#), this book views success as something that is developed from the inside out. Most self-help books focus on principles, which Covey says only determine what happens *if* you behave in a certain way (like a law of nature). The problem is that knowing the consequences doesn't get you to change your behavior, because your behavior is determined by your values. That's why this book focuses on aligning your *own*, unique values with some of the universally valid principles, which means it has the potential to **actually change your behavior**.

It's focused on the ethics of character, so it's super adaptable to you, **no matter what your values are**. This book focuses on you as an individual, and **speaks directly to your deepest beliefs**, giving it an incredible power to motivate.

Book #21 - When I Stop Talking, You'll Know I'm Dead by Jerry Weintraub

Title: When I Stop Talking, You'll Know I'm Dead

Author: Jerry Weintraub

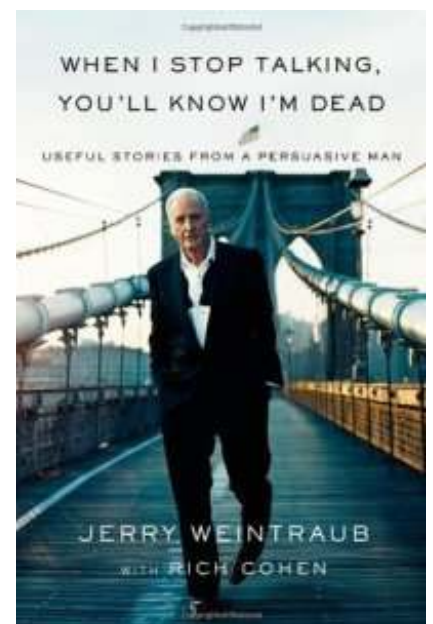
Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2011

Number of copies sold: Tens of thousands of copies.

Curious fact: Never having been a big fan of education, Jerry refused to publish a biography for many years, even though everyone told him to. But when he hit 70, he changed his mind, saying that "if an old man is not a teacher, he's not doing his job." Jerry died in 2015, at the age of 77. Alluding to the (perfect) title of the book, he joked that he even doubted whether he'd shut up after his death and already promised a second book 'Dead, But Still

Talking'.²¹Source: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jerry-weintraub/when-i-stop-talking-youll_b_539088.html

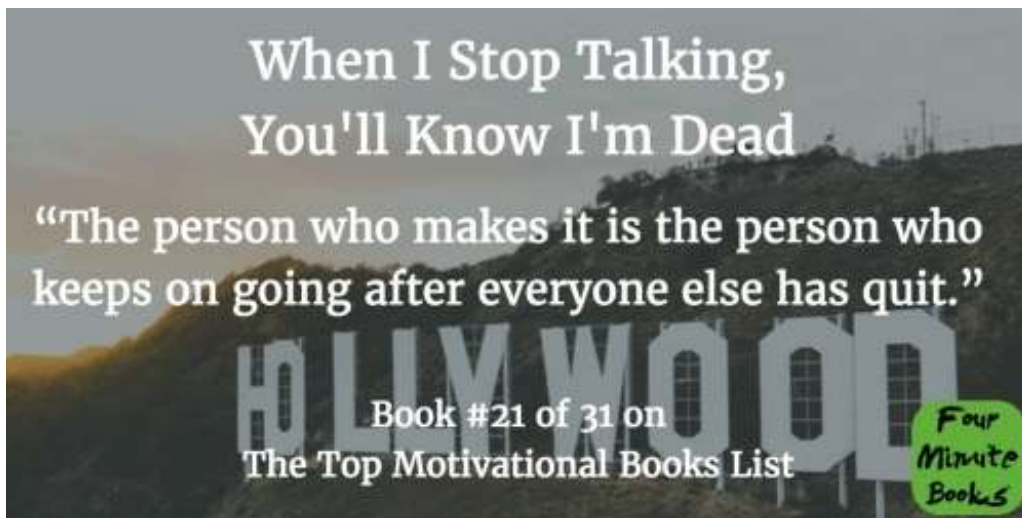


Best quote from the book:

The person who makes it is the person who keeps on going after everyone else has quit.

Summary: The book starts with Jerry's childhood adventures in New York City, his father's talent for selling, running

away from home, and his time in the army, when his cunningness and sense for business already started to shine. Determined to break into the entertainment industry, Jerry jumps from one job to the next (and you won't believe how he gets some of them), but his quick rise is followed by a steep fall. Starting again from zero, he bothers Elvis's manager long enough (365 days in a row, to be exact) until he agrees to let Jerry take the king on tour, and that's when things start to get *really* crazy...



Why is it such a motivational book?

When I read this book I was constantly laughing, nodding, shaking my head in disbelief and my jaw dropped in awe more than once. This is a book that elicits **real feelings**, I can still remember lying in bed reading it, and it's these kinds of books that we remember. I'll never forget the most memorable sentence from the book, which is the quote I picked.

Jerry's incredible hunger for life **shows you that we must make every minute count**, since we're all just given this short time on earth. Even if you're the complete opposite of Jerry and, like me, an introvert, maybe especially then, you can learn a lot. Jerry's life was an unforgettable tribute to fun, passion and persistence, which makes the lessons from this book **impossible to forget**. They'll ring in your ears long after you've put down the book and thus have everyday motivation power.

Book #22 - The Happiness of Pursuit by Chris Guillebeau

Title: The Happiness of Pursuit

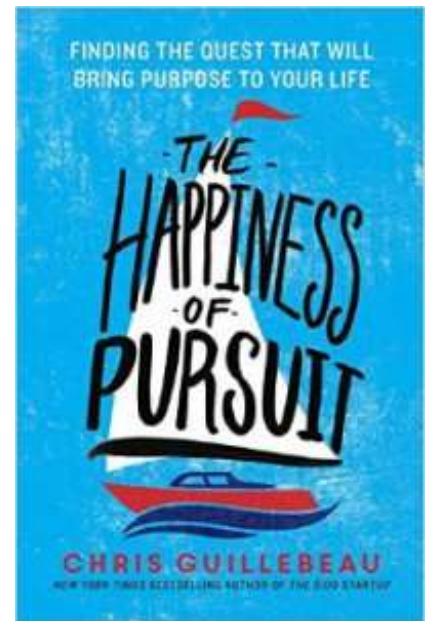
Author: Chris Guillebeau

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2014

Number of copies sold: ~100,000+, according to Chris's LinkedIn profile.

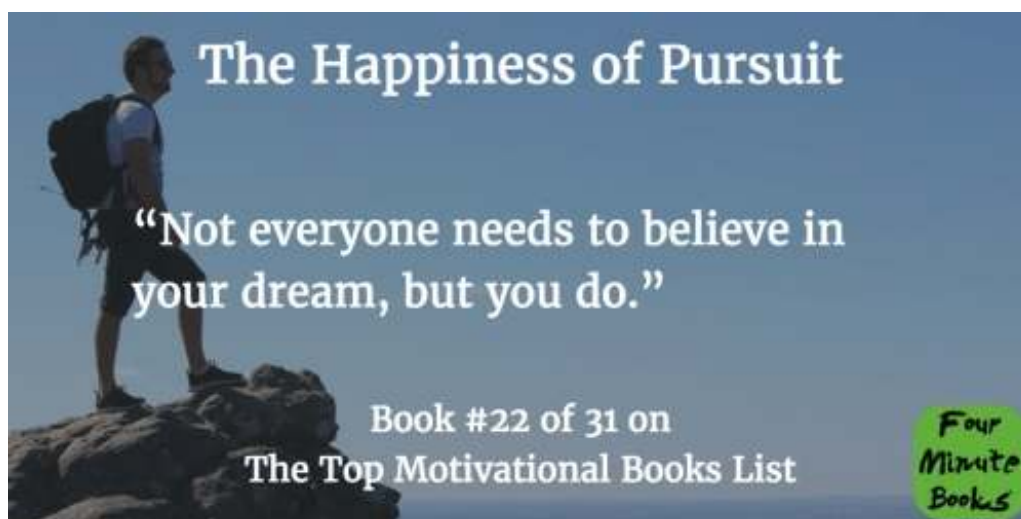
Curious fact: The book marks the end of Chris's biggest, personal quest so far: visiting every country in the world. When he started to track it publicly, by starting a blog, his grandma initially made up 40% of his readership (due to having signed up twice for his email newsletter). This quest took him 10 years to accomplish, and is something he's grown into in stages, wanting to see more and more countries the more he'd already visited. He completed it in 2013, which immediately sparked the beginning of his next quest – writing this book.²²Source: <http://chrisguillebeau.com/the-happiness-of-pursuit/>



Best quote from the book:

Not everyone needs to believe in your dream, but you do.

Summary: The book is divided into three parts: the beginnings of your quest, the journey, and arriving at the destination. The first explains where quests originate from, and how they often result from discontent with the status quo and answering a calling. If you then have the courage to pursue your quest, your journey will force you to become self-reliant and cultivate a sense of everyday adventure. Chris shows you how you can adjust time and money to make any quest practical and shines a light on some of the people he encountered in his own quest, so you can see that the long road is worth traveling. The last part explains the transformative powers of a quest and how to get through the common post-quest funk by, well, setting a new one!



Why is it such a motivational book?

This book has such a fun and upbeat spirit, it's just contagious. Riddled with examples, it shows you that **no dream of yours is unfeasible**, and that, with some adjusting, any quest can be made a reality. Chris is a craftsman, he's much more about the process than about basking in the sun of his own success, and his **"let's go get it" attitude rubs off on you.**

The best part about this book is that you can pick it up again, and again, and again. Every time you complete a quest, you just leaf through it again, and **will find yourself scribbling** down the next rough draft or sketch of your next adventure.

Book #23 - Rich Dad Poor Dad by Robert T. Kiyosaki

Title: Rich Dad Poor Dad

Author: Robert T. Kiyosaki

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 1997

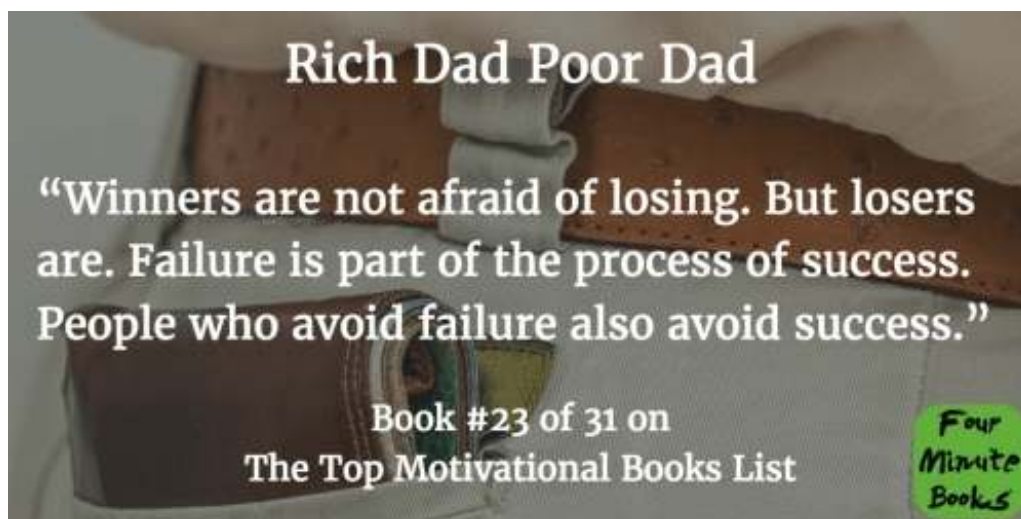
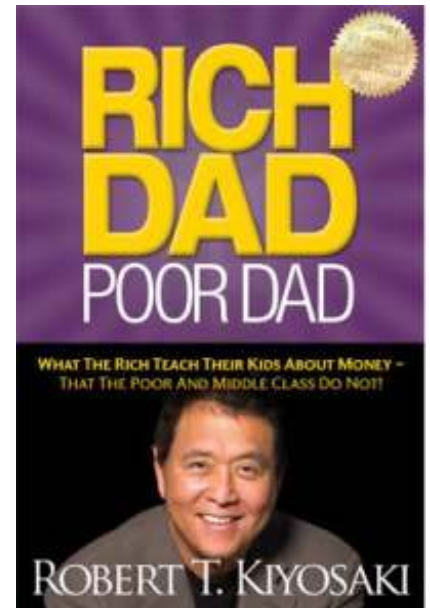
Number of copies sold: ~26 million

Curious fact: Both Kiyosaki and the book are highly controversial, not least because Kiyosaki has declared bankruptcy himself multiple times (last in 2012). Even though the book is always listed as non-fiction, Kiyosaki has insinuated multiple times that his “rich dad” never existed.²³Source: <http://www.thesimpledollar.com/deconstructing-robert-kiyosaki/>

Best quote from the book:

When you want something, all the universe conspires to help you achieve it.

Summary: The book starts with Kiyosaki re-telling the story of his childhood. His real dad, whom he considers to be his “poor dad” was an academic, who earned a decent living, but, according to him, never really understood some of the most important principles of money. He explains how the father of a friend took the two kids under his wings and taught them how businesses and money work, by having them work in one of his stores for next to nothing, but educating them about money in his spare time. The book then takes a turn and explains what “financial literacy” looks like, how you should approach your personal finances and work, what you can do to leverage taxes and laws to your advantage, before it ends with a few very practical first steps you can take.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Some people love this book, others hate it. I love it. The story of Robert’s childhood (invented or not) is super

inspiring, making the book worth a read regardless of the financial advice. Yet, the way it approaches personal finance is very simplistic, which **gives you a sense of relief**. Yes, his definitions of assets and liabilities might not be 100% accurate, but if you've never even understood them before, this'll help.

It's more of a beginner's book for sure, but it **gets you in the right mindset for financial success**, and shows you what you can do *right now* to start building wealth. For example, I used the book's "pay yourself first" principle to instantly put away 10% of my income, and that alone felt pretty good.

Book #24 - The Dip by Seth Godin

Title: The Dip

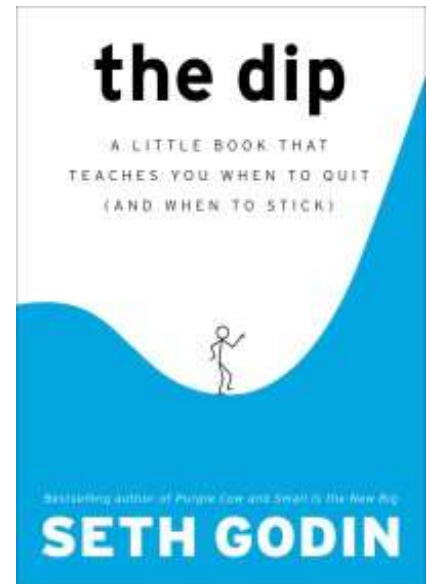
Author: Seth Godin

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2007

Number of copies sold: ~100,000+ copies

Curious fact: Seth was one of the few people with very early access to the internet (when a 24-hour line still cost \$400/month), and has been blogging ever since. He's published something every day for nearly 20 years, initially sending his ideas out via email, then moving to Blogger, Google's blogging platform. To date, over 6,000 (!) blog posts are on his site, which attracts millions of readers every month, and is often regarded as the #1 marketing blog in the world. Finding it is easy. Just type 'Seth' into



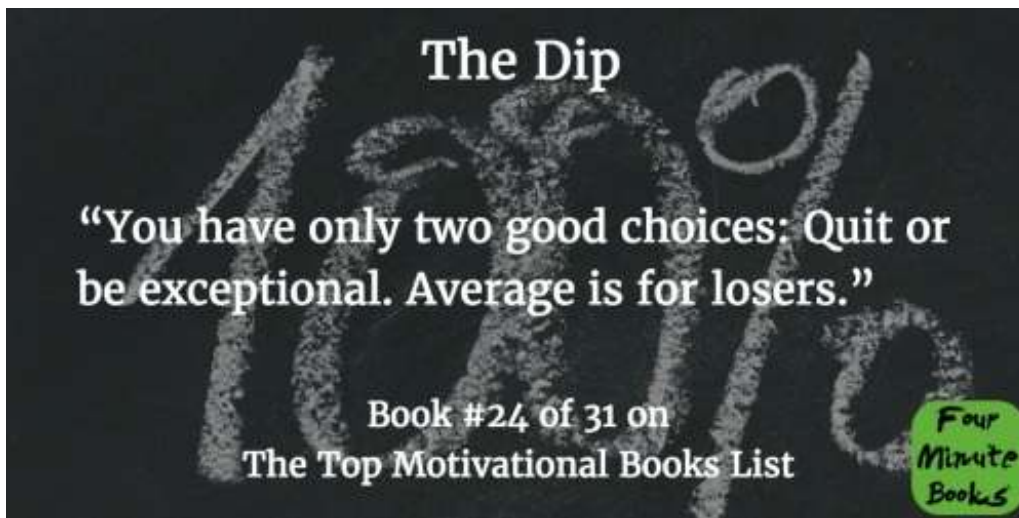
Google.24Source: http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2015/09/susdat.html

Best quote from the book:

You have only two good choices: Quit or be exceptional. Average is for losers.

Summary: This is a book about choices. Two choices, really. It's about the decision between quitting, or trying to be the best in the world. It starts with introducing you to the idea that being the best in the world is very underrated. On any top 10 list, number one gets far more than just its fair share of 10% (for example, the top result in Google gets ~40% of all clicks).

But isn't it almost impossible to become the best in the world today? No, because according to Seth, both "the world" and "best" are two very flexible terms and highly depend on what you do. He uses a few graphs and curves to explain when it's time to make one of the two choices, and underlines them with several examples so you can get a better grip of which one to make when it's your turn (and it's always your turn). The book ends with a series of questions to help you figure out which dip to pursue, and which dead ends it's time to quit.



Why is it such a motivational book?

This book has had the biggest impact on me all year. It tells you that it's okay to quit, that it's actually important to do so, which makes this **an unbelievably liberating book**. All of a sudden, you won't feel compelled to keep up with the digital and physical Joneses in your life, whether it's that extra Twitter account that pulls at your attention, or the vain chase for the next promotion at a company you'll never lead.

The Dip is a **call to greatness in a world of mediocrity**. But greatness always entails sacrifice. Luckily, this book also gives you the courage and confidence to happily make those sacrifices, figure out your true mission, smile and return to work that matters.

Book #25 - Sam Walton: Made in America by Sam Walton

Title: Sam Walton: Made in America

Author: Sam Walton

Type: Non-fiction

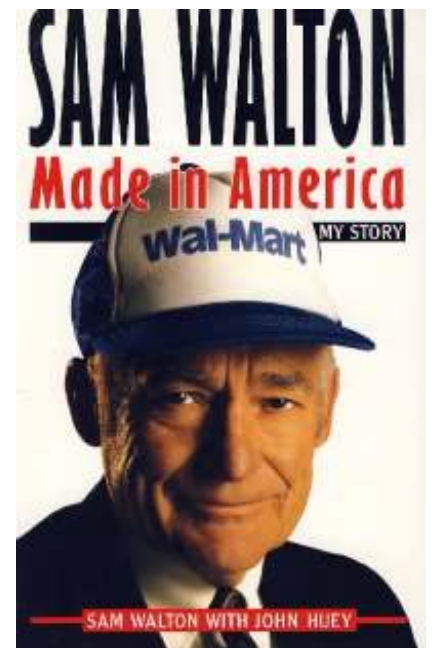
Published in: 1992

Number of copies sold: ~100,000+ copies, based on the number of reviews and the age of the book.

Curious fact: When visiting Brazil for business, Sam disappeared for a while one afternoon. Soon his host received a call from the local police that Sam was in jail. When they came down to bail him out, local police explained that they'd found "this crazy old man, crawling around on his hands and knees in a store." Sam had been measuring the aisle width with a tape measure, to figure out whether Brazilian retailers knew something he didn't. Crazy? Yes. But a great anecdote to show what a modest, relentlessly growing man he was.²⁵Source: <http://fastwhale.com/that-time-sam-walton-got-arrested-in-brazil/>

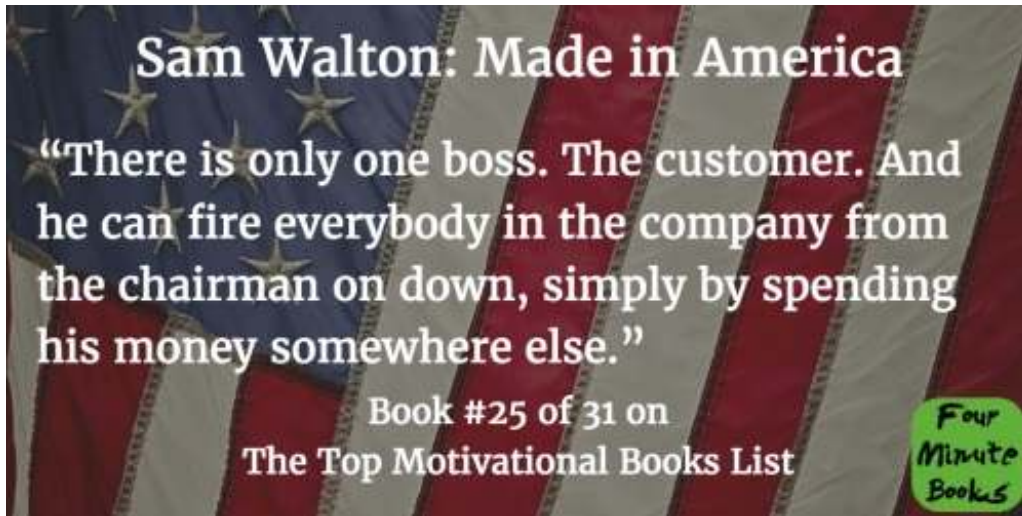
Best quote from the book:

There is only one boss. The customer. And he can fire everybody in the company from the chairman on down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.



Summary: Since it's a biography, the book begins with Sam's childhood and where he got his sense of entrepreneurship from initially. After an 18-month stint at J.C. Penney, Walton's only "job" and a brief intermezzo with the army, Sam took a loan from his father-in-law to start his own retail store in Arkansas. Having missed a clause in the rental contract, the owner of the building didn't renew Sam's lease in year three, forcing him to start all over again.

Sam then explains how he built out a chain of 16 stores (all but one under the Ben Franklin franchise), integrated family and business, started the first Walmart in 1962 (due to Ben Franklin franchise disapproving of his discount policy) and slowly grew the team, until eventually taking the company public in 1970 and using the money from the IPO to grow it further. He then explains various aspects of growing the company into the largest retailer of the world, including employee policy, his basic principles, and handing over the reins. The book concludes with his idea of giving back and his 10 rules for building a successful business.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Hate Walmart or not, you can't help but admire this man. Since this book covers a long history, it gives you a good sense of **what a privileged world we live in today**. The adversities Sam had to go against to make his dream become real would seem insurmountable today, where all we need is a laptop and a domain name to get started. It makes you feel humbled, and **cuts right through the excuses you might have** about not starting to chase your dreams just yet.

Sam didn't know that his company would become the biggest retailer in the world, and he never let the money go to his head, which goes to show all you need to be successful is **a humble attitude and an itch for adventure**. I highly recommend keeping his 10 rules for building a successful business around and looking at them every once in a while.

Book #26 - The 4-Hour Workweek by Tim Ferriss

Title: The 4-Hour Workweek

Author: Tim Ferriss

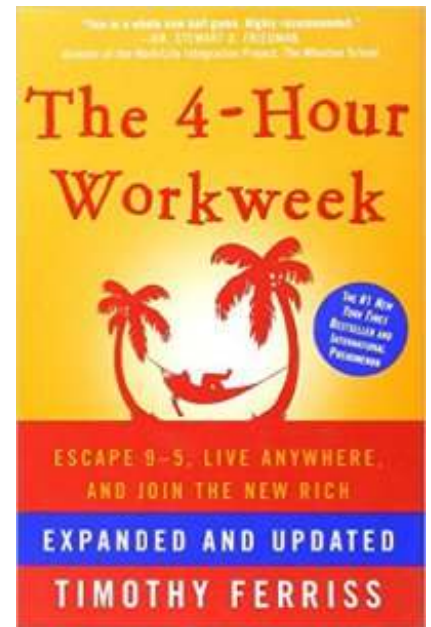
Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2007

Number of copies sold: ~1.8 million copies

Curious fact: Though alluring, the title of the book is much more the result of Tim's scientific attitude of testing everything, rather than a description of how he spends his days. Tim "works" far more than four hours per week, though he might not call it that, because by now what he does is just fun to him. Technically describing with how much effort he could have run his then-company BrainQUICKEN, he tested the book title next to a few others, such as "Broadband and White Sand" and "Millionaire Chameleon", using Google AdWords, and went with the one with the best click-through rate.

Smart!26Source: <http://boingboing.net/2010/10/25/howto-use-google-adw.html>

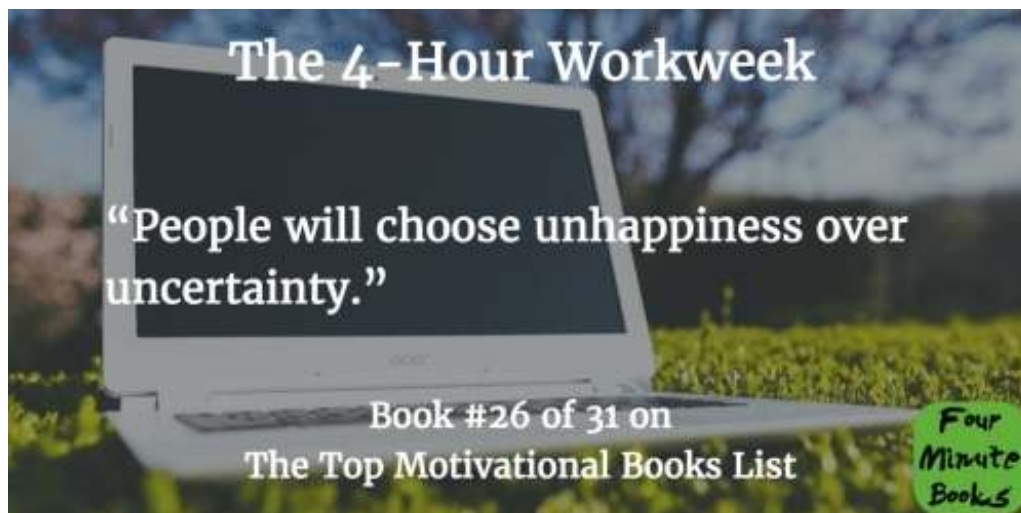


Best quote from the book:

People will choose unhappiness over uncertainty.

Summary: Tim uses an acronym to describe his 4-step process of removing himself from his own company without having it collapse, and how you can apply the same tactics to your own job, business and career. DEAL stands for definition, elimination, automation and liberation.

The first section explores how you can kill the fears that will inevitably creep up in your mind about applying all of this, for example by visualizing your worst-case scenario. It also shows you that nobody needs a million dollars to live a luxurious life and how you can crunch the numbers in your favor. Elimination highlights some ancient, minimalistic, almost Stoic principles of productivity, like a low-information diet and how to deal with interruptions at work. Automation is where the rubber hits the road. This part shows you how to outsource most of your life and create a "muse" that'll finance your future ventures. Liberation is the next logical step to take so you don't end up spending all your precious time managing your muse, and can spend your newly found time in a meaningful way, for example with mini-retirements.



Why is it such a motivational book?

If you're looking for an IKEA style manual for your entire life, this is as close as you're gonna get. It feels liberating to just turn off your head and follow Tim's instructions. This isn't a thinking book. **It's a doing book.** On my first read I instantly downloaded all templates, spreadsheets, and filled them in right after reading each chapter. Planning your life goals and calculating how much money you actually need to drive a fancy BMW (I'm coming for you, 2013 335is convertible) is **progress you can feel see.**

The productivity section is one of the most helpful I've read to this day, because it's rock solid and there's hardly anything more motivating than **the feeling of having enough time.** Yes, you'll likely get stuck at the automation part, because the rules of the passive income game have changed a lot, but you'll already know which book to turn to 10 years later, when the cash is flowing while you sleep, but you somehow still don't spend as much time in bed as you then should.

Book #27 - So Good They Can't Ignore You by Cal Newport

Title: So Good They Can't Ignore You

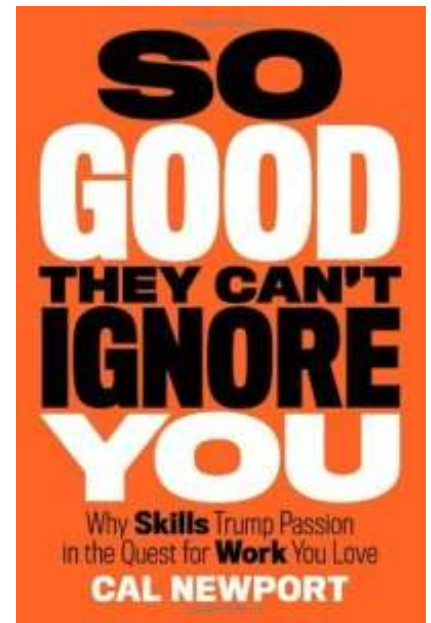
Author: Cal Newport

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2012

Number of copies sold: ~100,000+ copies, estimated from the fact that his previous three books have sold a combined number of 125,000+ copies, but this being his most popular one by far and has one a bunch of awards the year it was published, which has surely driven sales a lot.

Curious fact: The book is as much a reminder for Cal as for anyone else, if not more. He initially wrote it to answer his own question of whether to pick a teaching job, or go join the industry, and the answer not only surprised him, but also made his choice fairly easy and almost irrelevant.²⁷Source: <https://vimeo.com/48041227#t=384s>

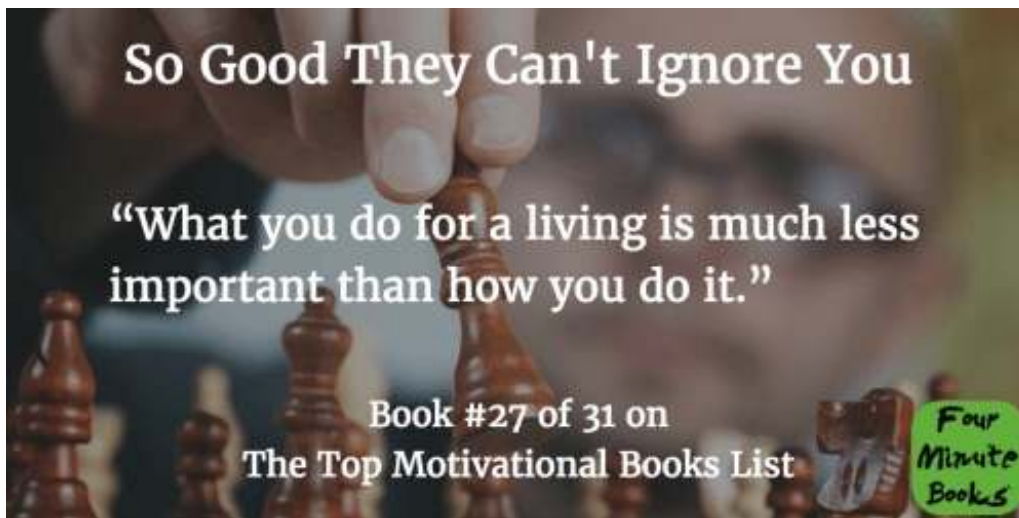


Best quote from the book:

What you do for a living is much less important than how you do it.

Summary: This book is broken into four rules. The first rule says don't follow your passion and breaks down why letting your passion guide you into a job is a bad idea. It uses Steve Job as the most prevalent among many examples of how, contrary to what we're often told, passion is something you acquire as you get better, and not a pre-existing condition that'll show you what type of work you're meant to do.

The three following rules then outline what it *actually* takes to end up doing work you love, based on Daniel Pink's assertions from "Drive" that describe motivation as the result of autonomy, mastery and purpose. Rule two addresses mastery by showing you how to cultivate a craftsman mindset, with which you acquire career capital (=valuable skills). You can then leverage this career capital into autonomy, by gaining more control over your work, for example by turning down promotions and avoiding other control-sapping traps, which Cal describes in rule three. He finally concludes with how you can find purpose in your work, thanks to your new skills and by going on new missions, which you can test with experiments and little bets.



Why is it such a motivational book?

This is a book about **where motivation comes from**, so, need I really say more? Okay, I'll say a bit more. If you've fallen for the passion presumption (haven't we all?), you might have an initial knee-jerk reaction to this book. If you do, **keep reading**. It's nothing short of a liberation once the gears click and the message falls into place. It shows you that **you can bring motivation to whatever work you're already doing**, and that you're not a lost cause if you haven't found your passion at age 42.

So Good They Can't Ignore You takes all the pressure off choosing a career, and puts it on how you decide to approach it instead – which **makes you feel a lot more in control**. It doesn't make finding meaningful work easy, but less mystical and moves it a lot closer within reach.

Book #28 - The Miracle Morning by Hal Elrod

Title: The Miracle Morning

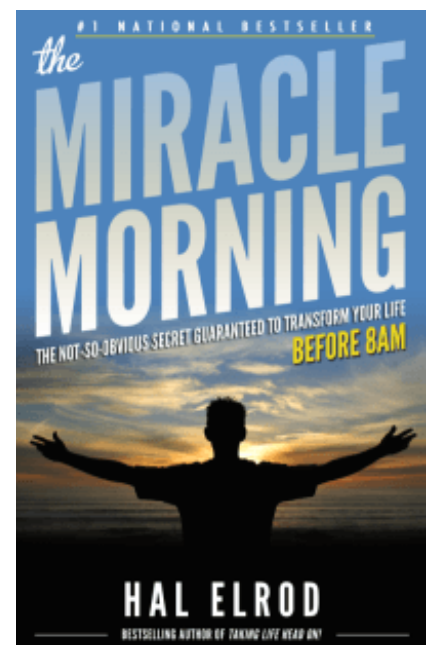
Author: Hal Elrod

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2012

Number of copies sold: ~300,000+, which is an estimate based on the book's number of ratings, Hal's bestseller rank, the book's bestseller status and size of his platform, and the time it's been out, but I could easily understand if this had sold north of 500,000 copies or even a million by now.

Curious fact: Hal often tells the story of how he was dead for 6 minutes after a car crash and woke up from a coma, being told he'd never walk again. Most people think that's when he came up with the Miracle Morning and that he pulled himself from that hole with it, but that's not true. The Miracle Morning is the result of how he dealt with a severe case of depression, due to losing half of his six-figure income, his house, and being \$50,000 in debt after the economy crashed in 2007. Facing a grand total of \$425,000 in debt, he took a friend's advice for a run, which sparked his morning practice and would be the turning point of his life. This eventually led to the Miracle Morning book.²⁸Source: <http://niklasgoeke.com/miracle-morning-summary/>



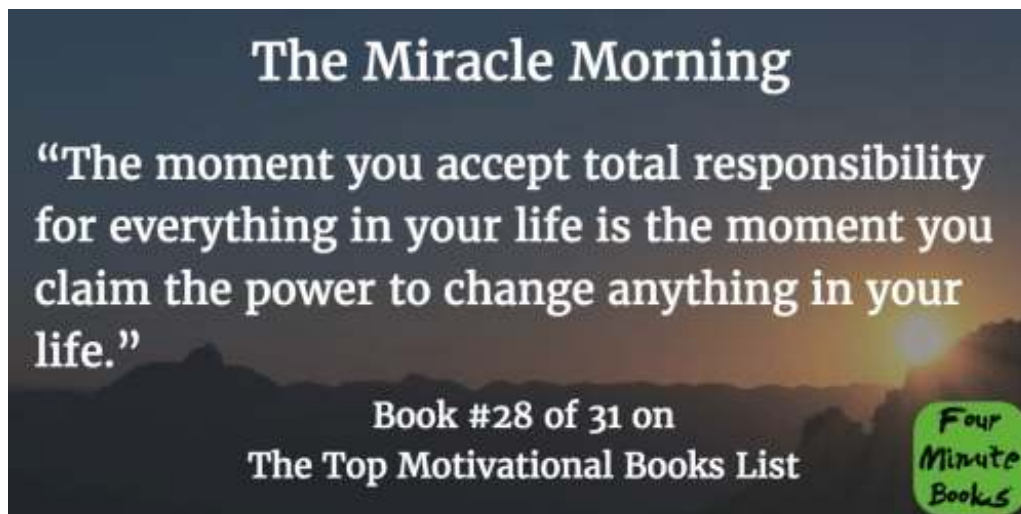
Best quote from the book:

The moment you accept total responsibility for everything in your life is the moment you claim the power to change anything in your life.

Summary: The book starts with Hal's story of the accident and the events leading up to his depression and discovery of the morning ritual, including a tip on how you can stop hitting the snooze button (which might be your biggest problem at first). Then he breaks down the six steps of the Miracle Morning in detail, with several options and tips on how to practice each in the best way. The six steps are:

1. Silence
2. Affirmations
3. Visualization
4. Exercise
5. Reading
6. Scribing (=Writing)

If you read the first letter of each step in a downward row, you can discover the acronym Hal created to remember his practice better: SAVERS. Hal suggests taking around 60 minutes each morning for your Miracle Morning, but he then also presents a 6-minute version for time-strapped people (like Four Minute Books readers). He gives a few customizing ideas and options and then transitions into how you can make your new morning routine a proper habit by joining his 30-day transformation challenge.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Hal writes like he talks, and if you've ever heard him talk, you'll know that in itself is motivating. His optimism seems to know no boundaries, and it spills over, **right into your heart**. You can feel that he really believes in you and that life has a lot more in store for you. It's one of the few books that **makes you feel like you're having a conversation with a friend**. I confirmed a lot of his questions or answered them in my head as I was reading. Plus, you can immediately put his practice to the test, there's no delay between learning and trying.

This book is simple, light, highly practical, not in the slightest overwhelming and instantly actionable. It could help you improve your own motivation tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, the day after that, and everyday henceforth (as opposed to just motivating you once). Thus, **it puts the power to motivate in your own hands**, which is what makes it one of my favorites.

Book #29 - Zero to One by Peter Thiel

Title: Zero to One

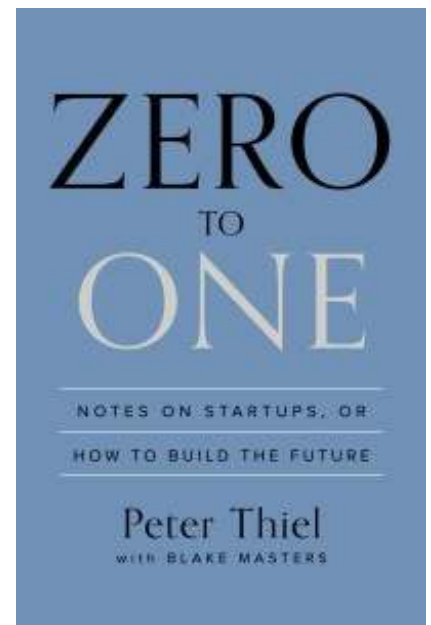
Author: Peter Thiel

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2014

Number of copies sold: ~1.25 million as of January 31st, 2016, according to a tweet by Blake Masters.

Curious fact: Peter Thiel never intended to write a book. In 2012 he taught a class at Stanford, where one student, Blake Masters, took very detailed notes, and put them up online, for the world to see. And boy, did the world see. The notes have been shared almost 650,000 times and were quoted in The New York Times, leaving Thiel thinking that maybe this was something to start a wider conversation about after all. He and Masters then worked together to condense the notes, and make Thiel's message clearer, which led to the publication of the book. The notes are still online, and you can look at them for free.²⁹Source: <http://zerotoonebook.com/about/>

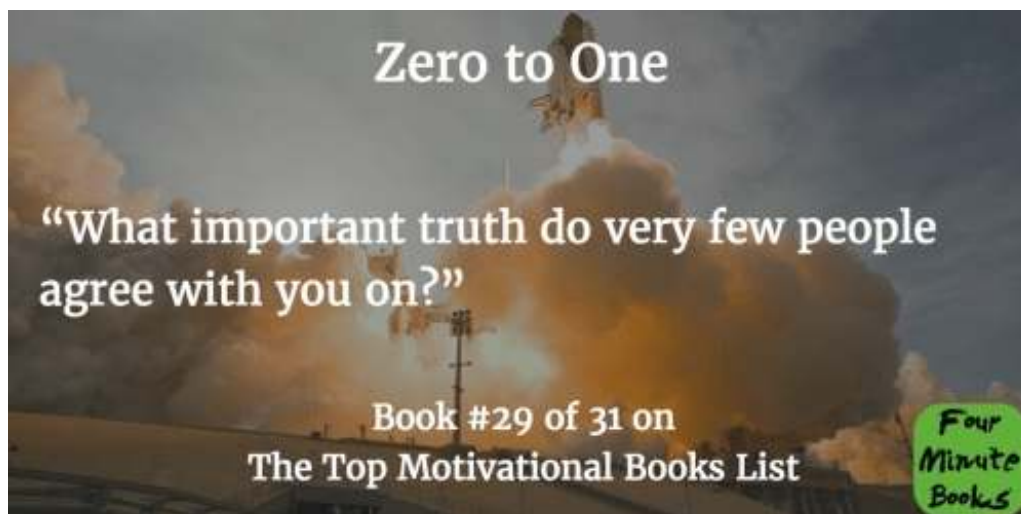


Best quote from the book:

What important truth do very few people agree with you on?

Summary: In short, this book answers the question: “If Peter Thiel were to start another startup, how would he start?” and then digs deeper from there. Peter Thiel isn't concerned with good businesses, he only cares about *great* businesses. But great businesses always start out as insane ideas – visions which no one but the founders can see.

That's why Thiel kicks off finding an idea with the question posted above (and below), before establishing that we can't rely on the past to tell us what the future should look like. Then he picks apart the economics of competition, arguing that monopoly is not only good for business, it's actually crucial for great business. He continues by discussing a variety of topics startup founders have to deal with, including mindset, money, ideas, marketing and relationships, before ending with a call to sustainability and vision.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Similar to some of the other books on this list, **this feels both limiting and liberating at the same time**. If you pay close attention while reading, you'll probably realize that you neither want, nor need to found a startup – at least that's what I hope most people learn, because they're not meant to. However, whether you join a startup, that's a whole other conversation. If you *are* cut out for the startup world, this book is even more important. But really, it's not the career advice that makes this book great.

It's that **it makes you feel hopeful**. Hopeful, that the world is in better hands than you think it is. That we can rise to the challenges ahead of us. And that many of the best things in your life haven't happened yet. That alone makes it a winner for me.

Book #30 - The Power of Less by Leo Babauta

Title: The Power of Less

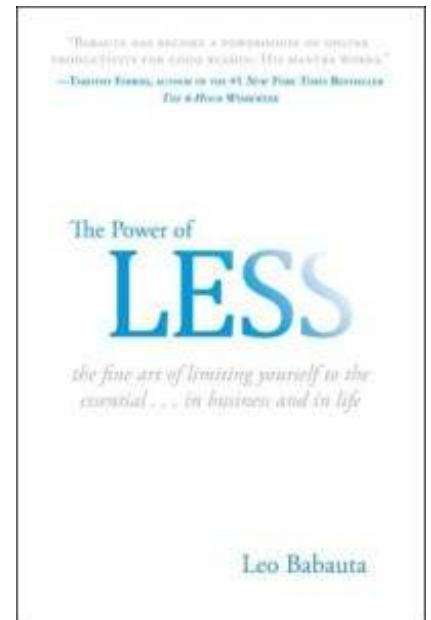
Author: Leo Babauta

Type: Non-fiction

Published in: 2008

Number of copies sold: ~10,000+ copies, an estimate based on his Amazon rank, number of reviews of the book and ratings on Goodreads.

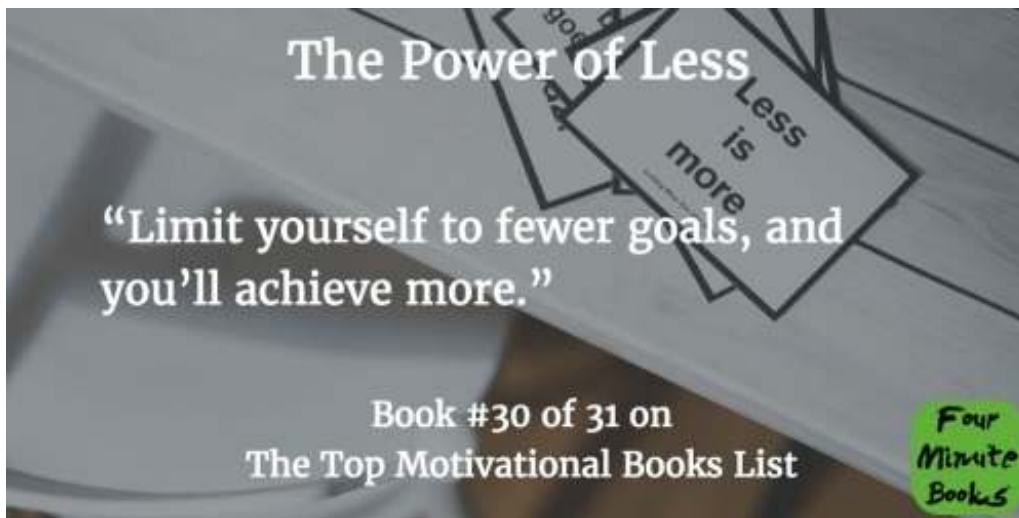
Curious fact: It's hard to justify selling a book when you're promoting a concept of "uncopyright", a culture of free and frugality on your blog about minimalism, so initially Leo struggled with releasing this through a traditional publisher, as opposed to just making it available for free on his blog, for example. He shared his thoughts and reasons for his decisions in a blog post shortly after the book came out.³⁰Source: <http://zenhabits.net/the-culture-of-free-and-the-power-of-less/>



Best quote from the book:

Limit yourself to fewer goals, and you'll achieve more.

Summary: This book is divided into two parts: the principles and what they look like in practice. In the first part, Leo walks you through why less is better in the first place and how you can internalize the principle of setting limits in everything you do. After this little mindset upgrade, he then helps you pick the essential things to focus on, and shows you how to cultivate that focus by changing your habits – with very small steps and in very small increments. Part two then details how to bring this new attitude of simplicity to a variety of things, such as goals, projects, tasks, time management, email, internet, your daily routine, your commitments, your home and even your health and fitness. The book concludes with a chapter about motivation.



Why is it such a motivational book?

Now, before you think this is another book that'll make you **feel free and lighthearted by simply cutting back** on the things you're doing (which it totally is), let me make another point: This book accounts for your sense of accomplishment. By doing 3 projects instead of 7 your chances of finishing all 3 of those successfully and in time go way up, meaning you **do more, relatively speaking**. A project 80% done doesn't make you feel proud. It makes you feel bad. But a project shipped out the door does, **giving you more confidence** to take on the next one.

That's what this book is great at. More accomplishments, which you can draw motivational fuel from for bigger challenges. Plus the liberating part of course.

Book #31 - Your Favorite

Title: ?

Author: ?

Type: ?

Published in: ?

Number of copies sold: at least 1 📖

Curious fact: This book motivates you more than any other book in the world, for one simple reason: it's *your* favorite. Nobody else might know it, it might have sold only 17 copies, or you might even have written it yourself. But none of that matters, because it's your favorite story in the world. Nobody can take that away from you, and whether you read it for the first or 50th time, every time you close it you feel inspired, confident, and ready to work on the goals that matter the most to you.

Best quote from the book:

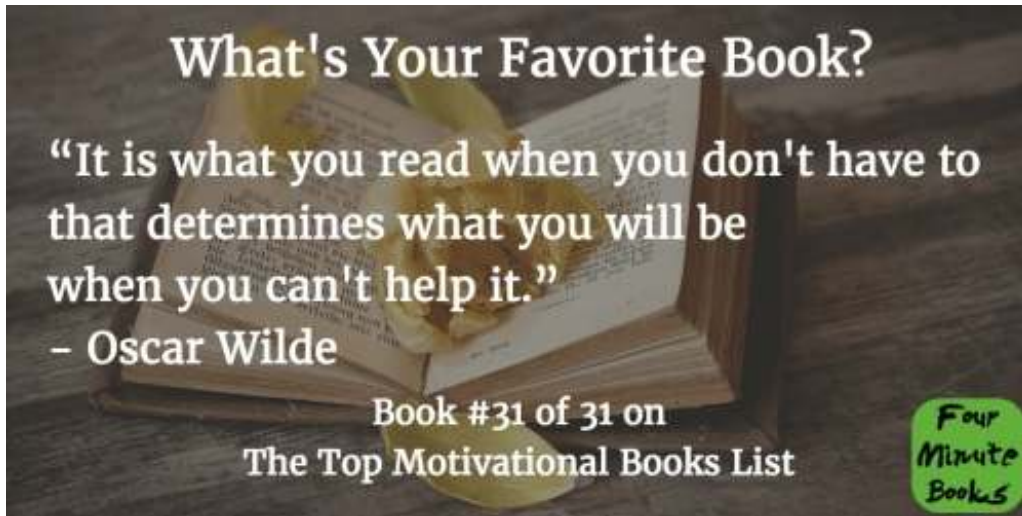
If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking. ~ Haruki Murakami

Summary: I bet your gears are already spinning. "Hm, what *is* my favorite book?" Here are some indicators to help you figure it out and "sum up" the book.



It's the book you've read at least three times. You know the blurb on the back and the flap text by heart and can somehow find a quote from it to fit any life situation. If there's a movie for this book, you've seen it not only in your own language, but also in English and potentially Korean with English subtitles, just because. You've raved about this book to at least 50 people, some of whom have already gotten annoyed at how obsessed you're with it. You've given this book as a gift at least once, or your copy is all weathered and wrinkled, because you've passed it around so much.

Most importantly, even after years and years, you never feel like a second of time is wasted when you open it again. Like Oscar Wilde said: *"If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all."*



Why is it such a motivational book?

The answer is simple: because **you picked it**. The biggest power to motivate you comes from within yourself, and by picking this book as your all time favorite you've bestowed an infinite capacity to motivate you upon it. How we respond to different stories is very subjective. Therefore, there are as many motivating books as there are people, because every book's power to motivate a person is unique to them. Your favorite book speaks more to you than anyone else because of when you read it, how many similarities you discovered between yourself and the hero of the story, what you were going through at the time, how others perceived you while you read it, and so on. Millions of little factors come together in a single experience, the sum of which makes it your favorite book of all time.

What are YOUR favorite motivational books?

Looking at [#31](#), I'd love to know what your favorite motivational book is and why. Who knows, it just might end up on a future version of this list 😊