

We've Given This Some Thought

AN ANNOTATED READING LIST FOR LEADERS WHO ARE READERS

Some books become more than references. They become companions.

Over the years, these titles have shaped my thinking and often surface in conversations about leadership, governance, human sustainability and meaningful work.

They are not assigned reading. They are books I return to often because they continue to illuminate the path.



A STANDING INVITATION

If you come across a book, film, TED Talk, podcast or other resource that has shaped your leadership, send me a note. I'd value your recommendation.



PRESENCE

What Must Become True of Me?

The General Theory of Love — Lewis
Explores attachment, emotional regulation and the social nature of the human nervous system.

Who We Choose to Be — Wheatley
A wise invitation to remain human, ethical and grounded during periods of disruption.

Midlife and the Great Unknown — Whyte
Part poetry, part philosophy and part field guide for life's transitions and reinvention.

Leadership and Self-Deception — Arbinger Institute
A memorable exploration of self-deception and the ways leaders unknowingly objectify others while believing they help.

A Failure of Nerve — Friedman
One of the most influential books on leadership under pressure, especially within anxious systems.

Exhaustion — Schaefer
An insightful examination of fatigue, productivity and the cost of modern life.

StoryJacking — deHart
A reminder that organizations live inside stories. Leaders who shape narrative often shape culture.



PRACTICE

What Habits Express My Becoming?

Leadership Is Language — Marquet
A practical guide to shifting conversations from control to commitment.

FYI: For Your Improvement — Lombardo & Eichinger
A staple in executive development. A field manual for identifying strengths and developmental edges.

Humble Inquiry — Schein
A deceptively simple book about the discipline of asking better questions and becoming genuinely curious about others.

The Professional Stranger — Agar
A classic text on observation, inquiry and entering unfamiliar systems with humility and curiosity.

Build the Bridge as You Walk On It — Quinn & Thomas
A thoughtful exploration of transformational change and the courage to move before certainty arrives.

Your Portfolio Life — Corbett
A useful framework for designing a life that reflects multiple callings, interests and contributions.

Adaptive Leadership — Heifetz
A foundational framework for leading change when the answers aren't clear and the stakes are high.



PERFORMANCE

What Informs How I Measure and Manage?

The Culturally Conscious Board — West & Jukanovich
A practical framework for helping boards cultivate belonging, inclusion and more thoughtful governance.

How to Fight a Hydra — Kaufman
A useful metaphor for adaptive challenges, competing demands and the realities of leadership in complex systems.

Bullshit Jobs — Graeber
A provocative examination of modern work and the unintended consequences of organizational complexity.

Theory U — Scharmer
One of the most ambitious frameworks for understanding systems change, emergence and leadership in uncertainty.

Turning Pro — Pressfield
A concise but powerful meditation on commitment, discipline and the transition from amateur to professional.

The Checklist Manifesto — Gawande
A masterclass in execution. Demonstrates how simple systems can dramatically improve outcomes in complex environments.



“Reading widely is one way I practice presence, deepen my understanding and remain curious about what it means to be human and to lead.”