

*Feel free to
Share this
eBook*

Over the past decade - since I started *Book Rapper* - I've often been asked by friends and colleagues to recommend good books to read.

During this time, I've read over 500 books fuelled by an annual goal to read 50 books. This year I made it to 53.

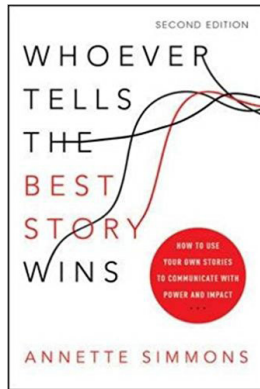
From this year's books, I've selected my top ten and my ultimate choice as the Book of the Year.

Mostly I read whatever appeals - almost all are non-fiction. This might range from business to sport, from psychology to Buddhism. This year I've read at least ten books for writers wanting to make better words.

And I think my Book of the Year this year will surprise you - it surprised me. Naturally, I picked it up because it looked interesting. The big surprise was the impact it had.

This ebook is split into three sections. The first section includes all the books that didn't make the Top Ten - in no specific order. The second section is my Top Ten Books for 2016. These countdown in order from ten to one. In the third section are some bonus resources including some books recommended by my colleagues, links to previous Books of the Year and a download link to the book I wrote this year.

For each book, I have added a short comment. In some cases I loved the book and in others it didn't meet my expectations. I repeat, it didn't meet MY expectations. That's not to say it won't meet yours...



WHOEVER TELLS THE BEST STORY WINS

ANNETTE SIMMONS

Love the title of this book! A neat and tidy read about sharing powerful stories in the world of business. Some practical tips and strategies worth applying.



ELON MUSK

ASHLEE VANCE

The reigning heavy-weight champion of the world in the arena of making stuff happen. There are two versions of this book. One is for teenagers, the other for adults. I read the short (still 200 pages) one for teenager. A fascinating read and an inside glimpse at what it takes to change the world. If you don't know who Elon Musk is, you really do need to read this book.

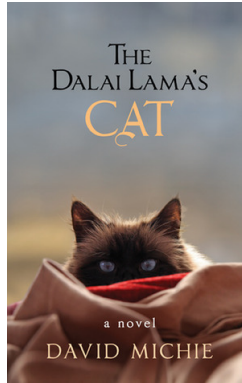


CHANGE ANYTHING

PATTERSON, GRENNY, MAXFIELD, MCMILLAN AND SWITZLER

Love this book! (I've read it previously otherwise it would have been in the Top Ten.) This book follows their earlier work *Influencer* and applies the same change model to your personal lives. An inspiration for Project Passion. (We rapped *Influencer*!)

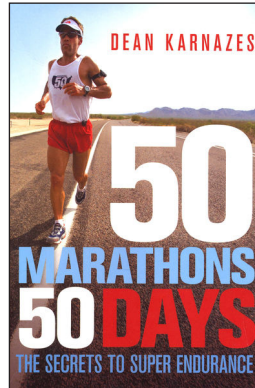
RECOMMENDED



THE DALAI LAMA'S CAT

DAVID MICHIE

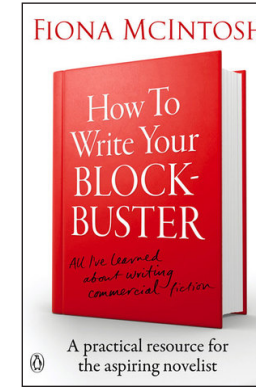
What an unusual story... Life through the eyes of a cat! Michie has written a few other Buddhist bestsellers and this time he weaves some of the key ideas of Buddhism into an enjoyable story.



50 MARATHONS, 50 DAYS

DEAN KARNAZES

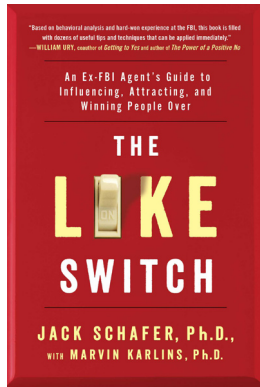
Extraordinary performance... to run 50 marathons in 50 days. I guess that's what makes him one of the world's best ultra-distance runners. Some practical tips are shared along the way, some wise words from hard-run experience and I wanted some more intriguing stories of this epic journey to make this an epic book.



HOW TO WRITE YOUR BLOCK BUSTER

FIONA MCINTOSH

Written by a highly successful author who is able to write best-selling novels in a matter weeks. While that might work for her novels, it didn't really work for me here.

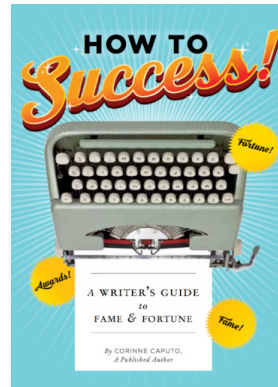


THE LIKE SWITCH

JACK SCHAFER

Love the title of this book - in particular that's it's written by a former FBI agent. That was enough for me to pick it up for a read. While it has some interesting thoughts, it failed to deliver the knockout punch that I was hoping for.

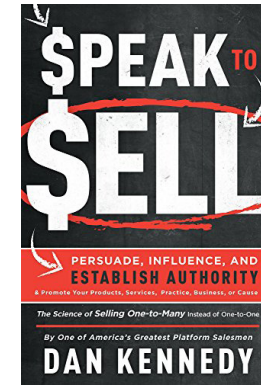
[Blog Post Review of this book](#)



HOW TO SUCCESS

CORINNE CAPUTO

A beautiful, quirky, tongue-in-cheek read about how to be a successful writer. It's light, it's fast and you'll probably giggle as you read.



SPEAK TO SELL

DAN KENNEDY

A great sales pitch! Not such a great book. Not my style of book because it's doesn't provide a lot of substance.

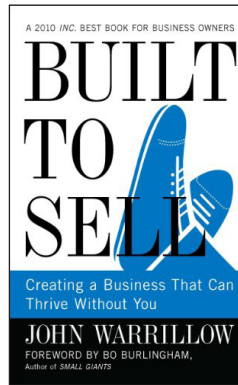


SCRUM

JEFF SUTHERLAND

Love this book! #3 on our list of best books for 2016. I've read this again because the ideas he presents are a core foundation for Project Passion. If you want to get things done, at scale, then you need to know about Scrum. This book is part manual, part philosophy telling you the backstory of why some things work and others don't. Valuable.

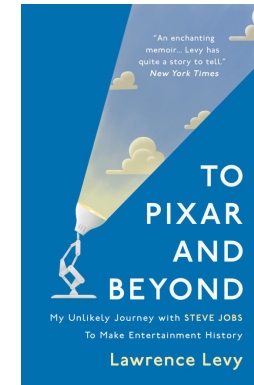
RECOMMENDED



BUILT TO SELL

JOHN WARRILLOW

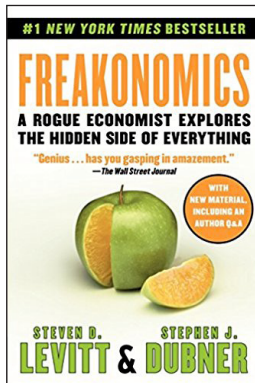
The story of an overwhelmed business owner who makes it big. The principles of the story provide a solid foundation for designing and building a business to sell.



TO PIXAR AND BEYOND

LAWRENCE LEVY

Pixar is one of the most successful companies in the world over the past 20 years - particularly in the creative space. This is the story of one of the men who was on the inside from Day One. It includes his relationship with Steve Jobs and highlights the balancing act of building a startup. Enjoyed this!



FREAKONOMICS

STEVEN LEVITT AND STEPHEN DUBNER

A best selling book on Economics? Who'd have think that? Some excellent story telling makes this an engaging read and it will force you to re-think some of those assumptions you hold dear. Enjoyable.



INNOVATING FOR PEOPLE

LUMA INSTITUTE

The real value here is the card set that the book belongs to. It's a kit of Design Thinking tools you can apply to any business. The book is a simple explanation of the cards. Buy this to re-design your organisation and be more innovative.

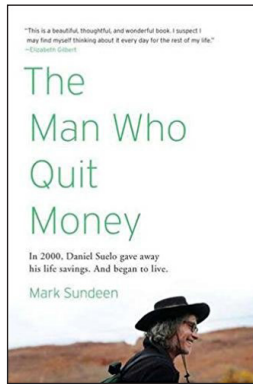


SAVE THE CAT

Blake Snyder

This is one of the most widely recommended reads for screenwriters - and story tellers. What I loved about this book was the popular movie examples to illustrate his points. If you want a super structure for a sensational story then this entertaining read could be the one for you. Written by a screenwriter with a number of movie credits to his name.

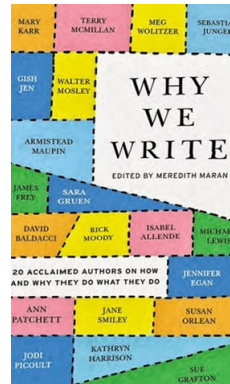
RECOMMENDED



THE MAN WHO QUIT MONEY

MARK SUNDEEN

What a great title! That was enough to hook me in. This is a meandering tale about the role of money in our society and it follows the path of Daniel Suelo - who really did quit money. Intriguing. Forced me to rethink some of what I valued and some of what I didn't.



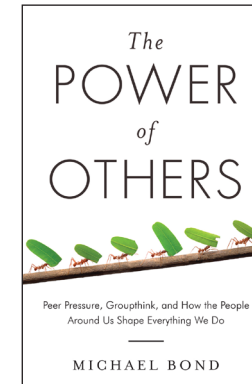
WHY WE WRITE

MEREDITH MARAN (EDITOR)

What a great way to write a great book - ask famous writers why they write and give the book proceeds to charity. The big take-home here is the number of diverse ways to be a successful writer. If you want the inside look, this book will give you a sneak peak.

[Blog Post review of this book](#)

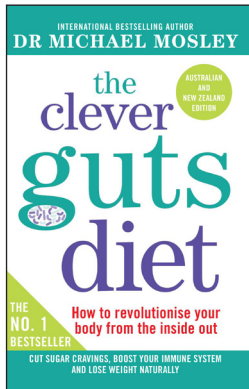
RECOMMENDED



THE POWER OF OTHERS

MICHAEL BOND

I was really looking forward to this book! The world of others is of serious importance in our always on, connected world. Unfortunately, this book didn't quite fill my grand expectations. It's a good read and a little too predictable in it's selection of examples for me. I wanted to be dazzled and I wasn't. It might work for you though.

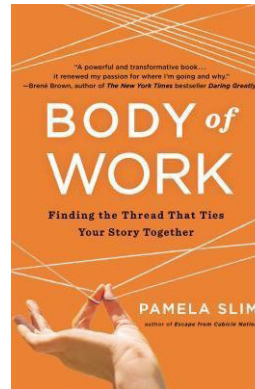


THE CLEVER GUTS DIET

DR MICHAEL MOSLEY

You might know of Mosley from his hugely successful TV shows. I've been having my own gut health issues and wanted to hear what the good doctor had to say. It was similar to other books on the same topic - plus a few gems. If you're having gut issues this is an easy, simple and reliable read.

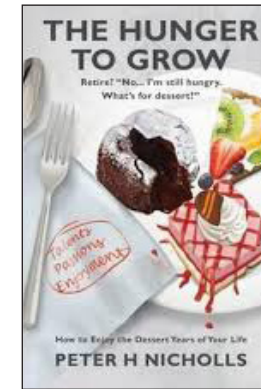
RECOMMENDED



BODY OF WORK

PAMELA SLIM

Love the idea of creating a 'body of work'. That really sums up my career. I had heard of this book on a number of podcasts that I had listened to. Unfortunately, when I came to read the book there wasn't a lot of excitement and fresh ideas for me. It might be because I've been working on my 'body of work' for so long. It might be inspiring for you though!



THE HUNGER TO GROW

PETER NICHOLLS

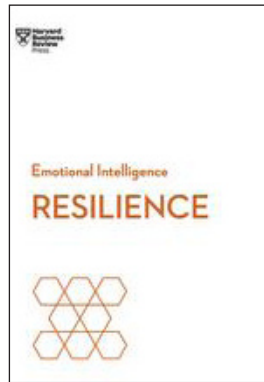
My mate Peter has written a wonderfully simple book for 50+ employees ready to move to their next stage of living and working. It didn't appeal to me for that reason - I'm pretty clear where I'm headed. If you're not and you're looking for a change this might be the fresh food for thought you need.



YOUTUBE MARKETING POWER

JASON G MILES

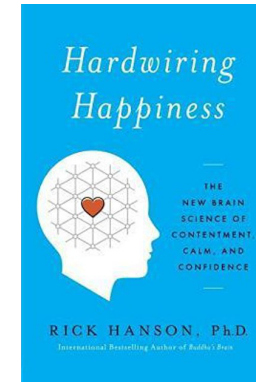
Remarkably, this book was published way back in 2013 and it still held lots of value for me as I learnt about YouTube for the first time. If you're more advanced some of it might be a little old or even outdated. It's full of strong tactics that you can employ straight away. Best of all, it's written by someone who has been there and done it.



RESILIENCE

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

This is a collection of short articles that have previously been published in HBR. There are some strong ideas here and unfortunately it's a bit of a lightweight read - a few more chapters might have helped.

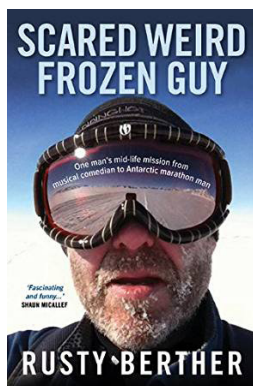


HARDWIRING HAPPINESS

RICK HANSON

This book had a big impact on me and just missed my Top Ten. The key idea is that our brains are naturally wired to be more alert to negative things. We evolved this way to keep ourselves safe. Unfortunately, this means we have to work a little harder to be happier. Dr Rick shows us the way!

RECOMMENDED



SCARED WEIRD FROZEN GUY

RUSTY BERTHER

You might know Rusty as one half of the music comedy duo Scared Weird Little Guys. This is the tale of his career from nowhere to worldwide acclaim and finally, in an unlikely happenstance, to running the Antarctic Marathon. It's funny, enjoyable and it's a gutsy tale.



MILLION DOLLAR COACH

TAKI MOORE

I found this book inspiring. It's not that I want to be a million dollar coach - my goals are more modest than that. It was more that it shone the light on some simple practices and business marketing that I had been doing poorly. While this book is not full of detail, it does outline some core strategies that you could use to bolster your coaching business. Use it to grow your business.

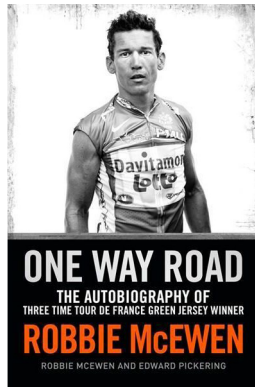
RECOMMENDED



THE TOUR

RUPERT GUINNESS

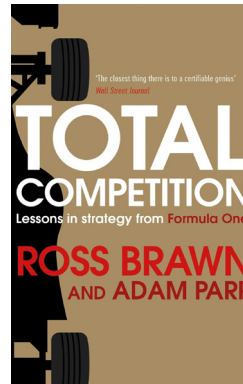
I love my cycling and perhaps the proudest 21 days for Australian cycling fans was when Cadel Evans won the Tour De France in 2011. This is the story of that tour. I lost a lot of sleep watching him race and now I've read the book. Great to hear the inside story.



ONE WAY ROAD

ROBBIE MCEWEN

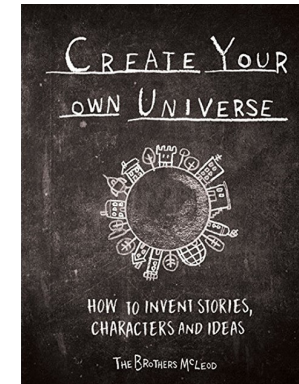
Another cycling book... Robbie McEwen is Australia's most successful sprinter having won the Green jersey in the Tour De France three times. Again, I read books like this to peak behind the curtain to see what makes people great. In true McEwen style what you see is what you get. You can experience his pain, effort and the ecstasy of being a pro cyclist. Really enjoyed this!



TOTAL COMPETITION

ROSS BRAWN AND ADAM PARR

This one was an interesting read. Ross Brawn is considered the guru of F1 motor racing with the best CV of anyone in the sport. Adam Parr has scored some wonderful success in his own right. The first half of the book is all about F1 - what an amazing sport. This is human ingenuity at it's absolute best. The second half of the book is Parr interviewing Brawn to draw out his thoughts on strategy. This didn't work for me... Some good insights and I think it could have been better.

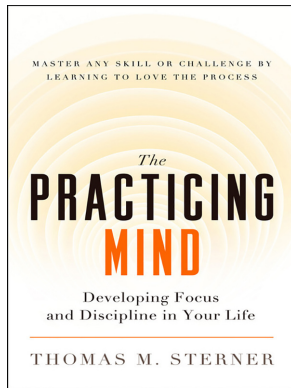


CREATE YOUR OWN UNIVERSE

THE MACLEOD BROTHERS

This was a fun read. It's probably meant for kids. Well, yes, it is meant for kids. And I loved it. It's light, amusing and fun. Best of all - and what attracted me to it - is that it provides one of the best overviews of writing tips and techniques in simple easy to apply terms that I've found. It covers creating characters, story structure and more. A great guide for writers.

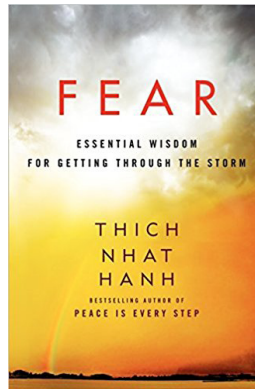
RECOMMENDED



THE PRACTICING MIND

THOMAS STERNER

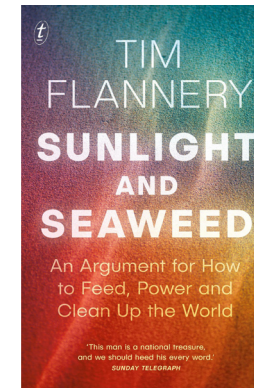
This book was a slow burn and that fits with its theme. I love the idea of a practicing mind... It's being in flow, being mindful and being focused. Sterner is a former tuner of classical pianos for some of the world's best performers so he knows what it means to train your mind to an elite task. Read it if you want to change the way you work.



FEAR

THICH NHAT HANH

This Buddhist monk author has written many fine and popular books. In every word you can hear the gentleness, the wisdom and the special way of looking at the world. An elegant and wise read.

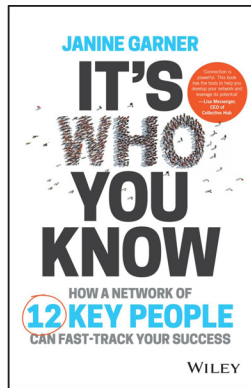


SUNLIGHT AND SEAWEED

TIM FLANNERY

I felt like I needed to read this to catch up on the latest thoughts around resolving Climate Change - the single biggest challenge of our time - and Flannery delivers. He does a brilliant job of drawing together a wide range of opportunities for ensuring we have a nice place to live in the future. Read it if you care about our planet.

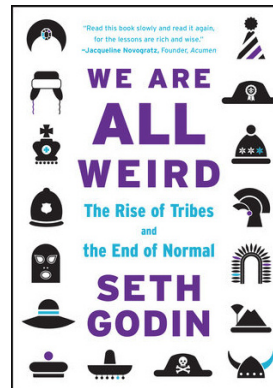
RECOMMENDED



IT'S WHO YOU KNOW

JANINE GARNER

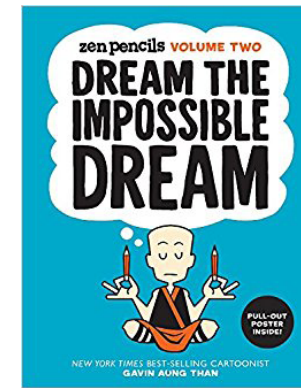
I'm not a great networker. Mostly because I don't put in the effort. I really like the approach of this book - find 12 key people. That's a simple and direct approach that can work. Sorry to say I still didn't take action on it. That might mean I'm fatally flawed or perhaps something was missing in my reading of this book.



WE ARE ALL WEIRD

SETH GODIN

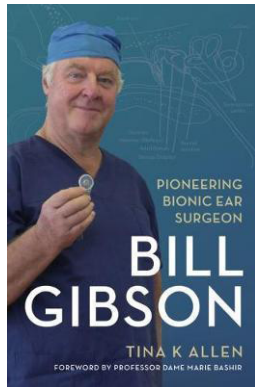
If it was simply by the number of books that I've read by one author, Seth Godin would have to be my favourite author of all time. I think I've read about ten of his books. This one is a little known one that's a few years old and that I'd hadn't seen (or missed) when it was released. As always, Seth provides clear insight into what is really going on in the world.



DREAM THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

GAVIN AUNG THAM

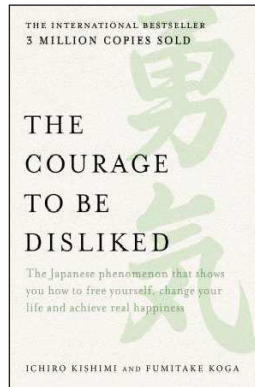
What a great idea! Gavin is a Melbourne based illustrator that has taken snippets from other books, TED talks and famous poems and turned them into a manga comic. Love the style of his illustrations - contemporary, edgy, fresh. Well suited to a younger audience.



BILL GIBSON

TINA ALLEN

This is the extraordinary story of one of the gentle men of medicine: Bill Gibson - pioneer of the bionic ear. Over the past few years I've admired my friend and colleague Tina Allen who has laboured over this book. It is filled with detail from an extraordinary amount of research. The result is a timely tale of a great career of a Brit turned Aussie.



THE COURAGE TO BE DISLIKED

ICHIRO KISHIMI AND FUMITAKE KOGA

I was really intrigued by this book. It follows the psychology of Alfred Adler who went in a different direction from Freud and Jung. The story is told as a series of conversations between a 'youth' and a 'philosopher'. At times it was a little labouring to read and... there were definitely enough strong ideas to get me thinking and questioning my life. With over three million copies sold worldwide this book is worth a look.



THE POWER OF MOMENTS

CHIP AND DAN HEATH

I love Chip and Dan Heath. I've rapped not one but **two** of their other books over at Book Rapper - *Made to Stick* and *Switch*. They write clear and compelling stories to illustrate their simple framework. In this one they turn their attention to the moments where change happens. Change can happen in an instant and the Brothers Heath show us how.

RECOMMENDED

The Top Ten



*Feel free to
Share this
Book*

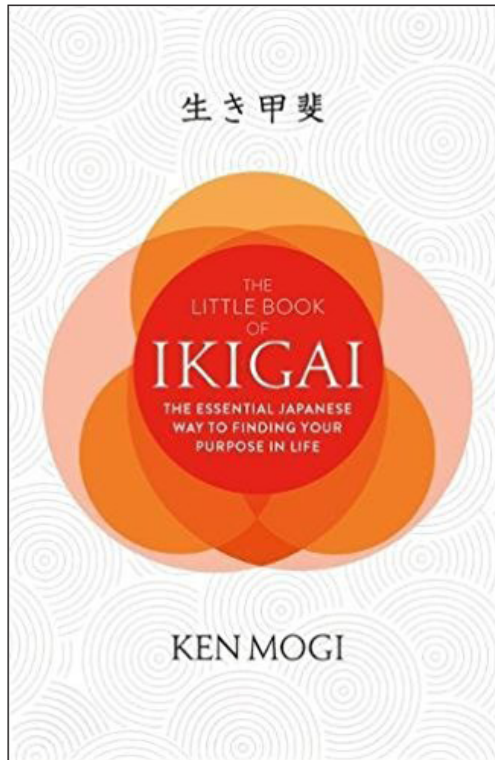
HOW I CHOSE MY TOP 10

Firstly, I read 53 books for the year which gave me a few to choose from.

Then, in selecting my Top Ten Books of 2017 I looked for three things:

1. A big idea – something new that rocked my world and changes how most of us think
2. Inspiring – it opens up an opportunity for me that I hadn't previously considered
3. Great design. Unfortunately, none of these books made this list because of their design.

10



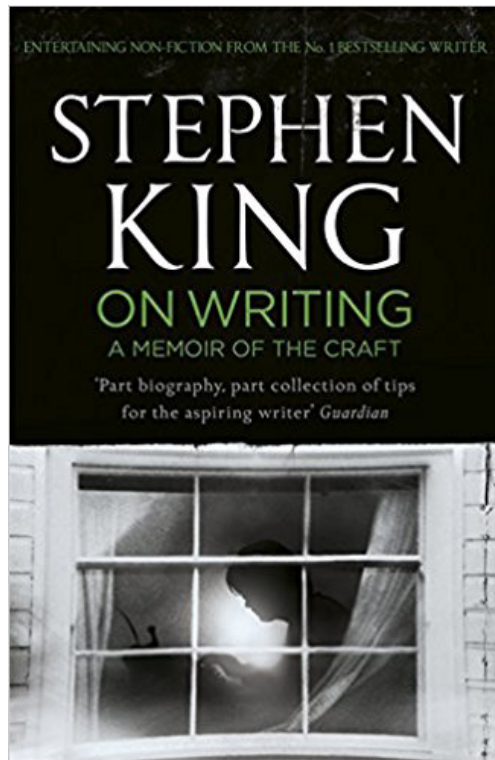
The Little Book of Ikigai

Ken Mogi

This book was a revelation. Most books on purpose only focus on the big picture - a traditional western approach. This book presents an alternative eastern world view that is based more on mindfulness, attention and the little things in life. It's filled with an array of Japanese stories that were refreshingly new and different. And best of all, it will have you think about your work as a new source of happiness, joy and purpose. Read this to explore the nuances of life.

This book was included in the RAP *Purpose*.

9



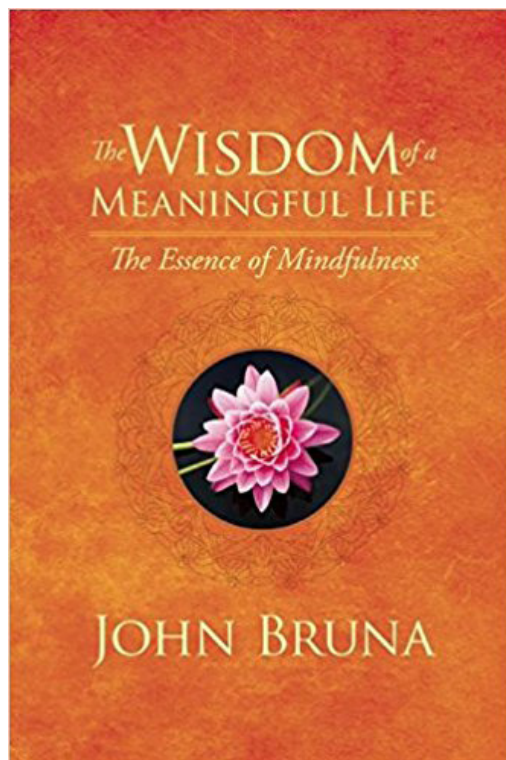
On Writing

Stephen King

Up until I had read this book by Stephen King the score was 6-0. I had seen six of his movies and read none of his books. Now, the score is 6-1. This book was the first of the 'writing' books I read this year. While it wasn't the best of them, it did spark a whole new interest in reading others. This book is a curious mix of King talking about his life story. And somewhere toward the end he shares a little about the way he gets his writing done. Perhaps the one point that I took to heart is this: To be a better writer, read better writers.

[Blog Post Review of this book](#)

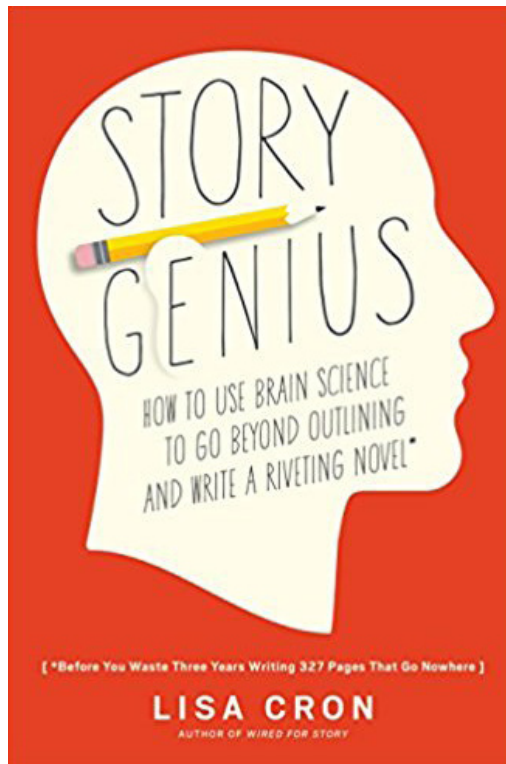
8



The Wisdom of a Meaningful Life

John Bruna

We've been using this book as our guide for the fortnightly Mindfulness group that I attend. Bruna is a former Buddhist monk who overcame some addiction issues. It's a humble AND rich book. In the manner of many Buddhist books it is simply written and relies on everyday stories overlaid with a framework of principles you can immediately apply to your life. Read it once, read it twice and you'll probably still come back for more.



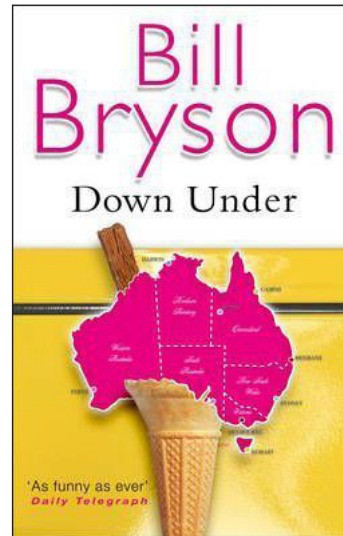
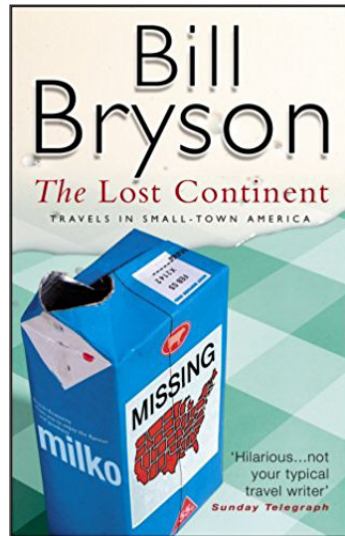
Story Genius

Lisa Cron

Almost... Almost... This book was so good it almost had me writing my first novel by the end of it. Lisa Cron is a US writing coach. I love her earlier book *Wired for Story* and this one is even better. This is a great peek inside the writing process - deliberately so! The goal is for you to write a great novel and Cron gives you the structure you need to succeed. Had I not been writing my book *Done* at the time, I could easily have written a novel and this book would have finished up as my Book of the Year. Maybe next year... Read this if you want to write a great novel, or even just want to be a better writer.

Wired for Story Review

6



The Lost Continent Down Under

Bill Bryson

You might have heard of Bill? He's one of the most popular writers on the planet and now I know why. He writes damn good books. They're funny - you probably heard me giggling at your place as I read these two.

The Lost Continent is a trip through the US and for an American to be taking the mickey out his own country that's a big thing. *Down Under* - as you might have guessed - is about his travels across Australia. The thing that really stood out for me was the wads of research he did to write these humourous tales. I thought I knew my own country and Bill found things about Australia I didn't even know. Read these if you want some insightful laughs. He has over 20 books to enjoy.

Best books for Writers and Authors

5



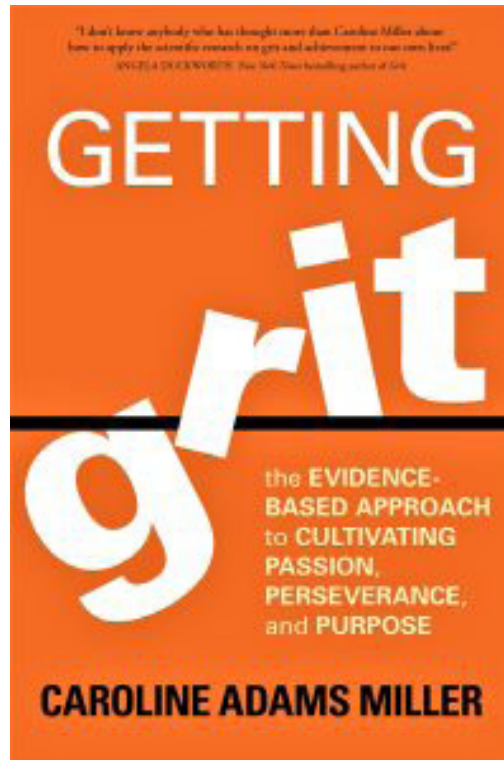
Transforming Organizations

Alexander Manu

The future is in this book! Manu is one of the leading business strategists on the planet. He maps current trends and directions because, as he suggests, the future is already here and we simply need to look for the patterns. This book presents a compelling case for all organisations wanting to lead in the digital world.

(Thanks James!)

4



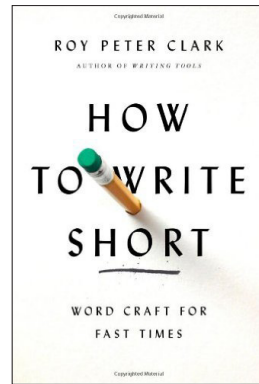
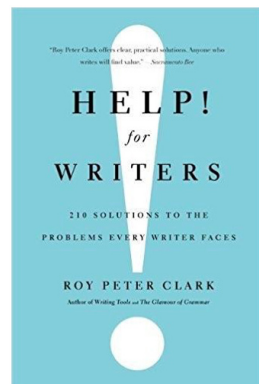
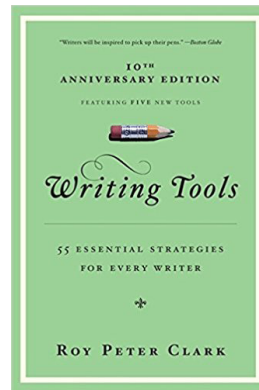
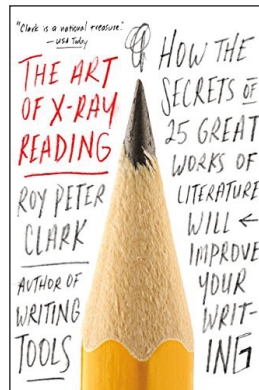
Getting Grit

Caroline Adams Miller

This book was a slap in the face to me. I had designed Project Passion in the belief that it was all about motivation. Yes, that's important to get things done and sometimes the basic time-honored tradition of rolling up your sleeves and apply some honest grunt is the only way to go. Together they're a dynamic duo. Even better, I had read a handful of other books on resilience and it was this one that punched through deep enough for me to take notice. The highlights of this gem are the deep reflective questions asked at the end of each chapter. This book might just change your life - like it has mine!

We rapped this book over at *Book Rapper* as *True Grit*.

3



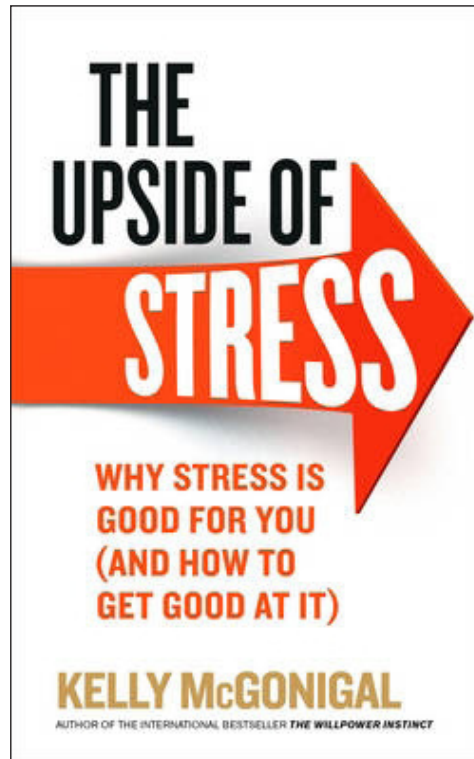
Four books by...

Roy Peter Clark

To read three books by one author... Well, I've probably only done that a handful of times. To read three books by one author in one year... Well, I don't think I've ever done that before. Plus, this author's fourth book (*How to Write Short*) was #6 on our list of best books for 2016. Roy Peter Clark is one of the top writing coaches in the US and I'm claiming him as my writing coach too. *The Art of X-Ray Reading* exposes the art of some of the great works of literature. *Writing Tools* and *Help! for Writers* are similar - both filled with tips and tricks for making more elegant words more easily. *How to Write Short...* Well, I guess the title says it all. Want to improve your word skills? Start here. Each book has a workshop full of exercises for you to complete as well. Buy any of these to be a better wordsmith.

[Blog Post Reviews of these books](#)

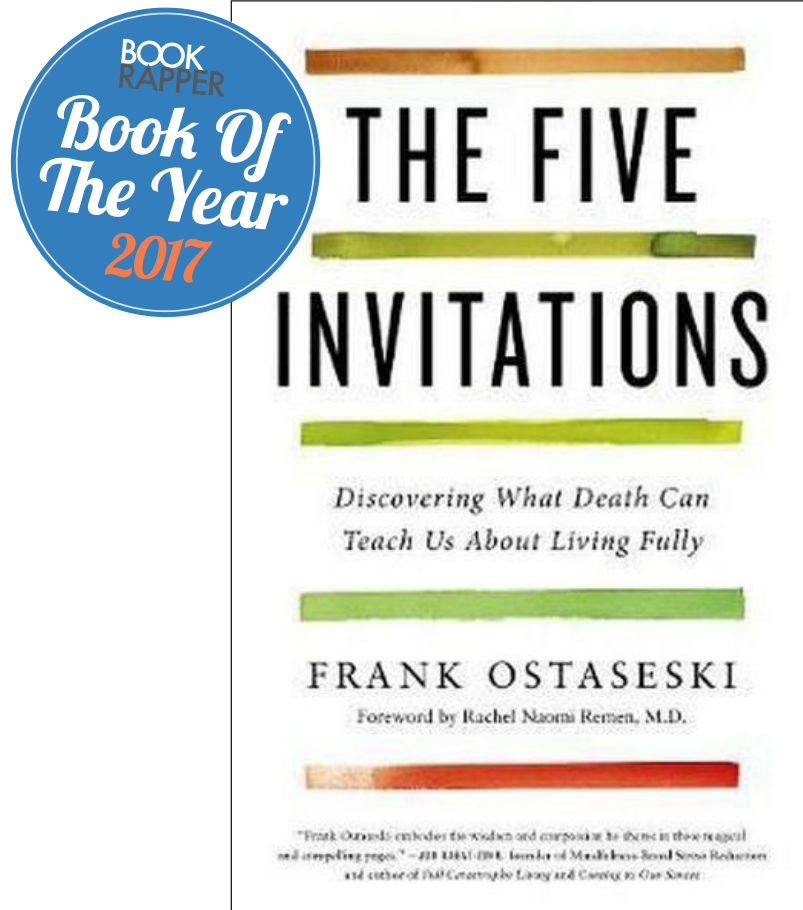
2



The Upside of Stress

Kelly McGonigal

I'd seen Kelly's TED talk a while back and it barely scratched my crusty exterior. However, when I read this book the lights finally switched on. Firstly, it updated my old thoughts about mindsets and the power of instant and lasting change from a simple shift in the head. Secondly, it has had me re-interpret what is happening everyday. That's huge! Like many people, I had bought into the popular view that stress was killing me. Now, life's an adventure filled with breakdowns. That's an incredible shift. If you're struggling with stress, read this book for a new outlook on life.



The Five Invitations

Frank Ostaseski

They say that if you want to get people talking ask for an opinion about religion or politics. And if you want to silence a room, talk about death. We all dread is our own mortality.

This book is by a co-founder of a Buddhist based hospice in San Fransisco. His day-to-day work is to help terminally ill people come face-to-face with death and dying.

I'm happy to admit that I'll cry during a good movie but almost never from reading a book... Except for this one. I cried numerous times - including in public while riding on a train! And they weren't sad tears. On the contrary. This book is beautiful. It's uplifting, inspiring and liberating. It will touch your soul and let you reconnect with humanity.

Read this book if you want to love life.

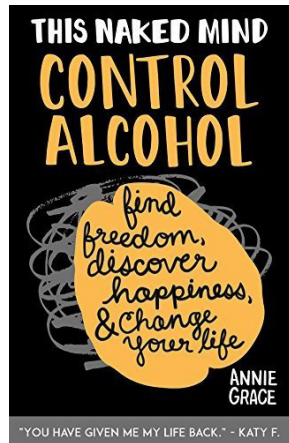


More...

Want to dig a little deeper?

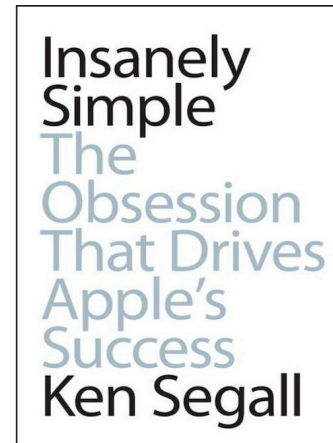
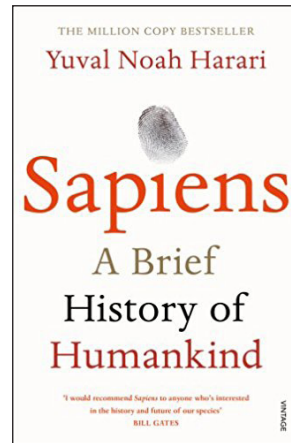
Your Best Books

I asked the people who receive my newsletter to suggest their best reads of the year. Here are the replies I received...



CLIVE PILLEY

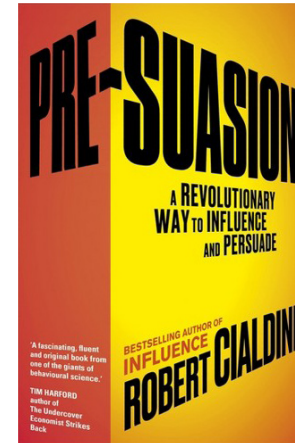
The Naked Mind: Control Alcohol, Find freedom Discover Happiness & Change your Life By Annie Grace - The scourge of addiction (anyone who drinks @ any level) is so persuasive in our society and has large negative effect on the ability of business people to perform.

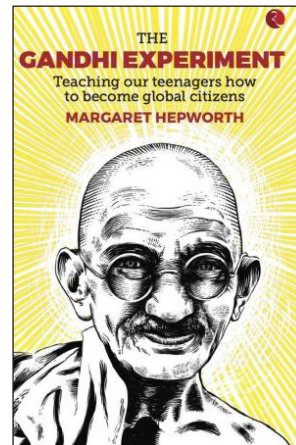
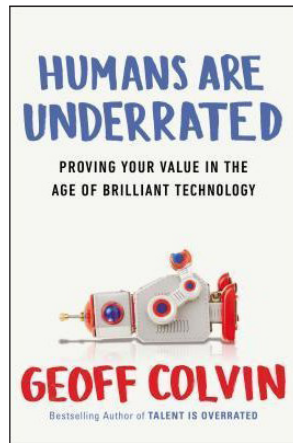
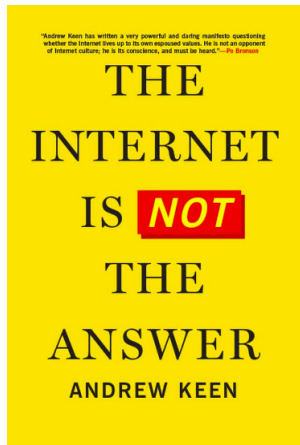


ROSS CLENNETT

Pre-suasion by Dr Robert Cialdini, a fantastic next step in the research that underpinned Dr Cialdini's classic book *Influence*, published 30 years ago.

Honourable mentions: *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari and *Insanely Simple: The Obsession that Drives Apple's Success* by Ken Segall





IAN BERRY

Humans are underrated by Geoff Colvin and *The Internet Is Not The Answer* by Andrew Keen are two I'm currently studying and would recommend them both. In my view online has becoming boring and is trouble and in person is making a big comeback and these two books are must reads.

(We've rapped two of Geoff Colvin's previous books: *Talent is Overrated* and *The Upside of the Downturn*)

MARGARET HEPWORTH

Margaret recommends her own book: *The Gandhi Experiment - Teaching our teenagers how to become global citizens*.

Previously

Here are some links to my previous Books of the Year...

BOOK OF THE YEAR 2016

Ebook : GeoffMcDonald.com/Resources/

BOOK OF THE YEAR 2014

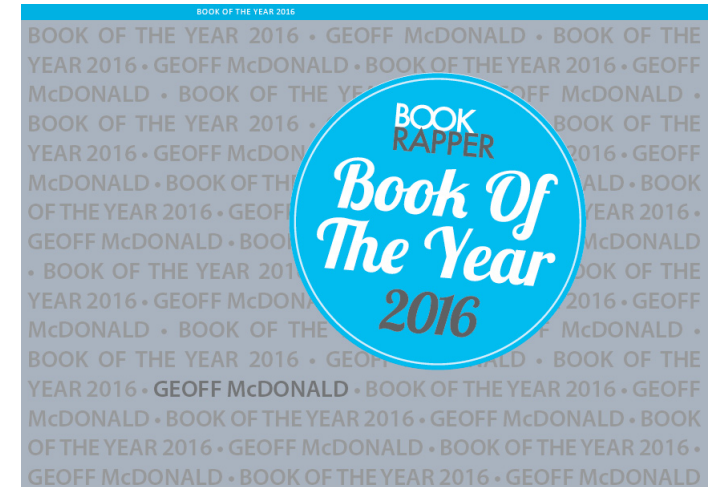
Blog post, infographic & podcast : GeoffMcDonald.com/ten-best-books-2014/

BOOK OF THE YEAR 2012

A single blog post: GeoffMcDonald.com/top-ten-books-to-read-in-2012/

BOOK OF THE YEAR 2011

A series of blog posts: GeoffMcDonald.com/ten-best-books-for-2011/





Geoff McDonald

I love to read. I guess you worked that bit out...

To have read over 500 books in the past few years tells you that I'm a compulsive reader and obsessive learner. I thrive on ideas and I get excited about what's happening in the world and what is now possible. I'm a creator, an innovator and an explorer.

My first career was as an architect. However, this was disrupted before I left university. I was in the last group of architecture students to study a five-year degree without touching a computer. Perhaps it's not a surprise that I've been studying the impact of computers and digital technology ever since. Mmm...

Also, I've presented at international design conferences, authored seven books and over 70 ebooks, exhibited my paintings and sculptures, written over 995 blog posts, published over 100 podcast episodes, I'm a sports-junkie and the creator of Book Rapper .

My current focus is Project Passion . It's all about bringing your ideas to life, fulfilling your projects and overcoming your most important business challenges. It's been inspired by many of the books I've read.

You can email me here: Geoff@GeoffMcDonald.com



DONE

Why you fail
to finish your
projects and
what to do
about it.

Geoff McDonald

Done

Geoff McDonald

This is the book I wrote this year.

Done includes some of the big ideas from Project Passion. Ultimately, it's about how to get more done in less time with less effort.

I'm proud to say it's my best book so far. It's the most readable with a lot of neat little stories. I think it shows I did learn something from all those writing books I read this year! You be the judge...

[Download the Full Book here](#)

[Download the Book Rapper version here](#)

BOOK RAPPER

HOW TO READ 50 BOOKS

You might be thinking... 50 books in a year! How do you do that? That's five or six hours of reading a week!

Too much? Well, here's a short cut to help you keep your career up to date...

At Book Rapper, we read the books for you. We take the best business books from the best brains on the planet and rewrite them in a visual way so you can grab the most important ideas from each one in 30 minutes. Even better, we've added some simple actions so you can profit from these ideas. Reading is good, action is better.

And, we'll only rap the great books. Don't waste your time on the ones that don't make the cut.

We have books on Leadership, Marketing, Innovation, Entrepreneurship, Change, Design Thinking, Crowdsourcing, Social Media, Strategy, Creativity, Story Telling, Branding and more... And, they're books by Seth Godin, Daniel Pink, Roger Martin, Malcolm Gladwell, Chip and Dan Heath, Warren Bennis, Chris Anderson and more...

Book Rapper is a super-powerful professional development program for anyone wanting to keep up to date with the latest business thinking in less time. It'll help you make informed decisions, create smart strategies and take advantage of the big opportunities that are right in front of you.

Find out more at: BookRapper.com

SOME OF THE BOOKS WE'VE RAPPED...



Don't pay \$1000 to buy all of these books separately just to gather dust on your shelves. Instead, buy all the RAPs of these 60+ books that you can read in only 30 minutes - all for only \$19.70 a month. Be up to date in 2018. Find out more at: BOOKRAPPER.COM/ALL