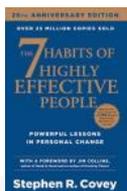


WINTER

# The reading list

Alex Edmans, Professor of Finance at London Business School, selects his favourite personal leadership classics

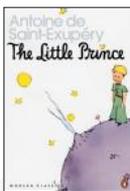


1

## THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE

Stephen R Covey  
(Simon & Schuster)

“Mr Covey has a knack of dressing up spiritual principles in pinstripes,” observed one commentator. This 1990 bestseller reinvigorated the personal development market almost singlehandedly. It is my favourite book on personal leadership. It covers several major topics, not limited to but including: being the master of your own destiny, setting goals and priorities, managing your time, showing empathy towards others, thinking ‘win-win’ in relationships.

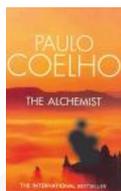


2

## THE LITTLE PRINCE

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

This is one of my two joint-favourite fiction books. It’s about the importance of savouring the breadth, length, height and depth of life, rather than focusing on goals; about having child-like wonder throughout life. Ostensibly a children’s book, *The Little Prince* is much, much more. Written by the short-lived aviator/philosopher, it has sold more than 140 million copies, was chosen as the best book of the last century in French and has been published in 250 languages and dialects since first being published in 1943.

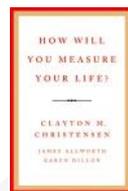


3

## THE ALCHEMIST

Paolo Coelho  
(HarperCollins)

The story of the journey of a shepherd from Andalusia to Egypt has sold more than 30 million copies since it first appeared in 1988. This is one of my other joint-favourite fiction books. It’s about personal drive, taking risks, and following your dream. If you like this book, I highly recommend *By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept* and *The Fifth Mountain* by the same author, which build on similar themes – and are also great works of fiction in their own right, quite apart from the leadership content.

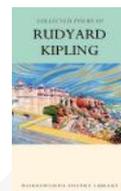


4

## HOW WILL YOU MEASURE YOUR LIFE?

James Allworth, Clayton Christensen and Karen Dillon  
(HarperCollins)

An excellent book on how to find meaning and fulfillment in your career and personal relationships, and to be true to your values. In a surprising change of career tack, Harvard Business School’s Clayton Christensen moves from contemplating innovation and industry change to seeking to understand how you truly gauge success. More information at [measureyourlife.com](http://measureyourlife.com).

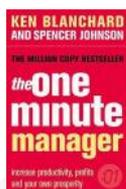


5

## IF

Rudyard Kipling

“If you can keep your head when all about you/Are losing theirs and blaming it on you” is the – perhaps too – familiar opening of *If*. Written in 1895, Kipling’s poem has become a much-quoted classic. It’s my favourite poem on balancing drive with humility.



6

**THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER**  
Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson  
(HarperCollins)

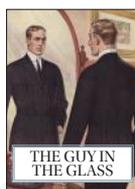
A book about how small time investments (that can take as little as one minute) can improve your effectiveness as a people manager. It encompasses one-minute goal setting, one-minute praisings, and one-minute reprimands. So far, this pithy collection of wisdom has sold more than 13 million copies.



7

**BOUNCE**  
Matthew Syed  
(Fourth Estate)

Written by a highly successful table-tennis international who has turned himself into one of the UK's top sports journalists, *Bounce* gives mere mortals hope. It debunks the talent myth: that highly skilled people are made (through effort and dedication), not born. It is empowering, as it shows we are not a slave to genetics.



8

**THE GUY IN THE GLASS**  
Dale Wimbrow

This is a short poem on staying true to what is important to you, rather than being swayed by external criticism or praise. Written in 1934, the poem is frequently mistitled as 'The man in the glass' and passed off as being written by other authors. This rather misses the poem's point of being honest with yourself.



9

**FIRST THINGS FIRST**  
Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill and Rebecca R. Merrill  
(Simon & Schuster)

Published in 1994, this was part of the flood of books spawned by the initial bestseller. It was a follow-up to one of the seven habits: putting first things first (time management). In response to *Seven Habits*, many readers wrote to Covey saying that this was the habit they found most difficult, and so he wrote a book devoted to this habit.



10

**HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE**  
Dale Carnegie  
(Vermillion)

Originally published in 1937, this was the original self-improvement book. Carnegie described it as a "practical, working handbook on human relations". The title is self-explanatory. None of his advice is earth-shatteringly surprising (a common feature of all books on personal leadership) but there is great benefit in reading his advice as it is explained in a clear and convincing manner.