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## Nine great books I would recommend to anybody

My two measurements for a great book are: was it entertaining to read and after I read it did I feel smarter or at least more thoughtful than before? With these criteria in mind, here are nine great books I've read recently. Please let me know of any books you've enjoyed and any feedback on this or any future lists.



### ***The Accidental Connoisseur: An Irreverent Journey Through the Wine World***

Why I included this book: I've lost track of how much wine I've purchased over the years yet I find it almost impossible to translate the description on wine labels into something I can understand. What exactly does "hints of underbrush" taste like? Although I never did find the answer to that question I did enjoy reading this book that felt more like a travel story than a textbook.

### ***Autopilot: The Art and Science of Doing Nothing***

Why I included this book: Doing nothing is hard for me. I put this book down several times before finally finishing it not because it wasn't good, but rather because it was so good at showing what I was doing wrong and I didn't want to change. I know am a much better husband and father when I am rested than when I am tired and stressed yet I found it hard to put down the endless to-do list of dishes, laundry, etc. I know I do better work and think more clearly after leaving the office for lunch yet I would still find myself regularly eating at my desk because so much work had to be done. I am a work in progress concerning doing nothing.

### ***Risk Savvy: How to Make Good Decisions***

Why I included this book: Risk is a daily part of lives. Most of the time our mind analyzes the risks and maps our reaction quickly and without much effort. Example: I'm driving home and its starting to rain very hard so I'm going to slow down. Sometimes, however, the risks and related decisions are unique. Example: A new version of the medicine I'm taking became available. The doctor says it costs half as much but the side effects are three times as common. This book provides tools to help you break down complex decisions like this into easier to answer parts. It also showcases how companies can use statistics to play to your emotions. Example: "Side effects are three times as common." Did the side effects triple from 10% to 30% of the patients or from 0.01% to 0.03%? Both of these sets of numbers are statistically accurate yet one presents a much greater level of risk than the other.

### ***Unretirement: How Boomers are Changing the Way We Think About Work, Community and the Good Life***

Why I included this book: My wife and I were hiking along a trail in Kauai one time when we crossed paths with another couple who happened to be walking in the same direction we were. They appeared fit, happy and enjoying time off from work and if it wasn't for their full head of gray hair (and the fact that we asked) we never would have known they were in their late 60's. Besides having to struggle to keep up with them, what made this encounter so memorable and why I wanted to read this book is how different this couple's life was (as well as today's baby boomers in general) to stereotypes of retirees from not that long ago.

### ***The Optimism Bias***

Why I included this book: The author argues that we're optimistically biased, because this "helps protect us from accurately perceiving the pain and difficulties the future undoubtedly holds." Additionally, "it may defend us from viewing our options in life as somewhat limited." This, in turn, reduces stress and anxiety, improves mental and physical health, and nudges us to try new things.

### ***Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means So Much***

Why I included this book: If I had to narrow this list down to one book, this would be it. I have lived with scarcity in one form or another almost my entire life. Scarcity of a girlfriend in high school. Scarcity of money after college. Scarcity of hope when my son was diagnosed with autism. Scarcity of time with too many projects due at once. From experience I can tell you scarcity is a suffocating, blinding feeling that takes away your vision to clearly see a way out. This book provides lots of stories of people facing scarcity and how some were able to navigate out of the storm.

### ***The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger***

Why I included this book: Except for explosions it had everything I enjoy in a book; it was informative, the topic was easy to relate to and it flowed well. I highly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys learning how one innovation can change the world.

### ***Decoded: The Science Behind Why We Buy***

Why I included this book: This book was designed to showcase to marketing executives the latest findings from behavioral economics, psychology and neuro-economics on why we buy what we buy and how these executives could use this information to efficiently sell us more stuff. I enjoyed reading this book because I felt as if I had stumbled upon a magician's secret notebook and now I not only knew how the trick worked but also why it worked.

### ***David and Goliath***

Why I included this book: The author uses the term "desirable difficulties" to describe the seemingly unsurmountable obstacles leaders eventually do overcome. Logically, I completely understand and can relate to this yet emotionally as a parent my instinct is to help make my children's path in life as smooth as possible.