

# 16 Books That Will Make You a Better Entrepreneur for 2016

Want to become a better entrepreneur leader next year? Time to start reading.



BY JOHN RAMPTON



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Finding the time to sit back and enjoy a book is almost impossible for entrepreneurs. But it's critical that you find the time to read. After all, [reading can boost our brainpower, help us relax, and make us more empathetic](#). I personally find that when I read I am much more aware of good ideas, am able to set more goals, and become a better leader to those around me.

With the new year rapidly approaching, one of your goals should be to take the time to read in 2016. And, here 16 books to help you get started on achieving that goal. As a bonus, you now have an answer when someone asks you what you would like for the holidays!

1. *The Startup Playbook: Secrets of the Fastest-Growing Startups From Their Founding Entrepreneurs*, by [David Kidder](#)

Have you ever wondered how companies like LinkedIn, PayPal, and AOL got off the ground and became household names? David Kidder, a *New York Times* best-selling author and serial entrepreneur, sat down with 40 founders to get an inside look at how their businesses were able to succeed, as well as for advice on topics like leadership, how to inspire others, and persistence.

2. *One Simple Idea, Revised and Expanded Edition: Turn Your Dreams Into a Licensing Goldmine While Letting Others Do the Work*, [by Stephen Key](#)

Throughout his career as an inventor, Stephen Key has licensed more than 20 simple ideas that have generated billions of dollars. Key has taken his experience and converted into this priceless book. Key takes readers through each step of launching a business, from an idea to cashing in on the idea, and presents it as a practical, real-world guide.

3. *As a Man Thinketh*, [by James Allen](#)

First published in 1902, this timeless masterpiece by British philosophical writer James Allen has inspired millions of people with pieces of wisdom like: "All that a man achieves and all that he fails to achieve is the direct result of his own thoughts." Even if you're already read this book, it definitely deserves another reading.

4. *Delivering Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion, and Purpose*, [by Tony Hsieh](#)

How has Zappos been able to make more than \$1 billion in gross merchandise sales year after year? For starters, it is the shining example of how to do outstanding customer service. Zappos also prides itself on focusing on a company culture that embraces happiness. Thanks to CEO Tony Hsieh, Zappos has become one of the most beloved companies around, both for customers and employees. In his first book, Hsieh explains how he built a culture of passion and happiness through his life experiences.

5. *Creativity, Inc.: Overcoming the Unseen Forces That Stand in the Way of True Inspiration*, [by Ed Catmull](#)

As the co-founder and CEO of Pixar, Ed Catmull certainly knows a thing or two about innovation and creativity. Catmull shares how leaders can create, drive, and maintain a culture of innovation. This book is so valuable that *Forbes* has stated that it "just might be the best business book ever written."

6. *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants*, [by Malcolm Gladwell](#)

Malcolm Gladwell, the author behind excellent books like *The Tipping Point* and *Outliers*, strikes again with another intriguing and fascinating book. This time around Gladwell argues that those with disadvantages are actually stronger and more prone to success than those who don't have to face an uphill battle. Gladwell uses examples like Richard Branson and Charles Schwab battling dyslexia to back up his claim.

7. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, [by Stephen R. Covey](#)

First published in 1989, this now-classic book examines how to succeed not only in business, but also as a leader and as a human being. Covey outlines a

step-by-step guide in which you can learn how to become a better person both professionally and personally by solving problems.

8. [\*Meditations\*, by Marcus Aurelius](#)

If you're looking to add balance to your hectic life as an entrepreneur, then this book, which is a collection of inspirational phrases from Stoic philosopher and Roman emperor Aurelius, is essential. One of my favorite pieces of advice is "You have power over your mind--not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength."

9. [\*The Dip: A Little Book That Teaches You When to Quit \(and When to Stick\)\*, by Seth Godin](#)

This is another winning text from Seth Godin, author of *Purple Cow* and *Tribes*, that is easy to consume, but packed with valuable insights, like the fact that winners know when to quit by cutting their losses, regrouping, and changing direction. It's a good companion book for entrepreneurs asking whether it's worth the fight or not.

10. [\*Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption\*, by Laura Hillenbrand](#)

While this isn't a business book, the inspiring true story of Louie Zamperini can help us all understand the importance of personal sacrifice and perseverance. If Zamperini could overcome the insurmountable challenges he faced during World War II, then you can overcome the barriers holding you back.

11. [\*Abundance: The Future Is Better Than You Think\*, by Peter Diamandis and Steven Kotler](#)

These two best-selling authors teamed up for a feel-good and visionary book that explores why the future is going to great thanks to technology. Diamandis and Kotler maintain that technology is going to solve some of the most pressing global concerns, such as food, overpopulation, and health care. This will present an opportunity for innovative leaders to start a profitable company that can also change the world.

12. [\*Elon Musk: Tesla, SpaceX, and the Quest for a Fantastic Future\*, by Ashlee Vance](#)

Journalist Ashlee Vance spent years with Elon Musk and interviewed more than 300 individuals to completely grasp the drive and vision of one of the most important entrepreneurs in recent history. The biography, which examines Musk's journey from South Africa to launching companies like PayPal and Tesla, also gives us a closer look at the hardships of entrepreneurship, such as Musk's meltdown in 2008.

13. [\*The 7 Day Startup: You Don't Learn Until You Launch\*, by Dan Norris](#)

If you're a first-time entrepreneur, then this book is a must-read, since it can be used as a guide if you're bootstrapping your startup. Written by Dan Norris,

an entrepreneur who experienced failure for seven long years until he created WP Curve, this book can help you start bringing in cash in literally a week.

14. *Mindsharing: The Art of Crowdsourcing Everything*, by [Lior Zoref](#)

After a decade at Microsoft as the VP of marketing for consumer and online services, Lior Zoref is now a crowd wisdom researcher. This book, his first, can assist us with learning how to use the power of crowds, such as connections on social media, to make smarter and more objective decisions.

15. *The 4-Hour Workweek: Escape 9-5, Live Anywhere, and Join the New Rich*, by [Timothy Ferriss](#)

It doesn't seem possible, but serial entrepreneur and best-selling author Timothy Ferriss may have discovered a shortcut to entrepreneurship. Pick your niche; use your experience to your advantage; test to find out what your audience needs help with; and then release a product that solves that pain point. After that, you can enjoy your life by working less.

16. *The Virgin Way: If It's Not Fun, It's Not Worth Doing*, by [Richard Branson](#)

Like so many other entrepreneurs, I'm fascinated with Richard Branson. It's hard not to be drawn to his charisma, wisdom, and excitement. In his recent book, Branson describes why leaders should listen, be passionate, and have fun the "Virgin Way."

*Special note:* If you're like me and have a hard time finding time and focusing to read, download the audiobook and listen to it. I personally do this and listen while I go for walks and drive in my car. It helps me to learn while on the go.

*What other books would you add to the reading list for 2016?*