

# Top 10 Best-Loved Business Books of 2013

Here's our favorite books we read in 2013. This list isn't based on book sales, critic reviews or Amazon ratings. These all made the list because they added value to the work we do at 4MAT®, engaging and equipping people to create results.

## The criteria for inclusion include:

1. Percentage of the book's pages which have scribbled comments and/or enthusiastic diagrams on them.
2. Number of times the book was recommended to random strangers in airports.
3. And the big one: usefulness.

## Here they are:



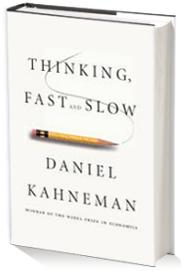
“Success is built sequentially. It's one thing at a time.”<sup>1</sup>  
—Jay Papasan

### ***The One Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results* by Gary Keller with Jay Papasan**

*The One Thing* provides a simple method for focusing on what is important to create the results you desire. The method shared applies to planning your to do list, your year and your life. This is one of those rare books that combines brilliant insights with simple action steps.

#### **One idea you can apply:**

- Ask the Keller and Papasan's focusing question in relation to a result you want to create, “What's the ONE Thing you can do such that by doing it everything else would be easier or unnecessary?”



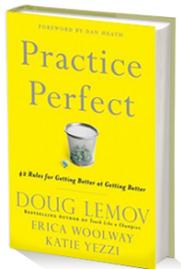
“A general ‘law of least effort’ applies to cognitive as well as physical exertion. The law asserts that if there are several ways of achieving the same goal, people will eventually gravitate to the least demanding course of action. In the economy of action, effort is a cost, and the acquisition of skill is driven by the balance of benefits and costs. Laziness is built deep into our nature.”<sup>2</sup> —Daniel Kahneman

**Thinking, Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman**

In *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman shares that there are really two systems of thinking: System One that is thorough, intentional, and largely accurate (this is the left brain, although, Kahneman is careful not to refer to a specific region of the brain), and one that is quick, efficient, and a bit on the lazy side (the right brain). Understanding how each system operates and when each steps up to the plate has the potential to transform the way we approach creating results as a leader, trainer or coach. This book validates the power of including right- and left-brain strategies in our coaching and training.

**One thing you can apply:**

- If your success depends on others taking a specific action consistently, constantly ask, “How can I lessen the effort required for them to do this?”



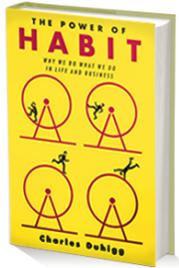
“The strategic decision about what skill to refine is the essence of teaching.”<sup>3</sup>  
—Doug Lemov

**Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better by Doug Lemov, Erica Woolway, and Katie Yezzi**

The authors show how deliberately designed practice can exponentially increase our mastery of a skill. The examples can be applied to building your own skill, coaching a colleague or client and, especially, to the design of powerful practice activities in training design.

**One idea you can apply:**

- Get clear on the 20% of behaviors that will deliver 80% of the desired performance results. Practice these highest-priority things (in your life, with your team and in the training you deliver) more than all the other priorities combined.



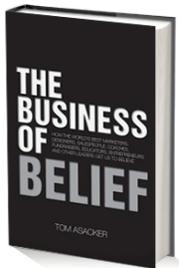
“Some habits ... matter more than others in remaking businesses and lives ... Keystone habits start a process that, over time, transforms everything. The habits that matter the most are the ones that, when they start to shift, dislodge and remake other patterns.”<sup>4</sup> —Charles Duhigg

***The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business* by Charles Duhigg**

Based on the most current neuroscience findings, Charles Duhigg explains how we can create the results we desire when we exchange old unproductive habits for new powerful ones that deliver the results we desire.

**One idea you can apply:**

- Focus on identifying the one habit you might shift that has the potential to create a domino effect. For example, if your goal is to eat healthier, a keystone habit might be creating a menu of meals for the week *before* you grocery shop.



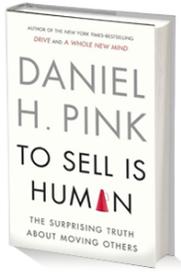
“Desire is what moves you from thinking to doing ... And that’s why all the information in the world will not get people to quit smoking, start exercising, or end an unhealthy relationship. If our hearts are not into it, if we don’t truly desire the change, our heads won’t be either. We are not computers. We don’t optimize our decisions. We decide, and believe, in order to feel good. And to avoid feeling bad.”<sup>5</sup> —Tom Asacker

***The Business of Belief: How the World’s Best Marketers, Designers, Salespeople, Coaches, Fundraisers, Educators, Entrepreneurs and Other Leaders Get Us to Believe* by Tom Asacker**

Asacker shares how the mind works and reveals what to focus on to motivate behavior, both in ourselves and in others.

**One idea you can apply:**

- When trying to move others into action, ask, “What do they desire?” When someone desires something, they will pay attention to the evidence (the information, the solution, the product) that supports achieving that desire.



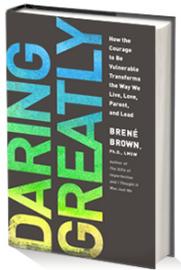
“Identifying a problem as a way to move others takes two long standing skills and turns them upside down. First, in the past, the best salespeople were adept at *accessing* information. Today, they must be skilled at *curating* it ... Second, in the past, the best salespeople were skilled at *answering* questions (in part because they had information their prospects lacked). Today, they must be good at *asking* questions ...”<sup>6</sup> —Daniel Pink

**To Sell is Human, The Surprising Truth About Moving Others by Daniel Pink**

We are all in the business of selling. If that doesn't feel right, you can swap out the word “selling” for “engaging.” It doesn't matter if your big sales opportunity is selling seats in your next training course or selling your child on doing his homework, this book gets to the truth about how we move others.

**One idea you can apply:**

- 🟡 Ask the 5 “Whys.” To sell, you need to solve a problem. When you want to figure out what kind of problem someone has, ask a “Why?” question. Then, in response to the answer, ask again. Repeat 5 times and you will get much closer to the real problem that person needs solved.

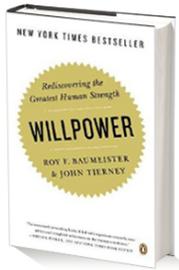


“Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness.”<sup>7</sup> —Brene Brown

**Daring Greatly, How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead by Brene Brown**

**One idea you can apply:**

- 🟡 To create belonging and to belong, we must lead, coach and inspire as our most authentic selves “because true belonging only happens when we present our authentic, imperfect selves to the world, our sense of belonging can never be greater than our level of self-acceptance.”



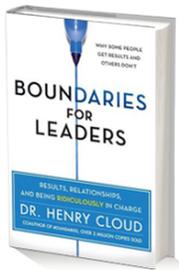
“Because you have only have one supply of willpower, If you set more than one self-improvement goal, you may succeed for a while by drawing on reserves to power through, but that just leaves you more depleted and more prone to serious mistakes later.”<sup>8</sup> —Roy F. Baumeister & John Tierney

***Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength by Roy F. Baumeister & John Tierney***

Each decision we make depletes our willpower “reserve.” Think of your willpower like a battery. It is recharged at the beginning of the day and steadily depleted as we deal with all the things that require willpower such as making choices, controlling emotions, and controlling our actions.

**One idea you can apply:**

- Baumeister’s studies show that people with the best self-control are the ones who structure their lives to conserve willpower. To ensure your willpower reserves are available to support new behavioral choices that produce new results, you can limit what you are trying to achieve to the most important, essential action. Choose rituals that make this action a daily habit rather than a choice.



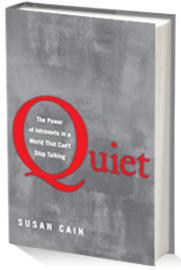
“When leaders lead in ways that people’s brain can follow, good results follow as well.”<sup>9</sup> —Dr. Henry Cloud

***Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships and Being Ridiculously in Charge by Dr. Henry Cloud***

Explaining that a boundary is setting up what will exist and what will not, Cloud leads us through how to create cultures and teams that create results. Using brain-compatible strategies, Cloud shows leaders how to “attend” to the thought patterns required to produce optimal results.

**One idea you can apply:**

- Pay attention to three critical things the brain needs to stay on track to create results: attention (what is important is always being attended to), inhibition (what is not important is not allowed in) and working memory (there is ongoing awareness of all the relevant pieces required to fulfill the task).



“Introverts need to trust their gut and share their ideas powerfully as they can. This does not mean aping extroverts; ideas can be shared quietly, they can be communicated in writing, they can be packaged into highly produced lectures, they can be advanced by allies. The trick for introverts is to honor their own styles instead of allowing themselves to be swept up by prevailing norms.”<sup>10</sup>  
—Susan Cain

### **Quiet The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain**

Cain helps us understand introversion and extroversion as preferences for certain levels of stimulation. With an understanding of this, you can consciously create environments that stimulate you appropriately. Understanding these very different preferences can also help you better create learning and work environments that allow each individual to find their “sweet spot.”

#### **One idea you can apply:**

- Create learning and work environments that balance large group dialogue, collaborative projects and high stimulation with small group conversation, independent projects and reflection.

## **Bibliography**

- <sup>1</sup> Keller, Gary, and Jay Papasan. *The One Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results*. Texas: Bard Press, 2012. Page 16.
- <sup>2</sup> Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Straus and Giroux, 2011. Page 35.
- <sup>3</sup> Lemov, Doug; Woolway, Erica; Yezzi, Katie; Heath, Dan. *Practice Perfect: 42 Rules for Getting Better at Getting Better*. California: Jossey-Bass. 2012.
- <sup>4</sup> Duhigg, Charles. *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and in Business*. New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2012.
- <sup>5</sup> Asacker, Tom. *The Business of Belief: How the World's Best Marketers, Designers, Salespeople, Coaches, Fundraisers, Educators, Entrepreneurs and Other Leaders Get Us to Believe*. Kentucky: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013. Page 50.
- <sup>6</sup> Pink, Daniel. *To Sell is Human*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2013. Page 132.
- <sup>7</sup> Brown, Brene. *Daring Greatly, How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead*. New York: Gotham. 2012. Page 37.
- <sup>8</sup> Baumeister, Roy and Tierney, John. *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*. New York: Penguin Books. 2012. Page 38.
- <sup>9</sup> Cloud, Henry. *Boundaries for Leaders: Results, Relationships and Being Ridiculously in Charge*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013. Page 11, Pages 28-29.
- <sup>10</sup> Cain, Susan. *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2012.