

My favorite books (in no particular order)

Nonfiction:

Talent is Overrated - Geoff Colvin

The Talent Code - Daniel Coyle; he also wrote "The Culture Code"

Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World - David Epstein

Bill Bryson - anything. Just finished "The Body". "At Home" is fantastic. Many, including: A Short History of Nearly Everything. One Summer: America, 1927. Notes from a Small Island. Shakespeare. The Mother Tongue - English and How It Got That way.

Lives of a Cell - Lewis Thomas

The Right Stuff - Tom Wolfe

Bird by Bird - Anne Lamott; also Word by Word

Desert Solitaire - Edward Abbey

Mastery - Robert Greene; also "The 48 Laws of Power"

The War of Art - Steven Pressfield [dealing with blocks to creativity]

John McWhorter - fantastic writing about language - best experienced hearing him read the text in an audiobook. "The Power of Babel: A Natural History of Language" is available in paperback. "Our Magificent Bastard Tongue: The Untold History of English"

Michael Lewis - anything! Great nonfiction writer. 'The Blind Side' is his best known.

Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning - Peter C. Brown

The Perfect Wrong Note - William Westney

The Purple Cow - Seth Godin - he has many books out on marketing, but very relevant for musicians. Start with this one. They are short, go fast.

Anything by John McPhee - fantastic nonfiction writing, maybe the best. Huge range of subjects. Start with "Oranges" My favorite is Coming into the Country (about Alaska). Many others: Uncommon Carriers. The Pine Barrens. La Place de la Concorde Suisse (about the Swiss army - read it when I lived in

Switzerland). Basin and Range. The Crofter and the Laird (took his family to live on a remote Scottish island for a year...). Many more, all great!
Listen to This - Alex Ross; also "The Rest is Noise: Listening to the 20th Century"

A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future - Daniel Pink

Six Thinking Hats - Edward De Bono; also Lateral Thinking

Quiet - Susan Kane (about introverts)

Outliers - Malcom Gladwell; also: The Tipping Point; and Blink

The Savvy Musician; The Savvy Music Teacher - David Cutler

Thinkertoys - Michael Michalko

Free Play - Stephen Nachmanovitch

Flow - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

A World Lit Only by Fire (about the Middle Ages) - William Manchester - great nonfiction writer; also: American Caesar; Arms of Krupp

A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous 14th Century - Barbara Tuchman

The Inner Game of Tennis - Timothy Galwey

Into Thin Air - John Krakauer; also Into the Wild

Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman – Richard Feynman

Fiction:

Hilary Mantel - Wolf Hall; Bring Up the Bodies - best writing in English since Shakespeare (well, maybe except for Dylan Thomas)

Lonesome Dove - Larry McMurtry

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance by Robert Pirsig - this is sort of a mix of fiction and nonfiction

A Confederacy of Dunces - John Kennedy Toole

The Name of the Rose - Umberto Eco (a Medieval detective story...)

Memoirs of a Geisha - Arthur Golden

All the Harry Potter books

A Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood

Shogun - James Clavell; also his Taipan (about Hong Kong)

The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy - Douglas Adams (part of a 5 part trilogy...)

Watership Down - Richard Adams

The Source - James Michener (any of the Michener books are great - you feel like you just took a college course in the subject...)

Pillars of the Earth - Ken Follett (Follett books - similar to Michener)

Angela's Ashes - Frank McCourt (memoir)

Catch 22 - Joseph Heller

Arrowsmith - Sinclair Lewis

1984; Animal Farm - George Orwell

The Martian - Andy Weir

The Signature of All Things - Elizabeth Gilbert

The Kite Runner - Khaled Hosseini

Perfume: The Story of a Murderer - Patrick Süskind

Saxon Chronicles - a series of books of a continuing story by Bernard Cornwell, who has many series. The first in this series is The Last Kingdom, which was made into a TV series.

Also fun to read by Cornwell: his "Sharpe" series.

Slaughterhouse Five - Kurt Vonnegut

Glitz - Elmore Leonard - this title picked at random from one of Leonard's many gritty crime drama books - great writing; no one does dialogue like Elmore Leonard. The TV series Justified was based on one of his characters.

Zorba the Greek - Nikos Kazantzakis (read the book, then see the movie)

Franny and Zooey - J.D. Salinger

Trinity - Leon Uris; also: Exodus

Anything by Agatha Christie

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society - Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows

Never Cry Wolf - Farley Mowat

Another Roadside Attraction – Tom Robbins