

Get Psyched Client Reading Guide

Recommended by John Borden

Choose a book for the change you want to make next. I have grouped my recommendations by goal so you can find a useful starting point, whether you are building consistency, training for a challenge or looking for a clearer direction.

Start with one book. As you read or listen, choose one idea to put into practice and bring it to our next coaching conversation. The books marked John's top pick are my strongest recommendations; choose the one that fits your current goal.

Choose your starting point

Your goal	Suggested first book	Page
Build consistency	Atomic Habits	2
Become mentally tougher	Do Hard Things	2
Find direction	The Alchemist	3
Stop living for approval	The Courage to Be Disliked	3
Handle performance pressure	Win the Inside Game	4
Understand endurance	Endure by Alex Hutchinson	4
Understand your thinking	Thinking, Fast and Slow	5
Communicate more effectively	How to Win Friends and Influence People	6
Take ownership as a leader	Extreme Ownership	7
Rethink money habits	The Psychology of Money	7
Explore meditation and identity	Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself	8
Understand psychedelics	How to Change Your Mind	8

If you prefer a story, try Greenlights, The Alchemist or Your Mindset Is Your Reality. If you want an exercise you can use immediately, try Atomic Habits or How to Win Friends and Influence People.

Build consistency and mental toughness

Use these books when you want to follow through, handle discomfort or recommit after progress has stalled.

Habits and taking action

Start with Atomic Habits for practical changes you can repeat.

Atomic Habits - *James Clear* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you keep starting and stopping.

You Are a Badass - *Jen Sincero* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you need encouragement to act on a goal you have delayed.

Awaken the Giant Within - *Tony Robbins*

Choose this if you want to raise your standards and take action.

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People - *Stephen R. Covey*

Choose this if your days are busy but not aligned with your priorities.

Unfu*k Yourself - *Gary John Bishop*

Choose this if you keep thinking about change without taking a step.

Resilience and doing hard things

Start with Do Hard Things for a flexible approach to toughness. Choose Goggins if you respond to an intense personal story. Apply extreme stories to your mindset while keeping training and recovery appropriate for you.

Can't Hurt Me - *David Goggins* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you routinely quit when effort becomes uncomfortable.

Do Hard Things - *Steve Magness* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you believe being tough means ignoring every signal.

Never Finished - *David Goggins* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you have made progress but feel yourself coasting.

Everything You Want Is on the Other Side of Hard - *Ken Rideout*

Choose this if you want a push toward a challenging goal.

Living with a SEAL - *Jesse Itzler*

Choose this if you respond well to stories about pushing your comfort zone.

Stay Sane in an Insane World - *Greg Harden*

Choose this if you want steadier confidence when life feels overwhelming.

The Obstacle Is the Way - *Ryan Holiday*

Choose this if you are stuck on something you cannot change.

Find purpose and a clearer direction

Choose a story if you want reflection, or a book of principles if you want to examine your values and choices.

The Alchemist - *Paulo Coelho* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you are afraid to pursue something that matters to you.

Greenlights - *Matthew McConaughey* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want a fresh perspective on setbacks and opportunities.

Your Mindset Is Your Reality - *John Borden* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want to understand the lived story behind *Get Psyched*. *My memoir of personal transformation*.

The Courage to Be Disliked - *Ichiro Kishimi; Fumitake Koga* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you make too many choices to avoid disapproval.

The Four Agreements - *Don Miguel Ruiz* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want simple reminders for how to live and relate.

The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck - *Mark Manson* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you care about everything and feel pulled in every direction.

12 Rules for Life - *Jordan B. Peterson* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if life feels chaotic and you want clearer standards.

Be Useful - *Arnold Schwarzenegger*

Choose this if you need a direction worth working toward.

Everything Is F*cked - *Mark Manson*

Choose this if you feel cynical about progress or purpose.

Will - *Will Smith; Mark Manson*

Choose this if you want a story-led reflection on ambition and identity.

Try one idea

Write down one value that matters to you and one action that would express it this week.

Develop as an athlete

Choose a performance book for your mental game, a running book for curiosity about endurance, or a personal story for motivation.

Start with *Win the Inside Game* if results and comparison dominate your self-worth. Start with *Endure* by Alex Hutchinson if you want to explore the limits of endurance. Stories about extreme training should inspire questions, not dictate your training volume.

Win the Inside Game - *Steve Magness* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if external results dominate how you judge yourself.

The Confident Mind - *Nate Zinsser*

Choose this if your confidence drops when the stakes rise.

Endure - *Alex Hutchinson* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want to understand what limits endurance.

Undeniable - *Cameron Hanes* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want inspiration to commit more fully to a pursuit.

Endure - *Cameron Hanes*

Choose this if you need inspiration for long-term commitment.

Relentless - *Tim S. Grover; Shari Lesser Wenk*

Choose this if you want an intense perspective on competitive excellence.

Secrets of Giants - *Alyssa Ages*

Choose this if you want to see strength as more than a number on a bar.

Born to Run - *Christopher McDougall*

Choose this if running feels like a chore and you want fresh enthusiasm.

Smile, or You're Doing It Wrong - *Andy Glaze*

Choose this if you want endurance training to feel more enjoyable.

The Rise of the Ultra Runners - *Adharanand Finn*

Choose this if you want to understand the appeal of ultrarunning.

There Is No Finish - *Stephen Parker*

Choose this if you want a story about long-duration persistence.

The Science of Running - *Steve Magness*

Choose this if you want a deeper understanding of running training.

Understand your mind and behavior

Choose based on what you want to understand: a recurring pattern, a difficult decision, your attention or the way you interpret an experience.

Self awareness and behavior

The Mountain Is You is an approachable option for reflection. Thinking, Fast and Slow is better suited to a deeper analytical read.

Dopamine Nation - Anna Lembke

Choose this if you feel pulled toward constant stimulation.

Hidden Potential - Adam Grant

Choose this if you think talent matters more than development.

The Anxious Generation - Jonathan Haidt

Choose this if you want to discuss how digital life affects young people. *Best suited to parents and adults interested in youth and technology.*

The Body Keeps the Score - Bessel van der Kolk

Choose this if trauma is relevant to your life and you want educational context. *Contains potentially distressing trauma material; choose it when you feel ready and have appropriate support.*

The Expectation Effect - David Robson

Choose this if you want to understand how expectations influence your experience.

The Mountain Is You - Brianna Wiest

Choose this if you keep getting in your own way.

Judgment and decision making

Use these books to question assumptions and explore alternative explanations.

Thinking, Fast and Slow - Daniel Kahneman | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want to question your first impression before deciding. *A demanding read; some research discussed has faced replication challenges.*

David and Goliath - Malcolm Gladwell

Choose this if you assume your disadvantages determine your outcome.

Freakonomics - Steven D. Levitt; Stephen J. Dubner

Choose this if you want to question obvious explanations.

The Tipping Point - Malcolm Gladwell

Choose this if you want to think about why some ideas spread.

Breathing and slowing down

For curiosity about everyday habits and making space for reflection.

Breath - James Nestor | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want to understand your everyday breathing habits. *Read as an exploration of breathing, rather than a medical treatment guide.*

Living with the Monks - Jesse Itzler

Choose this if your life feels constantly busy and noisy.

Build better relationships and conversations

Start with *How to Win Friends and Influence People* for everyday connection. Choose a more specific book when your goal is negotiation, dating or handling other people's behavior.

How to Win Friends and Influence People - *Dale Carnegie* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want to connect with people more effectively.

Supercommunicators - *Charles Duhigg*

Choose this if you talk but often feel misunderstood.

Never Split the Difference - *Chris Voss; Tahl Raz* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you struggle to navigate high-stakes conversations.

The Let Them Theory - *Mel Robbins*

Choose this if you waste energy trying to control other people.

8 Rules of Love - *Jay Shetty*

Choose this if you want a more intentional approach to love.

Models - *Mark Manson* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you want dating to feel more honest and less like a performance. *Written primarily for men navigating dating.*

The Like Switch - *Jack Schafer; Marvin Karlins*

Choose this if you want to build rapport more naturally.

Try one idea

In your next conversation, ask a sincere question and listen long enough to understand the answer. Notice whether the other person wants support, practical help or simply to be heard.

Leadership money and storytelling

Choose the section that fits your role: leading people, running a business, reflecting on money or telling a more engaging story.

Leadership and accountability

Start with Extreme Ownership to focus on actions you can take responsibility for.

Extreme Ownership - *Jocko Willink; Leif Babin* | **John's top pick**

Choose this if you focus on blame more than your next useful action.

Radical Candor - *Kim Scott*

Choose this if you avoid necessary feedback or deliver it too harshly.

Trust and Inspire - *Stephen M. R. Covey*

Choose this if you rely on control when you want people to grow.

Money and business

Start with The Psychology of Money for a perspective on behavior. These books offer ideas to examine alongside your own financial circumstances.

Rich Dad Poor Dad - *Robert T. Kiyosaki*

Choose this if you want to rethink your relationship with money and ownership. *A money-mindset perspective rather than personalized financial advice.*

The Psychology of Money - *Morgan Housel*

Choose this if your money decisions do not match your stated priorities.

The Way of the Wolf - *Jordan Belfort*

Choose this if you want more structure in sales conversations.

You Are a Badass at Making Money - *Jen Sincero*

Choose this if your beliefs about money keep you from taking practical action.

Storytelling

For speakers, creators and business owners who want their stories to connect.

The Science of Storytelling - *Will Storr*

Choose this if your stories lack focus or emotional connection.

Explore spirituality and psychedelics

Choose these books when you want to explore a spiritual perspective, meditation or the cultural history of psychoactive substances.

Spirituality and identity

Start with *Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself* if meditation and identity change interest you. Read these frameworks thoughtfully; spiritual and metaphysical claims should be distinguished from established scientific findings.

Breaking the Habit of Being Yourself - Joe Dispenza | John's top pick

Choose this if you feel trapped in an old version of yourself. *Approach scientific and healing claims critically while reflecting on the practices.*

Becoming Supernatural - Joe Dispenza

Choose this if you want to explore a spiritual model of inner change. *Includes metaphysical and scientific claims to approach critically.*

The Power - Rhonda Byrne

Choose this if you want a spiritual lens on gratitude and outlook. *Uses a law-of-attraction framework rather than established science.*

The Science of Getting Rich - Wallace D. Wattles

Choose this if you want to explore a historical philosophy of prosperity. *Historical New Thought philosophy rather than financial science.*

Psychedelics and culture

Start with *How to Change Your Mind* for reporting, history and personal experience. These are reading recommendations, not instructions for substance use or treatment.

How to Change Your Mind - Michael Pollan | John's top pick

Choose this if you want an informed introduction to the psychedelic conversation.

This Is Your Mind on Plants - Michael Pollan

Choose this if you want broader context for society's relationships with psychoactive plants.

Tripped - Norman Ohler

Choose this if you want a historical perspective on psychedelics and institutions.

Bring the reading into your life

Before choosing another book, ask yourself: What idea stayed with me? What did I actually try? What will I keep doing? Bring your answers to our next coaching conversation.