

Resources for the Entrepreneur and the Adventurer

Tom Field

Innovation, entrepreneurship, discovery, and creativity are not born from flashes of inspiration but intentional acts that develop mindset, establish habits, and open the doors to possibility by making connections that others ignore or miss because of their commitment to the illusions of safety provided by the status quo. We are blessed to live in an age where we can access ideas and information easily and in a variety of formats – I am offering some readings that I think will stand you in good stead.

Discovery Stories:

Undaunted Courage by Stephen Ambrose – be immersed in the vision, preparation, and experiences of the Lewis and Clark expedition – an authentic set of insights into the full scope of the noble, mundane, victorious, and failed efforts associated with a grand adventure.

Canoeing the Mountains by Todd Bolsinger – taking the lessons of the Lewis and Clark expedition and placing them into the context of leadership in uncertain times and uncharted territory, Bolsinger is focused on guiding churches, but the lessons cross the boundaries and offer deep and meaningful guides for the aspiring entrepreneur.

How I Built This by Guy Raz – foundational lessons from entrepreneurs across the spectrum of free enterprise – learn from the experiences of a wide-ranging set of founders and understand that none of them wore superhero capes but instead invested their time and energy based on a mindset of abundance and possibility.

Lessons from a Desperado Poet by Baxter Black – I have a regret tied to Baxter – I wish I had gotten him to the Engler Program to share his entrepreneurial journey and the lessons he learned about himself, humanity, and faith during the adventure that defined and celebrated his life. Fortunately, he wrote a book – an honest story filled with truths about life, entrepreneurship, and charting your own course – if you can only make time for one book – this one might be it. He wrote in the copy I carry – “for Tom...who found the way.” I reckon that he found the way as well and we want you to experience the same.

Building Organizations:

Small Giants by Bo Burlingham – a mistaken notion in the world of entrepreneurship is that an enterprise that doesn't scale is a disappointment. Enterprise building is done for lots of reasons and founders have unique perspectives that make scaling a value-neutral issue. Small Giants is a look into several companies that had the opportunity to scale up to publicly traded entities but chose another route. The Small Giants organization is a good resource for thinking about the way you want to run an organization and the core motivation that underlies its creation. <https://smallgiants.org/>

Legacy by James Kerr – The All-Blacks, New Zealand's national rugby team, is arguably the world's greatest professional team. By creating a strong and intentional culture, the All-Blacks were able to establish a framework that changed expectations, created deep accountability, and established habits and behaviors that contributed to success both on and off the pitch. Culture is not about days off, pizza parties or bean bag chairs in the office – it is about established values, unity, and character – a good

read even if you've never seen a rugby match. As we all find out, a scrum is not limited to the game of rugby.

The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni – one of many good books produced by Lencioni, this text dives into creating competitive advantage via organizational health. By creating clarity, focus, continuous learning, agility, and emotional intelligence; leaders can generate momentum and growth. Centering a business on principles and human potential allows the organization to recover faster from the inevitability of mistakes, build trust through vulnerability and transparency, and generating productivity through authentic teamwork.

Execution:

Good to Great by Jim Collins

Collins and his research team provide the core habits of those organizations that were able to make the leap from being a solid company to a great one. Focused on 5 core concepts – a culture of discipline, level 5 leaders, the hedgehog concept, technology as accelerators, and the relationship of the fly wheel and the doom loop – this work provides guidance and encouragement to those who seek to build something worthy.

Rocket Fuel by Gino Wickman and Mark Winters – many entrepreneurial founders are big picture visionaries can see the possibilities and the end goal but who may struggle with the details of execution. This book is a follow up to *Traction – an Entrepreneurial Operating System* and makes the case for a highly functional partnership in which both vision and execution are synchronized to assure that the organization reaches its full potential. You will find interesting ideas and concepts for the multi-generational family business in this text.

Building a Story Brand by Donald Miller – brands should be thought of as stories complete with heroes, problems, guides, solutions, and the reality that both success and failure are on the table. Miller will help you sharpen the message, more effectively engage with customers likely to buy, and to gain market traction in an environment filled with noise and distraction. His concept doesn't require expensive campaigns or high costs – results arise from clarity, connection, and motivating customers to act!