

7 Books That'll Retrain Your Brain and Push You Toward Success

By [Geoffrey James of Inc.](#)

The human brain is the most powerful tool you can possibly possess. Are you training and using your brain to its full potential? These seven books will help you achieve the peak performance you'll need to compete, today and in the future.

1. [Curious: The Desire to Know and Why Your Future Depends On It](#) by Ian Leslie

5-Second Summary: Harness your natural curiosity to develop the ability to think more broadly and deeply.

Best Quote: “Curious learners go deep, and they go wide. They are the people best equipped for the kind of knowledge-rich cognitively challenging work required in industries such as finance or software engineering. They are also the ones most likely to make creative connections between different fields, of the kind that lead to new ideas and the ones best suited to working in multidisciplinary teams. Consequently, they are the ones whose jobs are least likely to be taken by intelligent machines. In a world where technology is rapidly replacing humans even in white-collar jobs, it’s no longer enough to be merely smart. Computers are smart. But no computer, however sophisticated, can yet be said to be curious.”

Fun Factoid: Your brain stopped growing when you were 18 but continues to make new neurons throughout your life in response to mental activity.

2. [Thinking, Fast and Slow](#) by Daniel Kahneman

5-Second Summary: Your success in life depends upon mastering your brain’s two systems, one of which is fast, intuitive and emotional, and the other of which is slow, deliberate, and logical.

Best Quote: “When confronted with a problem—choosing a chess move or deciding whether to invest in stock—the machinery of intuitive thought does the best it can. If the individual has relevant expertise, she will recognize the situation, and the intuitive solution that comes were mind is likely to be correct. This is what happens when a chess master looks at a complex position: the few moves that immediately occur to him are all strong. When the question is difficult and a skilled solution is not available, intuition still has a shot: An answer may come to mind quickly, but it is not an answer to the original question. This is the essence of intuitive heuristics: When faced with a difficult question, we often answer an easier one instead, usually without noticing the substitution.”

Fun Factoid: The human brain activates (fires) roughly [20,000,000,000,000,000 neurons every second](#).

3. [Think Like a Freak: The Authors of Freakonomics Offer to Retrain Your Brain](#) by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

5-Second Summary: A blueprint for coming up with new solutions to old problems, accompanied by amusing examples.

Best Quote: “It’s tempting to run with a herd. Even on the most important issues of the day, we often adopt the views of our friends, families, and colleagues. On some level, this makes sense: it is easier to fall in line with what your family and friends think than to find new family and friends! But running with

the herd means we are quick to embrace the status quo, slow to change our minds, and happy to delegate our thinking.”

Fun Factoid: According to one study from the [London School of Economics and Political Science](#), liberal atheists have IQs that are six points higher on average than devout conservatives.

4. [*The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*](#) by Charles Duhigg

5-Second Summary: A guide for using the human tendency towards habitual behavior to positive use.

Best Quote: “In the past decade, our understanding of the neurology and psychology of habits and the way patterns work with in our lives, societies, and organizations has expanded in ways we couldn’t have imagined fifty years ago. We now know why habits emerge, how they change, and the science behind their mechanics. We know how to break them into parts and rebuild them to our specifications. We understand how to make people eat less, exercise more, work more efficiently, and live healthier lives. Transforming a habit isn’t necessarily easy or quick. It isn’t always simple. But it is possible. And now we understand how.”

Fun Factoid: Your brain uses 20% of the total oxygen in your body and 20% of the blood circulating in your body.

5. [*Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*](#) by Joshua Foer

5-Second Summary: A journalist is coached by the world’s foremost “mental athletes” on the latest methods for improving memory.

Best Quote: “The brain is like a muscle and memory training is a form of mental workout. Over time, like any form of exercise, it’ll make the brain fitter, quicker, and more nimble... But while there is much solid science to back up the dementia-defying effects of an active brain, [the] most hyperbolic claims about the collateral effects of ‘brain exercise’ should inspire a measured dose (at least) of skepticism. Nevertheless, it was hard to argue with the results. I just watched a forty-seven-year-old competitor recite, in order, a list of 100 hundred random words he’d learned a few minutes earlier.”

Fun Factoid: While awake, your brain generates up to 23 watts of electricity, which is roughly enough energy to power three iPhones.

6. [*The Future of the Mind: The Scientific Quest to Understand, Enhance, and Empower the Mind*](#) by Michio Kaku

5-Second Summary: The latest breakthroughs in neuroscience and physics suggest that several science fiction tropes (like mind control and telekinesis) might eventual become realities.

Best Quote: “To witness the mystery of our mind, all we have to do is stare at ourselves in the mirror and wonder, What lurks behind our eyes? This raises haunting questions like: Do we have a soul? What happens to us after we die? Who am ‘I’ anyway? And most important, this brings us to the ultimate question: where do we fit into this great cosmic scheme? As the great Victorian biologist Thomas Huxley once said, ‘The question of all questions for humanity, the problem which lies behind all others it is more

interesting than any of them, is that of the determination of man's place in nature and its relation to the Cosmos.'"

Fun Factoid: The [first successful brain surgeries](#) took place during the stone age, roughly around 7,000 B.C.

7. [A Mind for Numbers: How to Excel at Math and Science \(Even If You Flunked Algebra\)](#) by Barbara Oakley

5-Second Summary: An engineering professor provides alternative and often simple strategies for learning complex subject matter.

Best Quote: "Mathematics, as it's generally taught in American school systems, can be a saintly mother of the subject. It climbs logically and majestically from addition through subtraction multiplication, and division. Then it sweeps up towards the heavens of mathematical beauty. But math can also be a wicked stepmother. She is utterly unforgiving if you happen to miss any steps of the logical sequence—and missing a step is easy to do. All you need is a disruptive family life, a burned-out teacher, or an unlucky extended bout with illness—even a week or two at a critical time can throw you off your game. Or as with the case with me, simply no interest or seeming talent whatsoever."

Fun Factoid: Some researchers believe [neurons are quantum computers](#), which means your brain is more powerful than all the digital computers in the world combined.

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