



# STARTING A BOOK CLUB IN 5 EASY STEPS

Jump start a book club where you ARE!

# SO YOU WANT TO START A BOOK CLUB?

Book clubs often get a bad rap, as being boring affairs where half the people don't read the book and the other half speak of nothing but allegories and underlying themes. While there are certainly some book clubs that are like that and plenty of people who enjoy them, that doesn't describe them all. In fact, book clubs are really versatile. You can fashion them into whatever form best fits your needs. Whether your version is more of a party with some book talk, a more formal group discussion based on societal issues, or something in between, you can create one that works for you. To help you on your way, we have created a simple 5 step list on how to get your new book club up and running.





## 1. WHO'S COMING?

The first step is to figure out who you want to invite. Are you wanting to start a book club as part of an employee wellness program? Is it just a fun thing to do with your close friends? It's all up to you. Don't forget to consider how many people will be involved. The more people that you have attend can impact how long it lasts, how often everyone can meet, and even where you can meet.

## 2. FINDING PURPOSE

The next step is to figure out why you want to host your book club. Is it to catch up with friends, do you want to learn more about a certain topic, or do you want to meet new people? Your "why" will help you to structure the book club and pick out books that will fit your goals. You can choose the theme and even come up with a fun name! You can check out our list of theme ideas and names [here](#).

## 3. HOW ARE YOU MEETING?

Due to COVID, many things, including book clubs, have gone digital. However, now that more people are getting vaccinated and going out, you can choose if an in-person or virtual fits your group best. Zoom, a park, a coffee shop, your office break-room, all these places can be great for hosting your club. Make sure that you also decide how often, when, and how long you want to meet. It's important that there be enough time in-between meetings for people to finish the book, but not too long so that they forget what they read. You also want to make sure that the meetings are long enough that everyone in the group can participate in the discussion. If you are going to serve snacks or are reading something that might spark debate, make sure that you pad the time to allow for this also. Typical book clubs often meet once a month to every 6 weeks and last 1-2 hours.

## 4. PICKING BOOKS

Now you have to pick which books to read. You can own this by yourself or your book club can make these decisions each month as a group. There are a lot of great resources out there that can make the decisions easier. There are plenty of websites where you can find book lists, reviews, and even sample discussion questions. If you want popular books then you can look at the best sellers list. If you want to follow along with popular book club hosts, you can look at Oprah's Book Club lists or Reese Witherspoon's recommendations. Of course, you can also reach out to your local library or check out some of our suggested reading lists here.

## 5. AND...DISCUSS

Before you meet to discuss your first book, you should come up with some guidelines on how you want the discussion to go. Will everyone go around the circle and say what they think? Would you rather it be more organic and just have people pop in when they have something to add? You can also look up and share some discussion questions before the meeting or just brainstorm some points that you want to make. As the leader of the club, it is often a good idea to have some thoughts or questions prepared to spur discussions in case things get quiet or people are shy. It also doesn't hurt to set some ground rules such as if certain topics are off limits, there is a certain time limit everyone must not go over, or if you want to keep language clean.

Don't worry, it is totally fine and normal if things change. Once you start your club, you might find out that your non-fiction book club would rather read fiction or that a month just isn't enough time to make it through the latest bestseller for you and your friends since your lives are so busy. Remember, just have fun!







# BOOK CLUB THEMES

Finding a theme has never been so easy! Our reading experts have compiled the most interesting and diverse themes. There's a theme recommendation for anyone and for every book club!



## **THE BOOK WAS BETTER**

A go-to book club theme is to read books that have been made into movies. You can even take it a step further and watch the movie versions too, so you can vote on which really was better.

## **WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK**

This can be a great theme if you want to start a book club as part of an employee wellness program or to beef up your and your coworkers' skills. You can choose books that will add another tool to your toolbox, leadership books, management books, really whatever you think will help your work-life.

## **CHILD AT HEART**

Many adults feel like they are too old to read or enjoy books meant for kids or young adults, unless they are sharing them with their children, but this is simply not true. There are so many terrific books that are technically written for children or teens that are still entertaining for adults. This theme can also be fun to get nostalgic and read your favorite childhood books and see how they hold up to time and your memories.

## **DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?!**

Biographies and memoirs can provide interesting discussing points, especially if you are reading about someone that your group is all familiar with. Being able to get a personal look behind the scenes can supply a deeper understanding of what other people go through and expand your perspective.

## **INTERNET FAMOUS**

Are you on #BookTok? Or do you see new books floating all over the web? Hop on the bandwagon and choose books based on what everyone is talking about this month.

## **LOCALLY SOURCED**

You might not realize it, but more than likely, there are quite a few best-selling authors that live in your state. Take the opportunity to check out their books, and who knows, you might just run into them at your local store.



## **WHAT'S COOKIN'?**

It might not be what you normally think of with a book club, but Cookbooks are a popular theme. Not only can you test your skills, but you can take turns picking cookbooks that share your cultures, giving each other advice, and even bringing one of the recipes for everyone to try. Who doesn't love built in snacks?!

## **THAT'S GRAPHIC!**

Comics aren't just for kids. Graphic novels are the perfect choice if your club members don't have a lot of time to read a 300-page novel every month. Don't be fooled though, just because they are quicker reads, doesn't mean they are lacking in story. There are so many types of graphic novels to choose from that you are sure to find ones that even your pickiest book clubbers would enjoy.

## **LISTEN UP!**

Book Clubs aren't just for reading, they are also for listening. Audiobooks offer you the ability to "read" on your way to work, on the bus, at the gym, or wherever you are. They can even help you sink further into the books with the narrators using different voices and accents.

## **OUT OF THIS WORLD**

We all need a break from the real world at times and nothing is better than diving into Space! Whether you want to delve into Star Wars canon or read all about our robot overlords, science fiction has something for you.

## **OH, THE HORROR!**

A lot of people love to be scared. So, whether you want to read about the zombie apocalypse, killer clowns, or haunting ghosts, you can enjoy being scared together.

## **ELVES AND VAMPIRES AND WITCHES, OH MY!**

Who doesn't love all things magic and fantasy? You can go straight classic fantasy with books like Lord of the Rings or mix it up with sub-genres like Magical Realism, Urban Fantasy, or even Paranormal Romance.

## **IT'S KILLER!**

Whether you are reading true crime or mysteries, this theme is perfect for your inner sleuth.

## **KICKIN' IT OLD SCHOOL**

Re-read an old book or read a classic for the first time. It will be interesting to talk about how it compares to your memory or what you thought it was about.

## **STAYCATION**

Traveling the world isn't a possibility for many of us but there is still an easy way to see the sights and learn about other places. Books. Choose a book about a new place each month and travel vicariously without ever leaving your couch.







# BOOK CLUB CONVERSATION STARTERS

Not sure how to navigate the conversations of a book club? Use these conversation starters and questions as a starting point.

*These questions were adapted from [BookRiot.com](http://BookRiot.com)*



## GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What did you like best about this book?
- What did you like least about this book?
- What other books did this remind you of?
- Which characters in the book did you like best?
- Which characters did you like least?
- If you were making a movie of this book, who would you cast?
- Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out?
- What other books by this author have you read? How did they compare to this book?
- Would you read another book by this author? Why or why not?
- What feelings did this book evoke for you?
- What did you think of the book's length? If it's too long, what would you cut? If too short, what would you add?
- What songs does this book make you think of? Create a book group playlist together!
- If you got the chance to ask the author of this book one question, what would it be?
- Which character in the book would you most like to meet?
- Which places in the book would you most like to visit?
- What do you think of the book's title? How does it relate to the book's contents? What other title might you choose?
- What do you think of the book's cover? How well does it convey what the book is about? If the book has been published with different covers, which one do you like best?
- What do you think the author's purpose was in writing this book? What ideas were they trying to get across?
- How original and unique was this book?
- If you could hear this same story from another person's point of view, who would you choose?
- What artist would you choose to illustrate this book? What kinds of illustrations would you include?

## FICTION QUESTIONS

- Did this book seem realistic?
- How well do you think the author built the world in the book?
- Did the characters seem believable to you? Did they remind you of anyone?
- Did the book's pace seem too fast/too slow/just right?
- If you were to write fanfic about this book, what kind of story would you want to tell?

## NONFICTION QUESTIONS

- What did you already know about this book's subject before you read this book?
- What new things did you learn?
- What questions do you still have?
- What else have you read on this topic, and would you recommend these books to others?
- What do you think about the author's research? Was it easy to see where the author got their information? Were the sources credible?



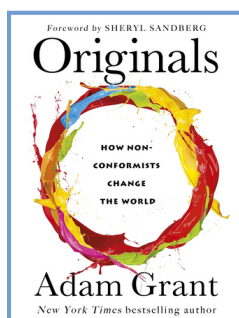
### PRO-TIP:

Search publisher's and author's websites for discussion guides to popular titles. You can also search Google for additional guides created by other book clubs.



# **SUGGESTED READS** *for* **PROFESSIONAL** **DEVELOPMENT**

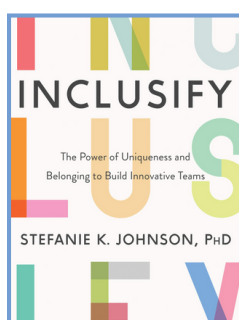
Our librarians have created a dynamic list of reads to help you take your career up a notch. These reads are also excellent selections for a book club at your work. The topics range from communication, leadership, EDI, and safety.



## ORIGINALS

by Adam M Grant

Examines how leaders can champion originality in their organizations, to explain how to identify a good idea, speak up, build allies, choose a time to act, and manage doubts.



## INCLUSIFY

by Stefanie K. Johnson

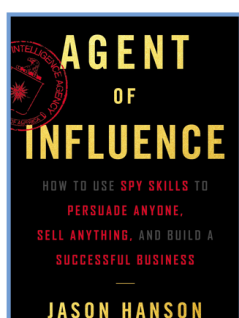
Explains what it means to Inclusify, which implies a continuous, sustained effort towards helping diverse teams feel engaged, valued, empowered, accepted and valued, strengthening any business.



## SALES 101

by Wendy Connick

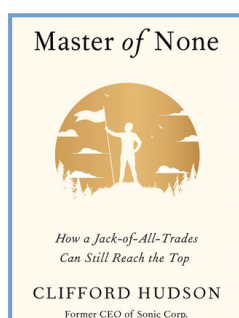
Provides guidance in making a presentation, closing a deal, handling rejection, and managing your time. Sales 101 shares the best solutions to prepare you for a career in sales



## AGENT OF INFLUENCE

by Jason Hanson

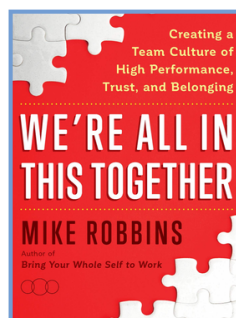
Former CIA, security specialist and winner of Shark Tank describes how to use spy tactics to develop a winning sales personality and become a more productive and confident professional.



## MASTER OF NONE

by Clifford Hudson

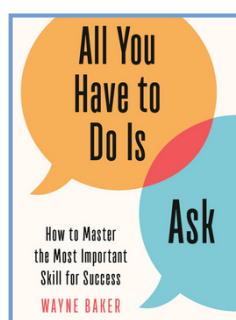
Former CEO of Sonic discusses whether mastery is necessary to succeed, saying that expertise is risky and can lead to over-confidence and instead promotes embracing variety and versatility.



## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

by Mike Robbins

In this book, Mike Robbins dives deep into the ways great teams build trust, collaborate, and perform at the highest level.



## ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK

by Wayne E. Baker

The Psychology Today columnist reveals the benefits of asking for help to solve problems, reduce stress and discover new opportunities, outlining strategies used by major companies that facilitate team-based organizational networks.



## FUTUREPROOF

by Kevin Roose

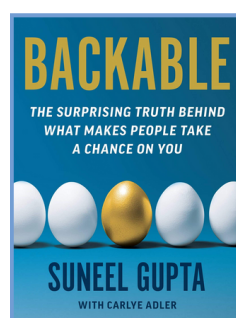
The New York Times technology columnist presents a counter-intuitive guide to the age of A.I. that explains how laborers facing the automation of their jobs can thrive in the machine age by rethinking their relationships with tech.



## LAUNCHING WHILE FEMALE

by Susanne Althoff

A veteran journalist and professor examines the obstacles that women and nonbinary entrepreneurs, face while trying to break through in the start-up world that was made by and for white men.

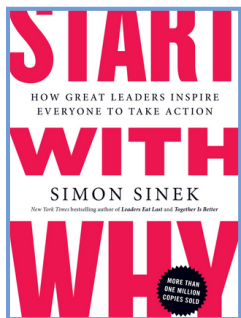


## BACKABLE

by Suneel Gupta

Drawing from his own business experience, interviews and case studies, a successful entrepreneur breaks down the six qualities of backable people who get others to take a bet on them.

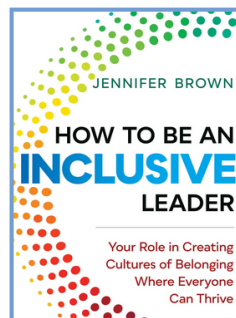




## START WITH WHY

by Simon Sinek

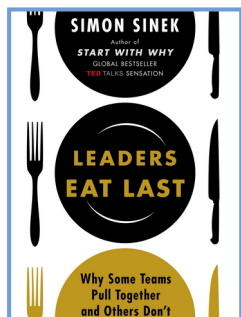
Draws on real-life stories and figures, including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Steve Jobs, to examine the qualities a good leader requires in order to inspire and motivate people



## HOW TO BE AN INCLUSIVE LEADER

by Jennifer Brown

Internationally acclaimed diversity and inclusion expert Jennifer Brown shows how we can all shift our perspectives to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.



## LEADERS EAT LAST

by Simon Sinek

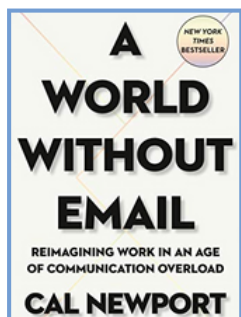
Discusses how to get employees and customers on board with a company and cultivate a supportive mentality of trust and commitment



## THE MEMO

by Minda Harts

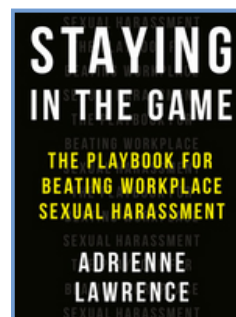
A guide for women of color examines such challenges as the wage gap, bias and micro-aggression, outlining actionable recommendations for how to team up with progressive allies to effectively respond to workplace racism.



## A WORLD WITHOUT EMAIL

by Cal Newport

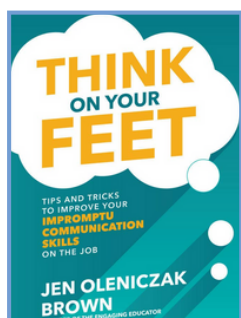
The best-selling author of Digital Minimalism and Deep Work outlines recommendations for business leaders on how to maximize a working team's professional productivity by improving administrative support and streamlining digital traffic.



## STAYING IN THE GAME

by Adrienne Lawrence

The attorney and television host who was the first on-air personality to sue ESPN for sexual harassment counsels women on how to recognize inappropriate behavior in the workplace, legally document experiences and navigate the complicated realities of backlash.



## THINK ON YOUR FEET

by Jen Oleniczak Brown

Packed with expert advice and engaging exercises, the book teaches you how speak and act with confidence in any situation



## CONTROLLING RISK

by Jim Wetherbee

Captain Jim Wetherbee, presents thirty techniques that astronauts use to conduct high-quality operations and accomplish complex missions. These same techniques, based on the foundational principles of operating excellence, can help anyone be successful in high-hazard endeavors, ordinary business, and everyday life.