

[WISDOM](#) // March 22, 2019

# 9 Uplifting Books That Will Ignite Your Sense of Purpose

*These reads can have a powerful impact on your motivation and well-being.*

By [Marina Khidekel](#), Head of Content Development at Thrive Global



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The right books can have a [powerful impact](#) on our well-being, from [inspiring us to be stronger](#) to making us [more empathetic](#) to helping us [unlock our full potential](#).

*The Wall Street Journal* recently reported on a growing trend of books (as well as movies, television shows, and other entertainment works)

that promote hope, community and optimism as a response to “dystopia fatigue.”

“I think it’s valuable to tell a dark story, but people want an alternative. They don’t want to look at a grim future and say, ‘That’s it, that’s an inevitability,’” novelist Becky Chambers told the *Times*. “It’s something of a relief for people to be exposed to futures where they say, ‘Hey, this might turn out OK.’”

So we asked members of the Thrive Global community to share the most uplifting books they’ve ever read, and the effect it had on their outlook and well-being. Which will you add to your reading list?

### ***Jonathan Livingston Seagull* by Richard Bach**

“The books that had an undoubted impact on my state of mind are Richard Bach’s *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and Aristotle’s *Ethica Nicomachea*. I was 18 years old when I read them and they both impressed me with the concept that simplicity can not only explain the most phenomenally complicated issues — e.g., how to unchain our inner insecurities — but mainly that nature teaches us that everything has its meaning (Aristotle’s teleology). I also learned that the notion of happiness may be different for each of us, but in the end we all thrive to excel through virtue.”

—E.K., lawyer, Greece

### ***The Happiness Advantage* by Shawn Achor**

“One of the most uplifting books I’ve ever read is *The Happiness Advantage* by Shawn Achor. The book focuses on how happiness is the precursor to success, not merely the result, as well as the benefits of happiness and optimism in fueling your performance and achievement. This read literally brought me joy and a tremendous sense of well-being. It helped me understand that each individual has the power to choose happiness, no matter what kind of chaos is occurring in your life or the world overall — talk about a timely read for these turbulent times. Reinforcing my natural instinct to seek the positive, this book has helped me deliberately infuse each day with more possibilities and hope.”

—Shira Miller, chief communications officer, Atlanta, GA

### ***The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch and Jeffrey Zaslow**

“The book that’s had the most impact in my life, hands-down, has been *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch and Jeffrey Zaslow. My

students and I followed Pausch's journey through pancreatic cancer and watched his last lecture that became the basis for his book. It's a living legacy to his wife and kids, but it's also left a lasting impression on anyone who has read it. It's a beautiful testament to living and enjoying each moment you have."

—Christine Denker, writer, Omaha, NE

### ***They Can Kill You, But They Can't Eat You* by Dawn Steel**

"The book that has been the most uplifting for me is Dawn Steel's 1993 text *They Can Kill You... But They Can't Eat You*. Steel, who has since passed away, came from very humble beginnings but became the first woman to lead a major motion picture studio, Columbia Pictures. I truly appreciated her honesty — she talked about topics regarding the unique challenges that women in the workplace face (i.e., having her voice heard in a male-dominated industry), shared her fears (i.e., being the only woman in the room giving a major presentation to senior executives), and was vulnerable (i.e., holding back tears when she wanted to cry in meetings). Steel highlighted the lessons she learned, and was a true advocate for professional women. Her generosity helped me understand that what I was going through professionally wasn't singular, but rather, understood by masses of other women."

—Jennefer Witter, CEO, public speaker, advocate, New York City, NY

### ***Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl**

"I loved Viktor E. Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. Amid the torture and suffering at Auschwitz, he lived and wrote about love, his wife, his family, and bliss. The Nazis controlled his external world, but he created his life's meaning. In writing "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way," he taught me that no matter my struggles, if he could create bliss and meaning there, then I can here. I believe he wrote the book to enable that result."

—Joshua Spodek, author, podcast host, New York, NY

### ***Present Over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist**

"The book *Present over Perfect* by Shauna Niequist changed the game for me. A friend recommended it, but it took me a while to actually go buy and read it. I was frantically pushing for goals in my business,

trying to hit deadlines, and honestly running myself into the ground. I was sick, tired, and stressed! So I decided to buy the book for our summer cottage vacation and read it in one day. I couldn't put it down! I returned from that trip knowing I had to change. I needed more fun, celebration, hobbies, and rest. Two years later, I can proudly say that I'm in a very different place. I'm happier, healthier, and more profitable by working less, but with more focus. That book started it all!"

—Lisa Pezik, business strategist, content marketing expert, Ontario, Canada

### ***The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* by Mark Manson**

"The book that put things in perspective for me is *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F\*ck* by Mark Manson. It released many shackles I had unknowingly worn for the longest time. It took me away from FOMO and helped me discover JOMO. It revealed "the universal truth of mortality" without making you uncomfortable. It told me to choose my "values" and live according to them, and to disregard everything else because we have a limited time here. The book also helped me realize why I don't like mountaineering, hiking, or even travelling. But it also added so much dignity to my enjoyment of being a homebody, writing, creating, and more. The book is now an integral part of my life."

—Ritu Garg, author, translator, Mumbai, India

### ***The Laws of Human Nature* By Robert Greene**

"*The Laws of Human Nature* by Robert Greene. Has been a tool to help me tame and accept my natural human tendencies and channel my energy to become a better leader, parent, and friend. It ultimately states that when we work for the greater good, others flourish and we benefit."

—April Choi, real estate investor/coach, Decatur, GA

### ***When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi**

"I was feeling tired, unmotivated and didn't have the strength to do anything (as I often do) when I read *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi. This is one of those books you need to re-read every now and then because it changes your perspective entirely. It made me cry, feel immensely grateful, and realize that I was wasting precious time. It's become one of my all-time favorite reads."

—Kennya Tirado, marketing, Sinaloa, México

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BOOKS, PURPOSE, WELL-BEING, WISDOM



Marina Khidekel, **Head of Content Development at Thrive Global**

Marina leads strategy, ideation and execution of Thrive Global content company-wide, including cross-platform brand partnership campaigns, editorial tentpoles and partnerships, and the voice of the Thrive app. In her role, she helps people tell their personal stories of going from surviving to thriving, brings Thrive's audience actionable, science-backed tips for reducing stress and improving their physical and mental well-being, and shares those insights on panels, at conferences, and in national outlets like NBC's TODAY.

Previously, Marina held senior editorial roles at *Women's Health*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Glamour*, where she edited award-winning health and mental health features and spearheaded the campaigns and partnerships around them.

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sandeep chakraborty · a year ago

I have read 3 of the books listed here. JLS is an all time favourite. Thanks for creating this list.

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