



# Raymond A. Mason School of Business

WILLIAM & MARY

LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS PODCAST

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## EPISODE 67: FACULTY & STAFF – GREAT READS FOR 2017

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### Ken White

The College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is Leadership & Business. The weekly podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. We share the strategies, tactics, and information that can make you a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host Ken White. Thanks for listening. The start of a new year a time when many professionals set new goals, and for many, one of those goals includes catching up on their reading. If finding the right book for 2017 is on your list, then today's podcast is for you. We spoke with faculty and staff here at William & Mary's Mason School of Business and asked them to share a recommendation regarding a book that professionals will find useful and entertaining in the year ahead. The first stop on our book tour is our McLeod Business Library ranked as one of the best libraries in the business school world. Tom Marini leads the efforts there. Here's Tom's recommendation.

### Ken White

Tom, you've selected a book for us. What book would you recommend to professionals to read in the New Year?

### Tom Marini

Well, this book is called Power Listening, and it's by a gentleman Bernard Ferrari. And essentially, it talks about something that not as many of us pay attention to as we should. The power of listening in a digital media-driven age. We spend so much time with information overload we have lost the art of conversation. But more important, we've lost the art of listening. This gentleman has a very readable book and talks about this, and I think this is something every one of us should pay attention to because we're not born listeners. We have to practice this. This is a skill set. There was a survey done by the ACT educational services with major business company leaders who said 70 percent of them used listening as one of the most critical components in hiring an individual. They further went looking at high school grads. Less than 19 percent of those people responded that the high school grads had any listening capabilities. So it's a skill set that needs to be practiced, and I think the book is not overwhelming. It's not a self-help book. It is common sense, but it's something that can give us a lot of reason to think about understanding

being attentive, paying attention. The 80-20 formula which is in here, 80 percent listening, 20 percent conversation. So I think it's a great book to recommend for everyone, both professionals and students alike.

### Ken White

Tom Marini recommends Power Listening by Bernard Ferrari. Next up is Professor of Strategic Management Brent Allred, who also selects a book that's career-focused.

### Brent Allred

So of the many books that I've purchased and hoped to read over the break, the one book that I have read and recommend highly is a book called How Will You Measure Your Life by Clayton Christensen with some other co-authors and Clayton Christensen's one of the top management minds in the world today. Famous Harvard business professor and author of Innovator's Dilemma and other books that came after that. But this is different than the classical management fad of the day book, which many that were constantly reading, and we read today and then forget tomorrow. This book is more about how will you measure your life. How will you behave? As mentioned earlier, one of the key points he makes is that it's easier to be true to your values 100 percent of the time than 98 percent of the time because once you start making poor choices, it's easier to continue to make them and often they can lead to tragic consequences. And so it's a book that really is not just how you're going to be famous rich, and famous and change the world by curing cancer, but it's really what is your impact on the world around you and the greater world as well.

### Ken White

Professor Brent Allred recommends How Will You Measure Your Life by Clayton Christensen. The Mason School's chief marketing officer is Jeff Rich. His recommendation is a bit different from the two career-related books on our list. Jeff, what book would you like to recommend to professionals for the new year?

### Jeff Rich

Well, you know, I normally like to stay away from things that have political overtones given a work environment, and you know, religion and politics are never good things to talk about at work. But given what we've gone through the last year with the political cycle, I've had a book on my reading list forever. It's been out forever, and it's been critically acclaimed. I just haven't gotten to it. But the book is Team of Rivals by the noted historian Doris Kearns Goodwin a frequent appearer on shows such as Meet the Press. But I've always been a big fan of her perspective. I think she frames issues and situations in a historical context very well, and I appreciate the sort of non-bias approach that she takes. But I thought it was a particularly interesting book to pick up and to really hit. Given the polarization that's been going on in our country, and you know, up until perhaps this

cabinet, Lincoln's cabinet may have been viewed as the most controversial in American history. The premise of the book, for those that are not familiar with it, is in the lead-up to the election cycle of 19 or 1860. It was very contentious election a lot of rivals for the nomination for presidency, from Edwin Stanton to Sewell. All of the key political players at the time were very much aligned against Abraham Lincoln. And as we all know, of course, he won that election, but instead of continuing to marginalize or minimize the impact that his rivals could have on our country and its politics, he chose the path of bringing them into his cabinet and creating a harmonious group ultimately that really helped govern the country and take it to new places by having a much broader and diverse perspective on issues across the country, particularly the issue of slavery at the time. So I very much appreciated, you know, reading that in given what we're seeing right now, and it makes me stop and think that we all come from different points of view and have very different perspectives about things, but there are some common threads that tie us all together, and we had to remember that more and find those common threads and come together and work in teams to solve some of our problems.

### Ken White

Chief Marketing Officer Jeff Rich recommends Team of Rivals by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Rosanna Koppelman is Executive Director of the Center for Corporate Education here at the Mason School. She works with executives and leaders from companies and organizations across the world. She suggests a must-read for leaders and aspiring leaders. Rosanna, what book would you recommend? What's the title, and why.

### Rosanna Koppelman

So the book that I would recommend is The Five Levels of Leadership by John Maxwell. It's one of those books that is a great go-to book. If you've been newly appointed in a leadership position and you are interested in kind of figuring out where you start your leadership journey, and that journey can be in a variety of places. It can be at any one point of the five levels. John Maxwell talks about levels as position, permission, production, people development, and then the top level is that pinnacle level. And he has a short little assessment at the beginning of the book where he, you know, instructs the reader to go through the assessment to figure out where they are on their leadership level and then very methodically. He takes you through a series of steps and behaviors that you need to master and to develop in order to get to the next level. And I really think that this is a great book. It's an all-time favorite of mine. I've read many books from different clients that they're using in their leadership and development programs, but this is just a great go-to book. I come back around to it time and time again for our clients as well as for myself.

## Ken White

That's Rosanna Koppelman of the Center for Corporate Education recommending John Maxwell's *The Five Levels of Leadership*. If you're interested in understanding the power of statistics without having to take a statistics course, Professor of Operations and Information Technology Bill Stewart has this recommendation. Bill, what book would you recommend professionals consider for this year and why.

## Bill Stewart

It's a couple of years old now, but I would recommend *The Signal and the Noise* by Nate Silver. It has wonderful background on statistics and how you use it, misuse it, and sets a context for the use of statistics that I don't think is demonstrated very frequently by other books. So it covers a lot of different issues. It talks about baseball and gambling and volcanoes erupting and so forth, but it has some business situations as well, like talks about the housing collapse and why the credit default options were not good monetary investments, and the why that the bottom fell out of that market. It talks about investing in Wall Street and talks about the efficient market hypothesis, which basically says you can't predict what's going to happen in the market from day to day without inside information of some sort. Talks about how you determine risk and how you communicate that risk to people when you've done some kind of a statistical analysis. Giving a point estimate of how high the river is going to get doesn't do you much good if you prepare for that height and the river gets two inches higher. You're flooded out. It talks about overfitting models and trying to extract more from models than is really there and with the limitations of statistical models are. So anybody who is interested in good and entertaining background in statistics and how it works and so forth should read this book. I think I thought it was fascinating; I use it in my courses.

## Ken White

That's Professor Bill Stewart recommending Nate Silver's *The Signal and the Noise*. Gaining a better understanding of the United States and its people is the goal of this next recommendation. Rita Murphy of the Boehly Center for Excellence in Finance shares her suggestion.

## Rita Murphy

The one I'm most looking forward to reading and I've just started it, is it's a book called *Hillbillyology* and it's by J.D. Vance and it was one of the most talked about books during the recent election and I think the outcome of the election helped me realize that I wasn't listening then and I may not. I didn't pay enough attention either. What this author is claiming he was a he's a young white working-class person from Ohio who is basically trying to say that people aren't listening to us, and I thought it would be worth kind of getting a different perspective. So it's a memoir, and it's also a social commentary, and it's a variety of different things. I'm just looking forward to seeing what he has to say.

## Ken White

That's Rita Murphy of the Boehly Center suggesting Hillbillyology by JD Vance. And finally, one more recommendation of a book to read in the New Year from me. If you don't mind, I suggest the classic communication book written in 1936. How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie. A title that sounds a little unusual in 2017, but the content is excellent, and it is relevant. Almost every communication book written today can trace the root of its content back to How to Win Friends and Influence People. So to review our list of books to consider for professionals in 2017, Power Listening by Bernard Ferrari, How Will You Measure Your Life by Clayton Christiansen, Team of Rivals by Doris Kearns Goodwin, The Five Levels of Leadership by John Maxwell, The Signal and the Noise by Nate Silver, Hillbillyology by J.D. Vance and How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie. If you have a recommendation that's not on our list, please let us know via email. Our address is [podcast@wm.edu](mailto:podcast@wm.edu), and that's our podcast for this week.

## Ken White

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