



CORE READING (If-you-only-read-one-thing-list)

You don't need to read these books cover to cover to get the point, but you have to if you're looking for depth.

Books

Complexity - A Guided Tour - Melanie Mitchell

Good Strategy, Bad Strategy - Richard Rumelt

Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds - Adrienne Maree Brown

Drift Into Failure: From Hunting Broken Components to Understanding Complex Systems by Sidney Dekker

Scrum: A Breathtakingly Brief and Agile Introduction - Chris Sims

Trauma Stewardship - Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk

On The Political - Chantal Mouffe

Thinking In An Emergency - Elaine Scarry

Jugaad Innovation: Think Frugal, Be Flexible, Generate Breakthrough Growth - Navi Radjou, Jaideep Prabhu Simone Ahuja

The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex - Incite! Women of Color Against Violence

Catastrophe In the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow by William R Freudenburg, Robert Gramling, Shirley Laska and Kai T. Erikson

A Simpler Way - Margaret Wheatley

Read Rumelt & Brown together. Try to imagine the book they would co-author - that will give you a sense of Strategy As Action

Note, this is a little painfully Market orientated, but if you can ignore the free-market rhetoric, it's good

Note, this one will also rewire your brain

Articles, Essays & Book Chapters

The Transformation of Silence Into Language and Action - Audre
Lorde

To Hell with Good Intentions - Ivan Illich

The Seductions of Quantification, Chapter 1, A World of
Quantification - Sally Eagle Merry

Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection, Introduction -
Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing

Seeing Like A State, Introduction - James C Scott

Planning, from The Development Dictionary - Arturo Escobar

Finding Ground in the Age of Groundlessness - Margaret Wheatley

Rationality and Power, Chapter 5 - Bent Flyvbjerg

The Container Principle - Crane Stookey

How Civilizations Fall: A Theory of Catabolic Collapse - John
Michael Greer

Note, this is a paper using the multiple
capitals model to explain civilisational
collapse

Information Design

The Fundamental Principles of Analytical Design (Chapter,
Beautiful Evidence) - Edward Tufte

The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within -
(Chapter, Beautiful Evidence) - Edward Tufte

EXTENDED UNIVERSE READING (If you want to go deep)

Strategy Overall

Strategy: A History - Lawrence Freedman

Note, this is a big book

The End of Power: From Boardrooms to Battlefields and Churches to States, Why Being In Charge Isn't What It Used to Be - Moises Naim

Tools for Conviviality - Ivan Illich

Ruined by Design: How Designers Destroyed The World and What We Can Do To Fix It - Mike Monteiro

Note that there is a big genre of "failure literature" that is useful to have a handle on - this is really the "why" of Effective Strategy.

Drift Into Failure and How Civilisations Collapse listed in Core Readings are the place to start. In general histories of specific catastrophes are very helpful.

Catastrophe in the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow - William R. Freudenburg

Reinventing Collapse: The Soviet Example and American Prospects - Dmitry Orlov

A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam - Neil Sheehan

Note, this is a very long read but if you get through it will rewire your brain

Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies - Charles Perrow

Natural Causes: Life, Death and the Illusion of Control by Barbara Ehrenreich

Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed by James C. Scott

Rationality & Power: Democracy in Practice - Bent Flyvbjerg

Note, this is a dry read but if you persist it's another rewire your brain book

Megaprojects and Risk: An Anatomy of Ambition by Bent Flyvbjerg
and Werner Rothengatter

The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning by Henry Mintzberg

Fool's Gold: How Unrestrained Greed Corrupted a Dream,
Shattered Global Markets and Unleashed a Catastrophe by Gillian
Tett

When Genius Failed: The Rise and Fall of Long Term Capital
Management by Roger Lowenstein

Systems Failure - Jake Chapman

Ps. The series Chernobyl is really worth
a watch

Strategy As Storytelling

Whose Story Is This?: Old Conflicts, New Chapters: Essays at the
Intersection - Rebecca Solnit

Narrative Economics: How Stories Go Viral and Drive Major
Economic Events - Robert J Schiller

The Science of Storytelling - Will Storr

The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Writing Flash Fiction: Tips
from Editors, Teachers, and Writers in the Field - Editor Tara Masih

Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell and Live the Best
Stories Will Rule the Future - Jonah Sachs

After the Future – Franco “Bifo” Berardi

The Essence of Scenarios: Learning from the Shell Experience -
Angela Wilkinson

Time Treks – The Uncertain Future of New and Old Despotisms -
Ashis Nandy

But What If We're Wrong? – Chuck Klosterman

Futurehype – Max Dublin

Strategy As Action

Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds and Actions -

Guy Kawasaki

This is Marketing: You Can't Be Seen Until You Learn To See -

Seth Godin

Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for

Collective Action - Elinor Ostrom

Superforecasting: The Art and Science of Prediction - Philip Tetlock

and Dan Gardner

Note, that this book shouldn't be read as a book about forecasting, it should be read as a book about how to make grounded "guesstimates" and to "run the numbers"

The Elements of Scrum - Chris Sims

The Checklist Manifesto - Atul Gawande

Process - Conflict & Negotiation

Sitting in the Fire - Arnold Mindell

Getting to Yes - William Ury & Roger Fisher

On Information

Why Information Grows: The Evolution of Order, from Atoms to

Economies - César Hidalgo

"Raw Data" is an Oxymoron - Lisa Gitelman et al

Curation: The power of selection in a world of excess - Michael

Bhaskar

Rethinking Economic Systems

Six Capitals: The Revolution Capitalism Has to Have - or Can

Accountants Save the Planet? - Jane Gleeson-White

Sabotage: The Business of Finance – Anastasia Nesvetailova,

Ronen Palan

The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money

and Life Paperback – Lynne Twist, Jack Canfield

Kids These Days: Human Capital and the Making of Millennials -
Malcolm Harris

The Age of Surveillance Capital: The Fight For a Human Future at
the Frontier of Power - Shoshana Zuboff

This is a key text on the consequences
of our current economic paradigm

Capital and Language: From the new economy to the war
economy - Christian Marazzi

Note these two books together weigh
in at over 2,000 pages, so they're
really "extended."

Capital - Thomas Piketty Capital and Ideology - Thomas Piketty

If you don't have the patience for that,
we suggest:
Thomas Piketty's Capital in the
Twenty-First Century: An Introduction
- Stephan Kaufmann and Ingo Stutzle
(it's less than 100 pages)

Strategy As Inner Game

Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds - Adrienne
Maree Brown

Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing
Your Organization and the World: A Fieldbook for Practitioners -
Ronald A. Heifetz et al.

Nonviolent Communication -- A Language of Life - Marshall B.
Rosenberg

Finite and Infinite Games - James P Carse

A Simpler Way - Margaret Wheatley

The One-Straw Revolution - Masanobu Fukuoka

Swamplands of the Soul: New Life in Dismal Places - James Hollis

Better Decisions: Direct your life. Influence your world 20 thought-
provoking lessons - Chris Grant

Understanding Patriarchy - bell hooks

Mindsight - Daniel J. Siegel

The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative
Power of Feeling Safe - Stephen W Porges

See also: Trauma Stewardship - Laura
van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk

Paradigm Shift

The Structure of Scientific Revolution - Thomas Kuhn

(Note the descriptions here of paradigm shift describe almost perfectly the shift from strategic planning to strategy in action)

Liquid Modernity - Zygmunt Bauman

Establishing the experimenting society: The historical origin of social experimentation according to the randomized controlled design - Trudy Dehue

Diversity and Complexity (Primers in Complex Systems) - Scott E. Page (Note I haven't read this yet)

Race

Unpacking The Knapsack of White Privilege - Peggy Macintosh

How To Be an Antiracist - Ibram X. Kendi

Migritude - Shailja Patel (poetry)

Postcolonial Banter - Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan (poetry)

How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective - Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

Heavy: An American Memoir - Kiese Laymon

Who Are We - Gary Younge

So You Want to Talk About Race - Ijeoma Oluo

Scheherazade Goes West - Fatima Mernissi

Brit(ish) - Afua Hirsch

The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism - Ashis Nandy

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism - Robin DiAngelo

Lone Ranger And Tonto Fistfight In Heaven - Sherman Alexie

Note, there is exponentially growing literature on race. We've included fiction in this list too as a way of gaining insight

Watch her on YouTube perform British Values

Fiction book

The Old Drift - Namwali Serpell

Fiction book

The British State: A Warning - Chris Nineham

Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya - Caroline Elkins

The Raj at War: A People's History of India's Second World War - Yasmin Khan

Darker Nations, The: A People's History of the Third World - Vijay Prashad

Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent - Priyamvada Gopal

I haven't read this but it's on my list

Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism - Ariella Aisha Azoulay

This isn't out yet:

Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America - Ijeoma Oluo

Articles

Design Thinking Critiques

https://medium.com/@sts_news/design-thinking-is-kind-of-like-syphilis-its-contagious-and-rots-your-brains-842ed078af29

<https://hbr.org/2018/09/design-thinking-is-fundamentally-conservative-and-preserves-the-status-quo>

Complexity

<https://hbr.org/2011/09/embracing-complexity>

Scenario Planning

The Law of Regression to the Tail - Bent Flyvbjerg

Scenarios: Uncharted Waters Ahead

The Man Who Saw the Future <https://www.strategy-business.com/article/8220?gko=4447f>

The use and abuse of scenarios

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/the-use-and-abuse-of-scenarios>

Living in the Futures <https://hbr.org/2013/05/living-in-the-futures>

Why adapt to the future when you can create it?

<https://reospartners.com/tools/transformative-scenarios/>

Are you considering all the plausible futures for your strategy?

<https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/programmes/oxford-scenarios-programme>

A new set of post Covid scenarios have just been published:

https://www.worldenergy.org/assets/downloads/World_Energy_Council_-_Covid_Scenarios_Summary_-_FINAL.pdf

Future Texts Future Texts-Alondra Nelson

Essay - Ashis Nandy - A futurist beyond futurists

Bearing Witness to the future - Ashish Nandy

Afrofuturism - Articles of Alondra Nelson

Inner Game

7 Ways to Stimulate Our VAGUS NERVE, Improve Our Emotional Responses, Relationship Skills and Favour Change - Fabio Sinibaldi