

HOW YOU READ 50+ BOOKS IN ONE YEAR

AN UNCONVENTIONAL WAY TO READ BOOKS THAT WORKS — EVEN FOR SLOW READERS WITH NO TIME OR ATTENTION SPAN

(FOLKS LIKE ME)

← JUSTIN OWINGS



IF YOU ...

- ... Feel like a slow reader
- ... Read every word in your head
- ... Only read a few sentences before checking your phone

I KNOW THE FEELING

You want to read, but it can be terribly frustrating.



Last year, despite my reading fails—including a 4-month break from reading—I still finished nearly 60 books.

I've finished 27 more so far in 2023.

That's more than I read in all of 2021.

Here's how I did it, and you can too.

SPEED READING
NOT REQUIRED



WHEN
KNOWLEDGE
=
POWER

BOOKS
=
ON
POWER
FOR
TAP

SLEIGHT OF MOUTH Robert Dilts
Ship Around!
DANIEL SUAREZ CRITICAL MASS
BRAVE NEW WORLD ALDOUS HUXLEY

Bronze Age Mindset
MIND AND NATURE
Generative Trance
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF Benjamin Franklin
UFO or GOD

AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH
MARSHALL McLuhan
CAL NEWPORT
THE 48 LAWS OF POWER
THE 50th LAW
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WHAT YOU NEED

1. BOOKS (LOTS OF THEM!)

2. HEADPHONES (BUT THAT'S NOT ALL)

3. HABITS (BEHAVIOR CHANGE)



#1 GET LOTS OF BOOKS

You'll need books to read immediately.

You'll also need books "on deck" so you can always keep going.

As you spin up this system, the books you have to read next will motivate you.

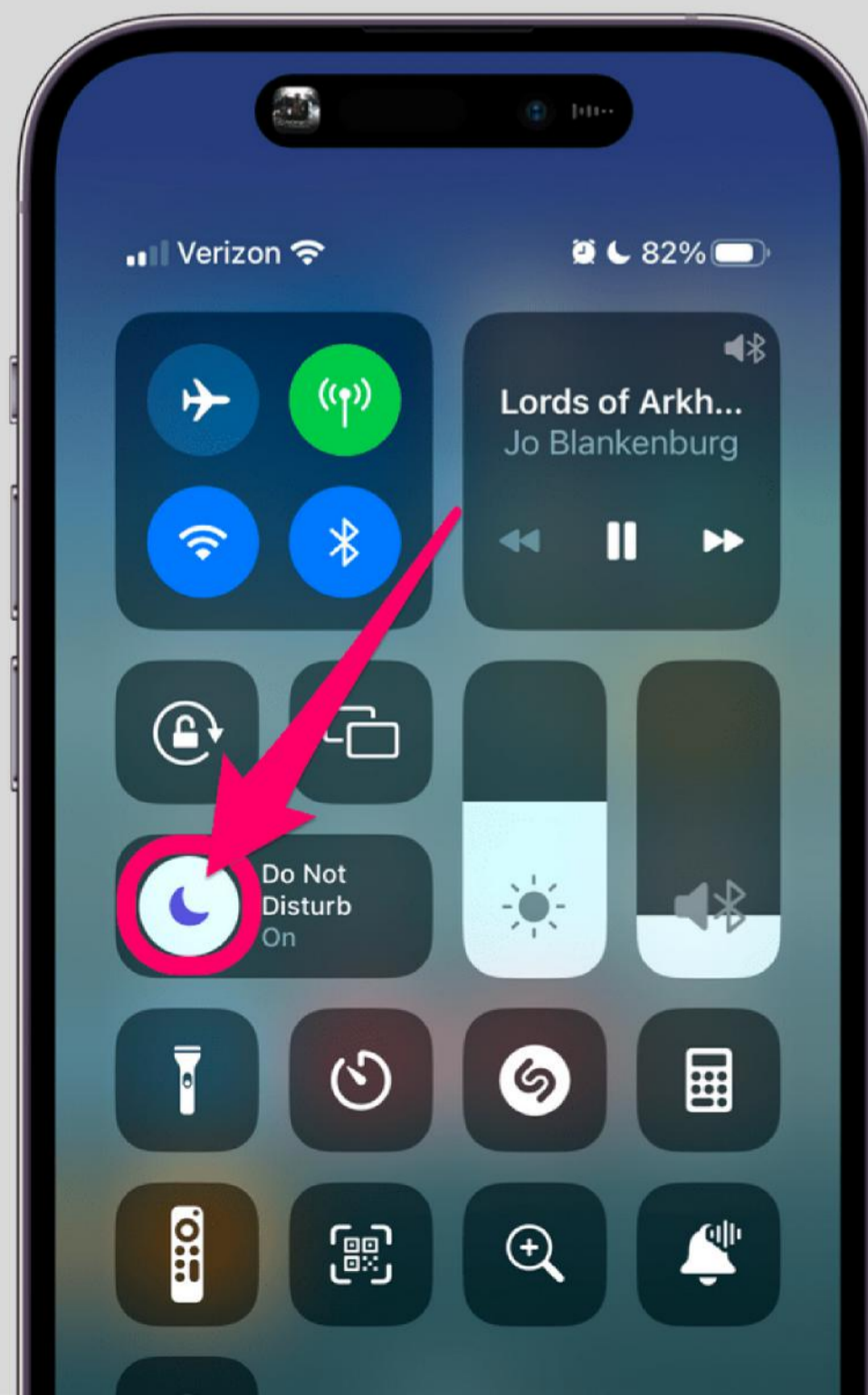
I prefer physical books for the cover designs, the weight, the texture of the pages, and more. Books on the shelf are trophies. They tell a story about your mind.

Ebooks are okay too. (You do you boo.)

Whatever you choose, you'll still need your phone nearby.

Just know that you must, **absolutely must**, distance yourself from distraction.

Put your phone on **DO NOT DISTURB.**



#2 GET HEADPHONES + ???

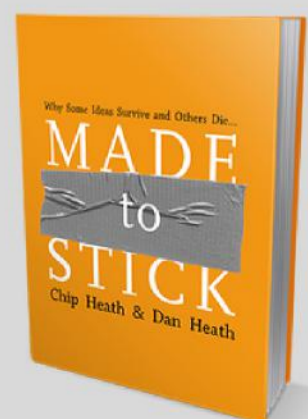
Here's the unconventional part. You are going to need both:

1. **Headphones** (or bluetooth speakers, one or the other and you can go back and forth all you want), and
2. **Audiobooks for the books you're reading**

Yes, you read that right. (I'll explain why in a moment.) My typical setup combines Bose QuietComfort earbuds + Audible + the physical book.



audible





You're probably thinking:

“This just got real expensive!”

But did it?

Once you can knock down knowledge like cold ones on a Friday night, you'll be able to tap into knowledge on whatever topics you want.

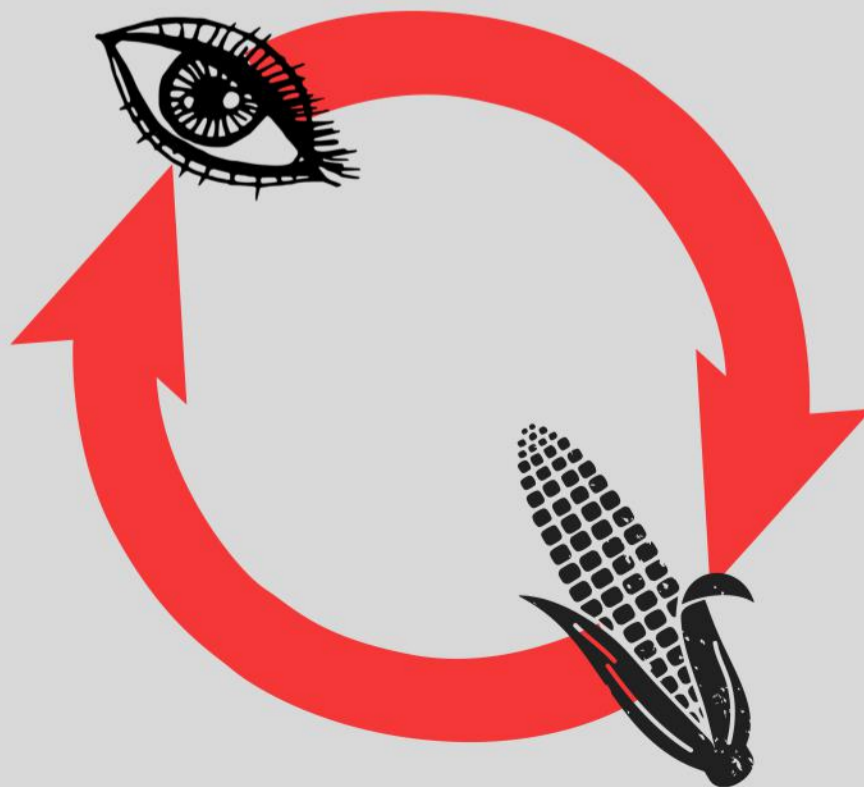
That's powerful. That's worth it.



AUDIO + VISUAL ... WHY?

This one-two punch works because as you read the book with your eyeballs line by line, you simultaneously hear the words you see read to you by the audiobook.

No need to read silently in your head. (More on this below.) Now, what you see will reinforce what you hear, and what you hear will reinforce what you see.



DODGE SUBVOCALIZATION

When you read you probably vocalize the text to yourself silently in your head. This is called subvocalization. You're probably doing this right now.

My own ability to subvocalize takes work. As a result, my reading speed is slow. When I outsource subvocalization to an audiobook, the problem goes away.

More on subvocalization

Subvocalization is really weird. When you do it—it also happens when you think to yourself in words—you physically go through the motions needed in your throat to speak. This occurs in your throat even though you aren't saying anything aloud! Subvocalization is how electronic voiceboxes (e.g. electrolarynx) work, helping folks who have laryngectomies speak again. NASA has even researched how to use subvocalization for astronauts.



READING 3X+ FASTER

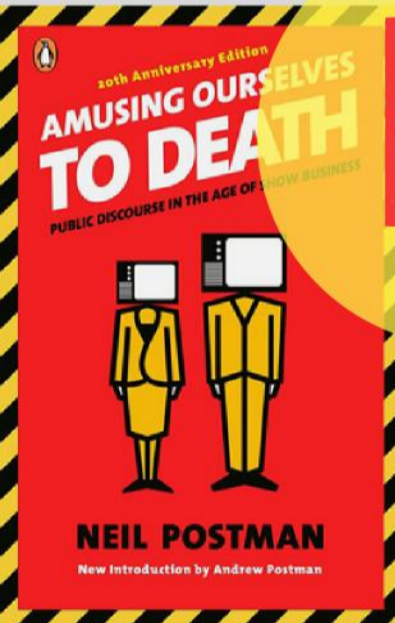
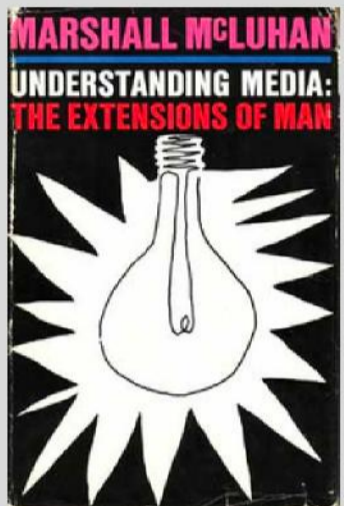
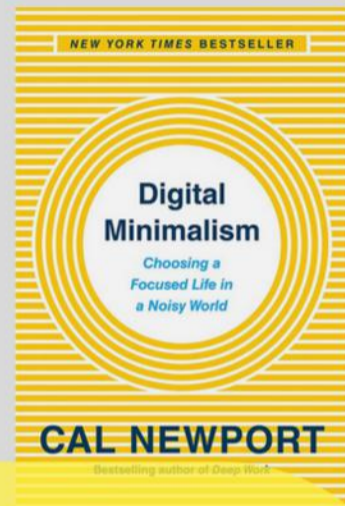
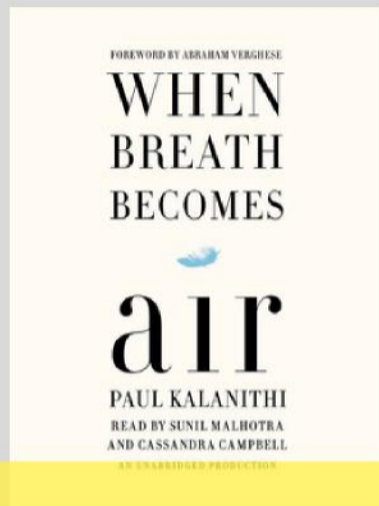
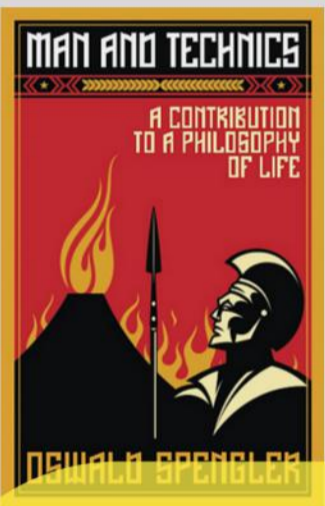
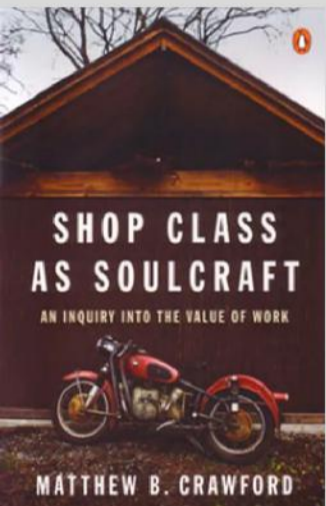
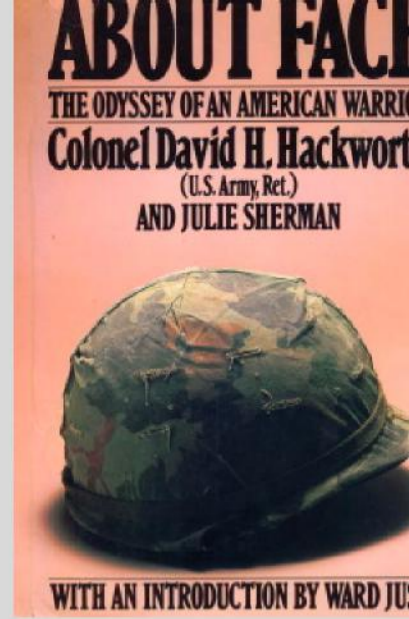
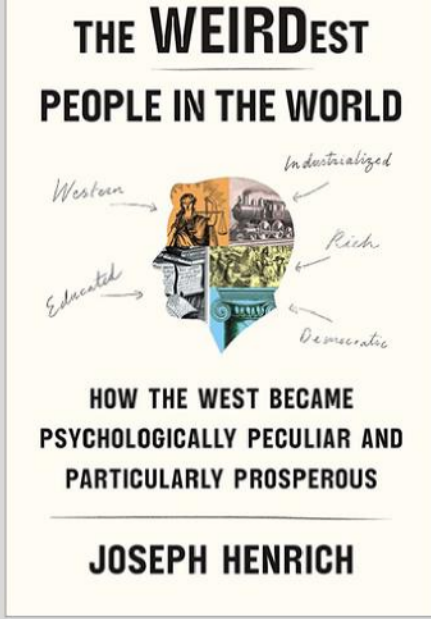
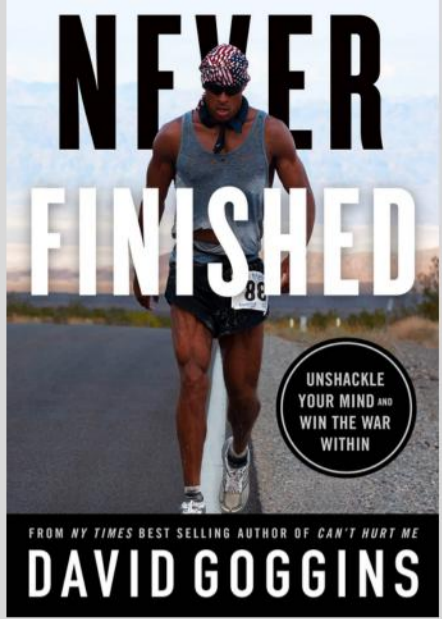
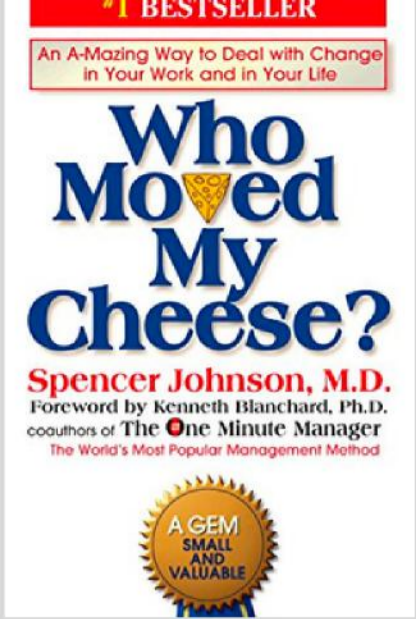
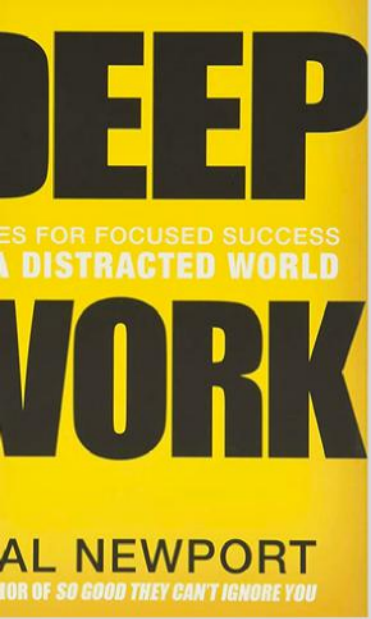


Using the audio+visual reading combo, I can crank the audiobook speed up significantly and simultaneously match that speed with my visual reading.

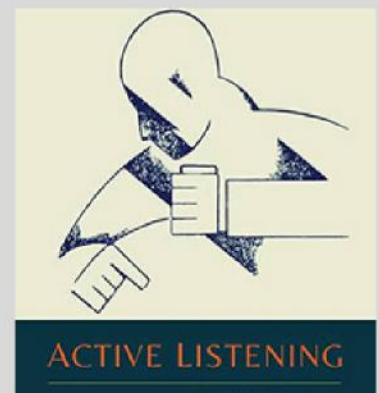
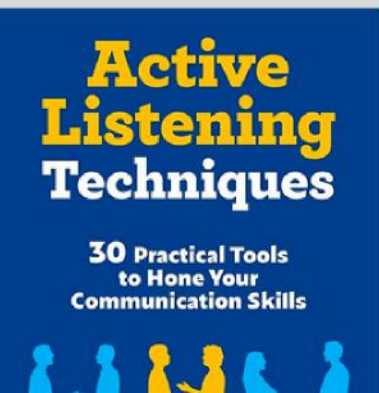
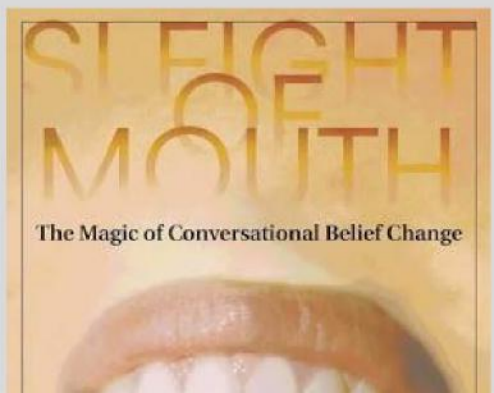
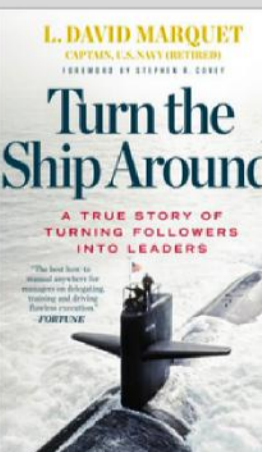
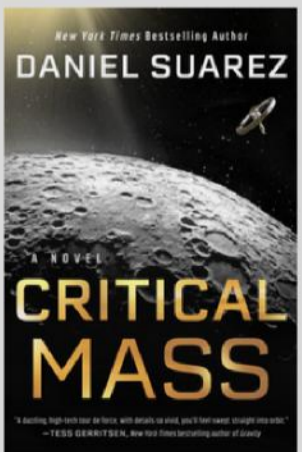
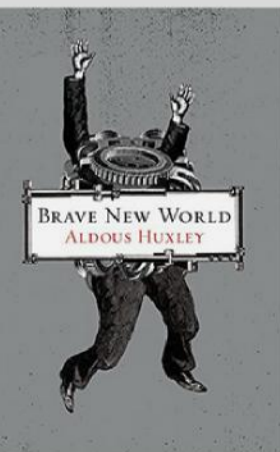
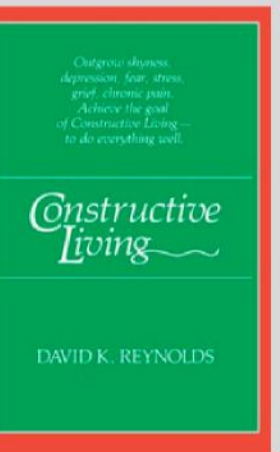
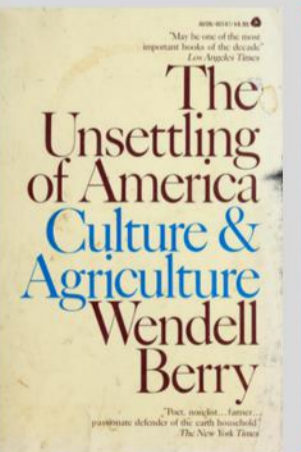
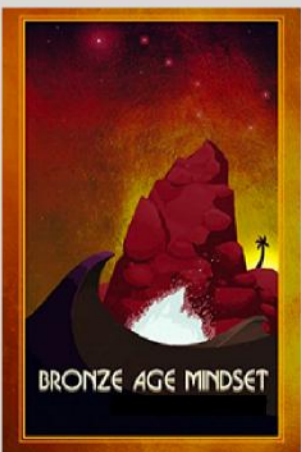
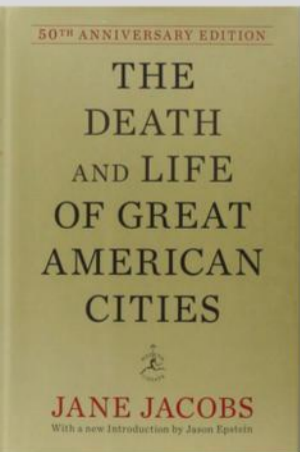
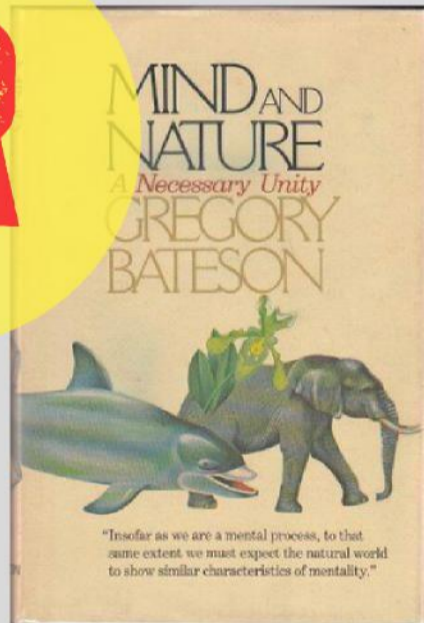
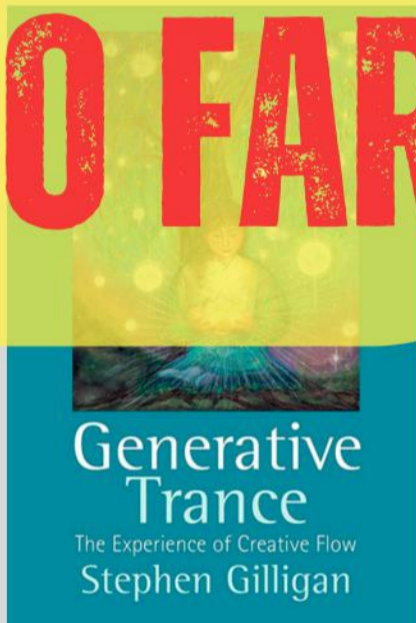
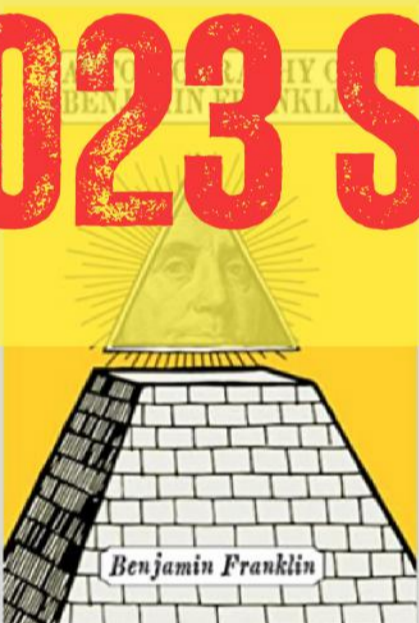
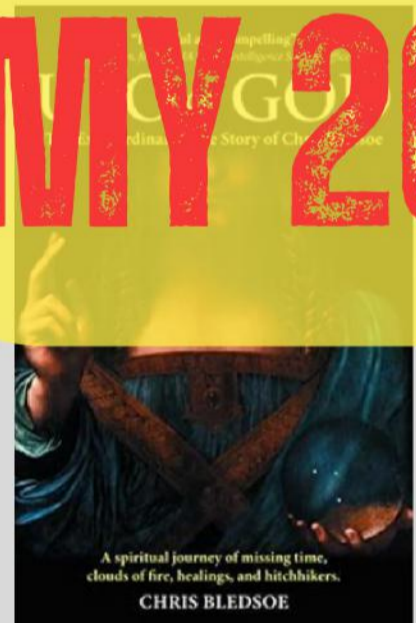
I most often use the 2.5–3.0X range. Sometimes even 3.5X. Depends on the book.

So in practice, you can blast through Adam Grant's 3 most popular books—if that's your thing—in 3 weeks.

Now, you can read one book a week—that's 52 books in a year.



MY 2023 SO FAR



WHAT ABOUT ...

“Okay, sounds intriguing But what do you do when there is no audiobook?”

So glad you asked! Last year, one out of every two books I read lacked an audiobook, so I just read these books “the old fashioned way.”

The good news is that even though I can't read good, it seems that the audio + visual system is training me to be a better reader overall. Practice!

Time to bring it all together with #3.



#3 MAKE READING A **HABIT**

Anyone can make time to read every day, even if only a little. Why not target a habit to read 15–30 minutes, 5 to 6 days a week?

New habits don't "stick" overnight. So tinker, experiment, and persist! You do have the time. Do the work to find it. Find what works for you:

- Read for 30 minutes after dinner
- Take 15 minutes 2X/day, morning and evening
- Add reading to the end of an existing routine, like brushing your teeth

Prioritize, and make no excuses!

THIS IS LOKI →



LOKI ACCEPTS

NO EXCUSES



HELPFUL TIPS

"MARK MY WORDS"

Keep a pen or a highlighter nearby so you can highlight passages.

"Dogear" pages that you want to go back to for future reference.

This may be sacrilege to some and definitely don't do this to books from the library!



NEIL POSTMAN
AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH

MARSHAL MCLUHAN
UNDERSTANDING MEDIA

CAL NEWPORT
DIGITAL MINIMALISM

PAUL KALANITHI
WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR

RICHARD ROHR
THE WISDOM PATTERN

NOTE THE DOGGEARED PAGES



REWARD YOUR SUCCESS

I loosely track how often I read by using tick marks made on a task. I get a mark even when I only read for a few minutes that day.

"What task list?" I create a weekly 3x5 index card for my non-work "todos." I have "READ" on the list, and I mark every time I read, aiming for at least 6 marks/week.

Listing and then tracking your weekly reading habit keeps it in focus.



2 BOOKS AT THE SAME TIME

Stop reading books sequentially, one at a time.

Instead, always have an audiobook+book going alongside a separate, different book, one that you read "old school" (these "side books" usually lack an audiobook option).

Go back and forth between your different books as you see fit.

This helps sustain momentum.

(ANTI) **TURN OFF SOCIAL MEDIA**

This doesn't include LinkedIn—that is, unless you're obsessive about checking it.

Let obsession be your guide:

If you find checking social media apps quickly sucks you into infinite scroll hell, good news! You just found time to read!

Log out. Turn it off. Kill the notifications!



THE END?

It's time to go forth and read!

Tell me what you're reading now or next
in the comments!

👉 FOLLOW ME **(BUT ONLY IF YOU LIKE UNCONVENTIONAL IDEAS)**

👉 QUESTIONS OR THOUGHTS? **(COMMENT!)**



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