



Books for 2025

Red Rising by Pierce Brown, recommended by Coffee Club (Morgan and Olli)

The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky, recommended by Ben

More of Marilynne Robinson's books

Thanks for reading!

Let's talk books: daniel.kittaka@gmail.com

MOTION & REST

2024

Books of 2024

Brad and Steve at the Growth Equation encourage reading books as one remedy to the scrolling ticker of constant shallow information crossing our brains these days. Books can't be consumed in seconds or minutes. They require us to dedicate hours to consume and have been crafted by writers over many months. That said, after discussing the limited number of books we'll have time to read with my friend, Dave, I've also been trying to be more discerning about the books I consume (while still leaving space for reading for fun). I started logging book recommendations as a way to curate my future reading and connectedness to the readers around me.

There are two books which I read this year which stand out:

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson

The passages of love and care in this book were incredibly memorable.

"I'm writing this in part to tell you that if you ever wonder what you've done in your life, and everyone does wonder sooner or later, you have been God's grace to me, a miracle, something more than a miracle. You may not remember me very well at all, and it may seem to you to be no great thing to have been the good child of an old man in a shabby little town you will no doubt leave behind. If only I had the words to tell you."

“I suppose you're not prettier than most children. You're just a nice-looking boy, a bit slight, well scrubbed and well mannered. All that is fine, but it's your existence I love you for, mainly. Existence seems to me now the most remarkable thing that could ever be imagined.” - p. 52

I've come across references to Robinson's work in various sources. The source I remember most clearly and consistently is Mario Fraioli's weekly newsletter, The Morning Shakeout.

The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron

I saw my friend Corey was reading this book so I checked the ebook out of the library not realizing that it was a 12-week program. As library loans are three weeks, I returned the ebook and later found a used copy for just a few dollars. In the process of moving apartments this past fall, I got rid of a lot of books, but kept this one waiting for the perfect moment to begin the 12-week program. Then feeling a bit stuck in life, I decided there was no “perfect” moment and I began the program. Maybe being stuck is/was the perfect moment to do something new.

Some ways the program has challenged me:

- Cameron requests we open ourselves to the concept of a universe (or higher power) which inspires and nourishes our creative efforts. The harm of Christianity in my life has made it difficult to put faith in a benevolent universe, but I think there is value in living with the expectation of affirming synergy instead of random indifference. I tried to rationalize that the atomic connectedness of the uncaring universe is the reason for this phenomenon, but I am also at a point where I think this is just something I need to take on faith.

- Cameron's program asks us to find strength in treating ourselves as a sacred resource. In physiology: to grow, a system needs to be stressed, but I've been practicing a twisted version of this and gone beyond stressing my mind and body and instead treated myself poorly in the name of growing stronger. I am still working on matching motion and rest.
- learning to ask what I have to gain by staying stuck; “It's often safer to be in chains than to be free.” Franz Kafka, The Trial
- practicing play or rather non-productivity or maybe exercising creativity for its own merit - valuing my creativity. This is part of treating myself as sacred.

Other Notable Reads - These books were also meaningful to me, but I don't have the time or space here to articulate the specifics, please let me know if you've also connected with these books.

Mongrel by Hanako Footman, discovered in the new books at Multnomah County Library

The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love by bell hooks, discussed with JJ

Million Dollar Weekend by Noah Kahan, discussed with John

The Year Without Pants: WordPress.com and the Future of Work by Scott Berkun, Mario Fraioli through The Morning Shakeout Newsletter

Shortcomings by Adrian Tomine, I saw the 2023 film on a plane and had to follow up by reading the graphic novel **Tightrope** by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl Wudunn, I got a copy of this from my parents in 2020

The Night Parade: A Speculative Memoir by Jami Nakamura Lin, Jami is a friend from Camp Lake Chi-ko (Chicago-area, Japanese American Church Camp)

The Sympathizer by Viet Than Nguyen, discussed with Victor