

Books and Analyses for Better Decisions, From Desire to Capital Allocation

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Andrew Wilkinson’s recommendation of *Wanting* leads a set of founder and investor picks on intrinsic motivation, long-term organizational thinking, product design, attention, and policy outcomes. Direct links are included for the Anthropic operating-model video and Texas solar analysis.

Most compelling: *Wanting* — a practical lens on borrowed ambition

- **Title:** *Wanting*
- **Content type:** Book
- **Author:** Luke Burgis
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Andrew Wilkinson
- **Key takeaway:** Wilkinson called the book a “revelation” for making mimetic desire accessible: people can adopt desires modeled by peers, such as status purchases or career markers. He contrasts these “thin” desires with “thick” desires—quiet, intrinsic interests that do not depend on signaling to others. [1]
- **Why it matters:** It gives readers a concrete question for evaluating ambition: is this goal personally meaningful, or primarily borrowed from the people around them?

Books for operating over the long term

Finite and Infinite Games

- **Content type:** Book

- **Author:** James Carse
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Tobi Lütke
- **Key takeaway:** Lütke called the book profound and underappreciated. In his framing, a finite game has an endpoint, while an infinite game—such as fitness—is not a destination. [2]
- **Why it matters:** It offers a useful distinction for leaders weighing short, bounded wins against pursuits that must continue over time.

The Outsiders

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author:** William Thorndike
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Andrew Wilkinson
- **Key takeaway:** Wilkinson said he loved the book’s account of 12 low-profile CEOs who compounded results over decades. He emphasized its central lesson: capital allocation—putting money into the highest-return opportunities—can matter as much as innovation or management. [3]
- **Why it matters:** It is a focused read on the long-run consequences of investment and acquisition decisions.

Parkinson’s Law

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author:** Not specified in the source notes
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Tobi Lütke
- **Key takeaway:** Lütke gives it to Shopify executives as an 80-page, comic treatment of how companies become unnecessarily silly and bureaucratic; he sees humor as a way to identify and replace bad organizational habits. [2, 4]
- **Why it matters:** The recommendation is especially relevant for teams trying to recognize organizational bloat before it becomes normalized.

Mindset

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author:** Carol Dweck
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Tobi Lütke
- **Key takeaway:** Lütke described it as especially insightful on the distinction between growth and fixed mindsets, which he sees as central to the change people need to make. [4]
- **Why it matters:** It is a direct resource for readers thinking about learning, feedback, and development within teams.

Design, attention, and foundational reading

The Design of Everyday Things

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author:** Not specified in the source notes
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Tobi Lütke
- **Key takeaway:** Lütke said he is a huge fan and connected the book to the need to complain about—and improve—bad design. [4]
- **Why it matters:** It supplies a design-oriented perspective for anyone building products or systems that people must use every day.

Huberman Lab episode with Anna Lembke

- **Content type:** Podcast episode
- **Creator:** Huberman Lab; guest Anna Lembke
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Andrew Wilkinson
- **Key takeaway:** Wilkinson credited the conversation on dopamine and addiction with helping him understand his own experience of digital overload. He relayed its comparison between repeated stimulation and diminishing enjoyment, along with a four-week “dopamine fast” recommendation for students struggling with social-media and video-game use. [1]
- **Why it matters:** This is a personal, experience-backed recommendation for readers examining the relationship between digital habits, craving, and motivation.

Sapiens and *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*

- **Content type:** Books
- **Author:** Not specified in the source notes
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in the source notes
- **Recommended by:** Naval Ravikant
- **Key takeaway:** Ravikant said he was rereading *Sapiens* because he loves it, and had read *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics* at least twice as part of a recurring science-reading practice. [5]
- **Why it matters:** Repeated reading is a stronger signal than a casual title mention: both books have remained in Ravikant’s active reading rotation.

Two timely direct links

Analysis of Texas’s utility-scale solar growth

- **Title:** Texas Dispatch analysis citing Texas2036 (*full article title not specified*)
- **Content type:** Article/analysis
- **Author/creator:** Texas Dispatch, citing Texas2036 analysis

- **Link/URL:** <https://buff.ly/8X2OSCh>
- **Recommended by:** Bill Gurley
- **Key takeaway:** Gurley highlighted the analysis as a worthwhile read for people interested in policy and real-world impact. It reports that Texas overtook California as the top U.S. producer of utility-scale solar power after a 25-year rise from a single Austin array to nearly one-fifth of U.S. utility-scale generation. [6, 7]
- **Why it matters:** It pairs a measurable policy outcome with Gurley’s reminder to prioritize results over performative claims.

Video on how Anthropic operates

- **Content type:** Video
- **Creator:** Not specified in the source notes
- **Link/URL:** <https://youtu.be/ra0-ZvVApGk?si=SxERM7sZmKsrJhSv>
- **Recommended by:** Jason Lemkin
- **Key takeaway:** Lemkin shared the video as a resource for learning more about how Anthropic operates. [8]
- **Why it matters:** It is the day’s most direct operational-AI video pointer, with an immediately usable link.

The strongest pattern across these organic picks is **decision quality**: distinguish intrinsic from socially modeled goals, treat organizations and capital allocation as long-duration work, and use evidence rather than stated intent to judge outcomes.

Sources

1. Dopamine Fasts, Cruise Ship Investing, and Elon Musk vs. Jeff Bezos Feuds with Andrew Wilkinson, ...
2. Tobi Lütke: Calm Progress
3. #174 with Andrew Wilkinson - How to Network with Billionaires, Andrew and Sam’s Recent Investment...
4. #41 Tobi Lütke: The Trust Battery
5. #18 Naval Ravikant: The Angel Philosopher
6. X post by @bgurley
7. X post by @Texas_Dispatch
8. X post by @jasonlk