

# Carmack's Law Resurfaces as Keith Rabois Shares Stress, Standards, and History Picks

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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After filtering out self-promotional material, today's authentic picks split between Tim Sweeney's resurfacing of Carmack's Law source material and Keith Rabois's recommendations on stress, performance, human behavior, history, and hiring.

### What made the cut

After filtering out self-promotional material, today's useful signal came in two clusters: Tim Sweeney resurfacing the primary sources behind Carmack's Law, and Keith Rabois recommending books and videos on stress, elite standards, human behavior, history, and hiring [1, 2, 3].

### Most compelling recommendation

#### Doom 3 interviews

- **Content type:** Webpage / interview archive
- **Author/creator:** Fabien Sanglard
- **Who recommended it:** Tim Sweeney
- **Key takeaway:** Sweeney points readers to this page as the original source for Carmack's Law, then argues that the prediction proved prescient in computer graphics and is now clearly so in AI [1, 2].
- **Why it matters:** This is the strongest pick because Sweeney is not sharing it as trivia; he explicitly places the idea alongside Moore's Law in importance [2].

### Companion read: Gordon Moore's 1965 paper

- **Content type:** Paper
- **Author/creator:** Gordon Moore
- **Who recommended it:** Tim Sweeney
- **Key takeaway:** He shares Moore's paper as the comparison point for the scale of Carmack's Law [2].
- **Why it matters:** It gives readers the historical benchmark Sweeney invokes when making his case [2].

“Ultimately the prediction, which proved prescient in computer graphics and is now clearly so of AI, is as important as Moore's...”  
[2]

### Keith Rabois's operating recommendations

Rabois's picks are less a conventional startup reading list than a compact set of resources on how ambitious people handle pressure, standards, judgment, and hiring [3].

#### *The Upside of Stress*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Kelly McGonigal
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in source material
- **Who recommended it:** Keith Rabois
- **Key takeaway:** He says the book argues that if you want to be happy, healthy, or wealthy, you need more stress in your life, not less, and he calls the evidence compelling and the book transformative [3].
- **Why it matters:** It is his clearest recommendation for reinterpreting a condition many operators try to avoid rather than use [3].

#### *The Jordan Rules*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in source material
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in source material
- **Who recommended it:** Keith Rabois
- **Key takeaway:** He recommends it as the better guide to elite performance, with the blunt lesson that if you want to be Michael Jordan, you have to act like Michael Jordan [3].
- **Why it matters:** It is the sharpest performance-culture recommendation in today's batch [3].

### Shakespeare

- **Content type:** Plays / collected works
- **Author/creator:** Shakespeare

- **Link/URL:** Not provided in source material
- **Who recommended it:** Keith Rabois
- **Key takeaway:** Rabois says that everything important to learn about humans was written by Shakespeare, and that reading Shakespeare is better than customer research [3].
- **Why it matters:** It shows he treats human observation as a practical advantage, not just a cultural interest [3].

### *Nuremberg Trial*

- **Content type:** Film
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in source material
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in source material
- **Who recommended it:** Keith Rabois
- **Key takeaway:** He says it contains lessons applicable to the modern world, taught him several things he did not know, and is useful for understanding historical travesties and how to prevent them [3].
- **Why it matters:** This is the clearest recommendation today for sharpening present-day judgment through history [3].

### **Eric Glyman’s hiring speech**

- **Content type:** Talk / online video
- **Author/creator:** Eric Glyman
- **Link/URL:** Not provided in source material
- **Who recommended it:** Keith Rabois
- **Key takeaway:** Rabois says the speech covers hiring in detail and is fairly similar to his own views on the topic [3].
- **Why it matters:** It is the only recommendation in today’s mix aimed directly at a core startup function: hiring [3].

### **Bottom line**

The highest-signal item today is Sweeney’s Carmack’s Law source material because it comes with a precise claim about lasting importance for AI. The rest of the list is most useful as a pattern: Rabois’s recommendations repeatedly point readers toward better handling of stress, higher standards, deeper models of human behavior, and stronger historical judgment [2, 3].

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### **Sources**

1. X post by @TimSweeneyEpic
2. X post by @TimSweeneyEpic
3. Hard truths about building in the AI era | Keith Rabois (Khosla Ventures)