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Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Pete Florence names leadership books by Bill Walsh and John Wooden. Paul Graham and Garry Tan cite an NBER paper on California's billionaire tax. Matt Mullenweg and Sarah Guo point to pieces on WordPress and on internet security.

Pete Florence: two coaches on leadership

Asked for a book recommendation on The Generalist, robotics founder Pete Florence named two coaches: **Bill Walsh** of the San Francisco 49ers and **John Wooden** of UCLA. His answer brought the conversation back to teaching and coaching, which interviewer says have both been big parts of his life. [1] The episode's reading list gives the books as:

- *The Score Takes Care of Itself: My Philosophy of Leadership* by Walsh (link) [1]
- *Wooden on Leadership: How to Create a Winning Organization* by Wooden (link) [1]

Paul Graham and Garry Tan: NBER paper on California's billionaire tax

Both quoted an NBER paper by **Benjamin Jaros and Joshua Rauh** (paper). It estimates that California's Billionaire Tax Act would collect about \$30 billion. Once income taxes lost to people leaving the state are counted, the mean net

present value is negative \$39 billion. [2] Graham’s summary: the tax “would actually lose the state money.” [3] Tan read the paper as evidence that California keeps trying to “eat the Golden Goose.” [4]

Matt Mullenweg: two pieces on why AI still needs WordPress

- **Jono Alderson, “Your website needs a brain.”** Alderson’s argument: if you replace your CMS with AI-generated pages, you inherit “a thousand publishing problems.” [5] Mullenweg posted his own 134-word condensed version (he says he cut it from 2,910 words using Fable). The key point is that AI can regenerate pages but not the shared records and dependency tracking that connect them. His takeaway: “Use AI on top of it, not instead of it.” In the same post he plugged his own new product, Spacefast. [6]
- **Elementor, “WordPress: born ready.”** Shared by Miriam Schwab, the post argues that WordPress’s REST API, which has existed since 2016, makes it ready for AI agents. Every object has a JSON endpoint, and agents can find routes on their own through /wp-json/. [7] Mullenweg’s endorsement: “Real ones know.” [8]

Sarah Guo: Ars Technica on compromised TLS certificates

Guo pointed to Ars Technica’s “The Internet goes on high alert after discovery of 8 compromised TLS certs” [9] as “today’s example of why ai people are legitimately stressed about internet resilience in the face of agentic cyber attacks.” She writes that eMudhra’s intermediate CA private keys turned out to be tiny numbers like 4 and 56. That meant anyone could recover them in seconds and mint a trusted certificate for any site. Browsers have blocked the bad certificates, but “the long tail of servers, containers, and devices” still trusts them. [10] She credits the term “vulnpocalypse” to @dok2001. [11]

Shorter mentions

- **Vinod Khosla** shared a conversation between Brad Porter and John Giannandrea. It covers why one research paper could make models ten times faster, and what it takes to move AI from research to deployment. [12]
- **Elon Musk** said in an interview that a book on “suicidal empathy” is “well written” and “points out some good good things.” In his telling, the book argues that high-trust, high-empathy societies help explain the West’s prosperity. Musk added that empathy goes wrong when people assume everyone thinks like they do. [13] The transcript gives no title and renders the author’s name as “God’s,” which is probably the psychologist Gad Saad. That attribution is our inference.

Sources

1. Pete Florence: When Robots Improvise
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5. X post by @jonoalderson
6. X post by @photomatt
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9. X post by @arstechnica
10. X post by @saranormous
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13. Elon Musk: “Humans Won’t Be in Control” When AI Becomes Smarter Than Us