# Smalltalk Best Practices, the Bitcoin Whitepaper, and Bayesian LLMs

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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## Smalltalk Best Practices, the Bitcoin Whitepaper, and Bayesian LLMs

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Today's strongest organic recommendations lean foundational rather than topical: DHH credits Kent Beck with shaping how he writes software, Brian Armstrong revisits the Bitcoin whitepaper, and Martin Casado surfaces a formal video on LLMs. The rest of the set extends into company design, robotics-adjacent reading, and one sharp essay on consensus culture.

### Most compelling recommendation: *Smalltalk Best Practices*

DHH's Kent Beck recommendation is the strongest direct craft signal in the batch. He says *Smalltalk Best Practices* is the most influential book on how he writes software, and that it still holds up now [1].

> "It is the most influential book on how I write software that I've ever read." [1]

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Kent Beck [1]
- **Link/URL:** None provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** DHH [1]
- **Key takeaway:** A short, nitty-gritty programming book that shaped his software craftsmanship more than any other [1]
- **Why it matters:** This is the clearest "this changed how I work" endorsement in today's set [1]

## Foundational technical material

### *Bitcoin whitepaper*

Brian Armstrong's recommendation stands out for the depth of the rationale. He says the paper described a decentralized network for moving value, then showed how digital systems could achieve provable scarcity [2].

> "This might be one of the most important things I've read in a long time." [2]

- **Content type:** Whitepaper
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the cited material
- **Link/URL:** None provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** Brian Armstrong [2]
- **Key takeaway:** It frames Bitcoin as a decentralized network for moving value and introduces mathematically provable scarcity in the digital world [2]
- **Why it matters:** Armstrong says he reread it multiple times and tried implementing the protocol himself to fully understand it [2]



*Brian Armstrong - CEO of Coinbase | Podcast | In Good Company | Norges Bank Investment Management (3:46)*

### Vishal Misra on why LLMs are "exactly Bayesian"

- **Content type:** Video conversation [3]
- **Author/creator:** Vishal Misra [3]

- **Link/URL:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwDmKsnhl08 [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Martin Casado [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Misra argues, both empirically and formally, that LLMs are exactly Bayesian [3]
- **Why it matters:** Casado calls it foundational work for understanding both the capabilities and limitations of LLMs [3]

## How operators build

### *Maverick*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Ricardo Semler [1]
- **Link/URL:** None provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** DHH [1]
- **Key takeaway:** The book gave him permission to think much more irreverently about company design, including valuing long-term contribution over visible busyness [1]
- **Why it matters:** DHH says 37signals took inspiration from it for *Getting Real* and *Rework* [1]

### *Extreme Programming*

- **Content type:** Book / methodology
- **Author/creator:** Kent Beck [1]
- **Link/URL:** None provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** DHH [1]
- **Key takeaway:** Beck challenged waterfall and big upfront design with a different way of working before agile became mainstream [1]
- **Why it matters:** DHH frames it as pioneering a style of software development that later became standard [1]

### *Jab, Jab, Right Hook*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Gary Vee [1]
- **Link/URL:** None provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** DHH [1]
- **Key takeaway:** Give repeatedly first, then make the occasional call to action [1]
- **Why it matters:** It offers a simple sequencing rule for communication and audience-building [1]

## Cross-disciplinary reading around robotics

### *Worlds I See*

- **Content type:** Book / biography

- **Author/creator:** Fei-Fei Li [4]
- **Link/URL:** https://www.amazon.com/Worlds-I-See-Fei-Fei-Li/dp/1250389895 [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Karol Hausman [4]
- **Key takeaway:** Hausman discusses how he relates to Fei-Fei Li's biography [4]
- **Why it matters:** It broadens today's list beyond technical texts and shows which biography resonated with a robotics founder [4]

### *The Inner Game of Tennis*

- **Content type:** Book
- **Author/creator:** Not specified in the cited material
- **Link/URL:** https://www.amazon.com/Inner-Game-Tennis-Classic-Performance/dp/0679778314 [4]
- **Who recommended it:** Karol Hausman [4]
- **Key takeaway:** Hausman draws parallels between the book and robotics [4]
- **Why it matters:** It shows a robotics founder borrowing mental-performance ideas from outside robotics [4]

## One broader lens

### Dan Wang's last letter on China

- **Content type:** Letter / essay
- **Author/creator:** Dan Wang [5]
- **Link/URL:** None provided in the source material
- **Who recommended it:** William Hockey [5]
- **Key takeaway:** Hockey highlights its critique that San Francisco and Beijing are the two most consensus societies the writer has been to [5]
- **Why it matters:** It is the only recommendation in this batch explicitly aimed at understanding consensus culture rather than product, code, or management [5]

## Pattern worth noting

The best recommendations today skew foundational: a whitepaper, an LLM theory video, older software books, and a few cross-disciplinary texts that founders connect back to robotics and company design [2, 3, 1, 4]

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**Sources**

1. $100M+ Advice That'll Piss Off Every Business Guru (ft. DHH)
2. Brian Armstrong - CEO of Coinbase | Podcast | In Good Company | Norges Bank Investment Management

3. X post by @martin_casado
4. Why Robots Still Struggle With Simple Tasks (And What Might Finally Change That) | Karol Hausman, Co-Founder & CEO of Physical Intelligence
5. How to bet on yourself (without venture capital)