

Three high-signal book picks: hospitality culture, inference infrastructure, and career direction amid AI anxiety

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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By Recommended Reading from Tech Founders • February 24, 2026

Three organic recommendations from founders/investors: a book that reshaped how Airbnb's founder thought about hospitality and culture, plus two timely picks on inference infrastructure and career direction amid AI-driven job anxiety.

Most compelling recommendation: a culture + hospitality reframe that shaped Airbnb

Peak: *How Great Companies Get Their Mojo from Maslow* (book)

- **Title:** *Peak: How Great Companies Get Their Mojo from Maslow* ¹
- **Content type:** Book ²
- **Author/creator:** Chip Conley ³
- **Link/URL:** Not provided for the book (context clip: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oC2KMh8zvD4>) ⁴
- **Who recommended it:** Brian Chesky (in a conversation reflecting on starting Airbnb) ⁵
- **Key takeaway (as shared):** Chesky says the book had a “profound impact” and he took away lessons on **culture** and **hospitality**, including

¹From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

²From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

³From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

⁴From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

⁵From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

a reframing of hospitality as “service with heart.”⁶

- **Why it matters:** It’s a concrete example of a founder changing how he defined the company’s job—from “anti-hotels” to learning and teaching hospitality—based on an external framework.⁷

“...hospitality is just service with heart.”⁸



From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky (6:18)

Also worth saving: engineering + career guidance in an AI-shift context

***Inference Engineering* (book)**

- **Title:** *Inference Engineering*⁹
- **Content type:** Book¹⁰
- **Author/creator:** Philip Kiely¹¹¹²

⁶From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

⁷From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

⁸From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky

⁹ post by @saranormous

¹⁰ post by @saranormous

¹¹ post by @saranormous

¹² post by @saranormous

- **Link/URL:** <https://www.baseten.com/inference-engineering/> ¹³¹⁴
- **Who recommended it:** Sarah Guo ¹⁵
- **Key takeaway (as shared):** She frames it as “democratizing the technical layer that powers the biggest change in computing in decades.” ¹⁶
- **Why it matters:** If you’re trying to get more literate in the infrastructure layer (not just model headlines), this is flagged as a direct learning resource. ¹⁷

Bill Gurley’s book (title not specified) (book)

- **Title:** Not specified in the post (“Bill Gurley’s book”) ¹⁸¹⁹
- **Content type:** Book ²⁰
- **Author/creator:** Bill Gurley ²¹
- **Link/URL:** <https://a.co/d/05iTXN6l> ²²
- **Who recommended it:** Brad Gerstner ²³²⁴
- **Key takeaway (as shared):** A set of career principles offered in the context of “anxiety...for parents & kids as AI radically changes job futures,” including:
 - Passion is “discovered by moving, learning, experimenting, building.” ²⁵
 - Skills/experience/reputation compound, and being around smart people accelerates that compounding. ²⁶
 - Take risks; be curious; be willing to fail. ²⁷
 - Find a worthy mission and start; don’t fixate on early economic rewards. ²⁸
- **Why it matters:** It’s positioned as a practical, action-oriented antidote to career paralysis—especially under uncertainty about future work. ²⁹³⁰

“Passion is not an epiphany. Just find a worthy mission & get going.” ³¹

¹³ post by @saranormous
¹⁴ post by @saranormous
¹⁵ post by @saranormous
¹⁶ post by @saranormous
¹⁷ post by @saranormous
¹⁸ post by @altcap
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²⁹ post by @altcap
³⁰ post by @altcap
³¹ post by @altcap

Sources

1. From Ambition to “I’m Enough” | Brian Chesky
2. post by @saranormous
3. post by @saranormous
4. post by @altcap