

10 Books-Ten Crucial Concepts

Below are ten contemporary books that provide a treasure trove for thoughtful administrators. Each book develops one or more useful tools that leaders and managers should add to their toolboxes. Self-efficacy, GRIT, nudge, flow, flourishing, mindset, mindfulness (both individual and organizational), fast and slow thinking, and the conscious and unconscious mind are all salient conceptual tools for reflective practitioners.

1. Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: Freeman.

Self-Efficacy is an individual's judgement about his or her capacity to organize and execute a course of action that is required in a specific situation to attain a certain level of performance.

2. Duckworth, A. (2016). *GRIT: The Power and Passion of Perseverance*. Simon & Schuster: New York.

GRIT is a combination of passion and perseverance in the pursuit of a long-term goal; a can-do attitude.

3. Thaler, R. and Sunstein, C. (2006). *Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Nudge is a slight prod to behave in a predictable, beneficial way without forbidding other options; nudges are not mandates. Nudges help individuals make good choices that are in their own best interests.

4. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1997). *Finding Flow: The Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life*. New York: Basic Books.

Flow is a state in which individuals feel a sense of effortless action that stands out as moments when they are at their very best, that is, peak performances; athletes refer to the experience as "being in the zone."

5. Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-Being*. New York: Free Press.

Flourish is the process of having and acting on a set of core features that include happiness, self-esteem, optimism, resilience, a love to learn, the feeling of a valuable life, and the belief there are people who really care about you; that is, achieving a general sense of well-being.

6. Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Random House.

Mindset is the view that you adopt for yourself concerning your ability. Is ability a fixed attribute or a malleable one? Dweck identifies two contrasting views. A fixed mindset is the belief that your ability, intelligent, and personality are relatively fixed whereas a growth mindset is the belief that your basic qualities such as ability, intelligence, and personality can be cultivated and changed.

7. Langer, E. (1985). *Mindfulness*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.

Mindfulness is the guardian of the mind, which facilitates a playful creation of new categories and ideas, openness to new information, an awareness of multiple perceptions, control over context, and a process perspective.

8. Weick, K. and Sutcliffe, K. (2007). *Managing the Unexpected*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Collective mindfulness in organizations is characterized by preoccupation with failure, reluctance to simplify interpretations, sensitivity to operations, commitment to resilience, and deference to experience.

9. Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Fast and Slow Thinking is the dual system for processing information in the mind. The fast system of the mind is automatic and runs fast and effortlessly, whereas the slow system is deliberate, plodding, careful, and effortful. Fast thinking occurs in the adaptive unconscious of the mind; it dominates the mind as it processes automatically and quickly based on impressions and experience. Slow thinking uses the conscious mind to make decisions deliberately and carefully as it tries to slow processing and check for errors; error correction is its critical function.

10. Wilson, T. D. (2002). *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

The adaptive unconscious is a shorthand term used to describe all of the unconscious mental processes of the mind. It is a collection of modules that have evolved over time to initiate action in an efficient and sophisticated manner. The conscious is the set of mental processes that the individual is aware of, is deliberate, is relatively slow, and typically requires much effort. The conscious processes are used to solve complex problems, which require slow, deliberate effort.