



HONEYBEE CAPITAL

FOUNDATION

Dear Honeybees,

It's my favorite time of year -- book season! These past months I have been separated from my own library, and though I'd like to think I'm not so bound by possessions, when I think of soon being reunited with my book-friends I am filled with delight.

In the meantime, it brings me great joy to share these favorites with you, with best wishes for the new year.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO MARVEL

[THE SOUL OF AN OCTOPUS: A SURPRISING EXPLORATION INTO THE WONDER OF CONSCIOUSNESS](#), by **Sy Montgomery**

[OTHER MINDS: THE OCTOPUS, THE SEA, AND THE DEEP ORIGINS OF CONSCIOUSNESS](#), by **Peter Godfrey-Smith**

Can it be? Two books about the brilliance of cephalopods? Montgomery's is a friendly tour of octopus awesomeness, while Godfrey-Smith looks at the octopus as an entrée to deeper philosophical questions about the nature of mind. Both are fascinating and engaging, though be warned, you might not ever be able to eat calamari again.

[WOOLY](#), by **Ben Mezrich**

When I first heard de-extinction explained, it was by [Stewart Brand](#) at the TED conference, and at the next coffee break I heard a guy exclaim with glee, "it will be just like Jurassic Park!" I turned to ask him if he'd actually seen that movie, but he was already gone. Questions persist about consequences of de-extinction, but a number of the world's most talented scientists are working on exactly that, including George Church, whose research is at the heart of the Woolly story. If you are interested in advances in genetics, how the mammoths might save us from climate change, or how a technical scientific story can turn into a page-turning thriller, this is the book for you.

If you want to be even more inspired, pair these selections with a few we've noted before:

[I CONTAIN MULTITUDES](#), by **Ed Yong**. Poetic science writing from one of the best science writers on the planet.

[THE WONDER OF BIRDS](#), by Jim Robbins

Robbins is like the best party host, introducing us to (as the title accurately promises) the wonder of birds, sharing terrific stories, and emphasizing the points of connection between our species and theirs. The next time someone calls you a birdbrain, you will just beam and say, thank you.

[THE SONGS OF TREES](#), by David George Haskell

If you dig mycelium (pun intended), this book will knock your socks off. Here is a much more detailed summary from Maria Popova of [Brainpickings](#).

[THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES](#), by Peter Wohlleben

This book is a dream come true – lots of the terrific recent science of forest networks, bundled up in one handy package. It's not an artistic, unscientific leap to consider forests as a type of community, with some of the same attributes of human communities – Wohlleben illuminates these parallels convincingly, in prose that is both lyrical and logical.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO UNDERSTAND:

[JANESVILLE: AN AMERICAN STORY](#), by Amy Goldstein

If you grew up in a steel town, or a manufacturing town, or a company town, the story of Janesville might already seem pretty familiar. If you've spent the past year or two generalizing about "those people" who disagree with you politically, Janesville might seem like a foreign place. Either way, you will benefit from reading this book, which reminds us that the headlines in the paper and the restructuring costs in earnings reports represent individuals and families and communities, unique and fascinating and resilient. Couple with [Hillbilly Elegy](#) if you are trying to bust out of your bubble --- but temper both with a review of Chimamanda Adichie's [Danger of a Single Story](#).

These past months it seems that gender discussions are everywhere – from equal pay proposals to board diversity plans to sexual harassment reports. Though the conversations are more frequent right now, they are still often deeply uncomfortable and sometimes deeply frustrating. These latest conversations might seem new, but that's only because we've avoided them for a long time: the substance underneath these modern settings is ancient. If you are looking for ways to think more deeply about gender and diversity, here is a great (and incomplete) list of some of my favorite resources.

[WHAT WORKS: GENDER EQUALITY BY DESIGN](#), by Iris Bohnet

We all know that saying, don't waste a good crisis, right? But when it comes to gender equality, even when action is desired, we often come up short on ideas for what to DO. Bohnet presents thoughtful research that demonstrates the universal preconceptions that are baked into our systems (that means all of us), and offers straightforward data-backed suggestions for improvement.

[THE DIVERSITY BONUS](#), by Scott Page

If you are looking for a super-rational argument for diversity, without too much messy emotional stuff, this is the book for you (and that is a compliment!). Page's work on diversity has continued since his well-regarded earlier publication, [The Difference](#), and here he presents a compelling set of evidence for considering cognitive diversity (in all its forms) when constructing teams. If you want to fix the sink, you might want 3 plumbers, but for problems like designing new products or analyzing companies or navigating an unfamiliar forest, you want a more diverse group.

[MEN EXPLAIN THINGS TO ME](#), by Rebecca Solnit

Especially if you are a Good Guy (of any gender) who is still surprised by stories like #metoo, or can't understand why "all the women leave" your office environment, or don't see the links between those two phrases I just wrote, this book is a difficult and helpful read.

[DEAR IJEWELE](#), by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

If you still tense up a little bit when you hear the word "feminist," this tiny book, written as a letter to a dear friend and new parent, will bowl you over with its common sense. Plus, you can read it over a single lunch hour. Pair with [We Should All Be Feminists](#) if you want an extra oomph of understanding.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO INVEST:

[DOUGHNUT ECONOMICS: SEVEN WAYS TO THINK LIKE A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMIST](#), by Kate Raworth

Ignore the dorky title – though the book is indeed reader-friendly, as the cover implies, Raworth's content is important and serious and terrific and revolutionary. Even if you disagree with some of her arguments, it is healthy to question our assumptions once in a while, and the tenets of neoclassical economics run deep in our current economic and political systems. Raworth helps us to pull them into the light, so they can be properly seen and assessed.

[ADAPTIVE MARKETS](#), by Andrew Lo

"The financial system is more like an ecosystem of living organisms than a mechanical system of inanimate parts, and we need to manage the system accordingly." So, yeah, I really like this book.

[GDP: A BRIEF BUT AFFECTIONATE HISTORY](#), by Diane Coyle

It is a wonderful thing to find a small focused book that addresses a single important topic in a thoughtful, well-researched way. It's interesting that the main critiques of this book are that it is not wonky enough nor radical enough – but Coyle's purpose is to examine the history and use of this measure, and in that she succeeds. Given how often we reference GDP, we should all know a bit more about how it came to be.

PRINCIPLES: LIFE AND WORK, by Ray Dalio

I have never known what to make of Ray Dalio's approach. In theory, I agree with the core of his philosophy wholeheartedly: we all have lots of biases, often the best ideas are not heard or valued, and more transparency helps us to make better decisions. In practice, his methods kind of freak me out: I'm not sure a giant database that tracks colleagues' judgments of one another is as helpful as other tools might be, and it's hard to believe that I could navigate the complex evaluation system his team uses while also paying attention to the actual content of the discussion. Overall I think we might all be better off spending time building respect and trust and empathy from within, instead of imposing it through software. Still, his intent is sincerely positive, and the questions he addresses are important. Dalio is making a meaningful effort to reflect and to share what he's learned, and to inspire others to do the same. Indeed, there is a lot in here that will inspire your own reflections, which is always worthwhile.

And here are a few earlier favorites that are well worth repeating:

THE WISDOM OF FINANCE, by Mihir Desai

This book's explicit goal is "to humanize finance by bridging the divide between finance and literature, history, philosophy, movies, and religion." Anyone who can comment on the risk management philosophy of Elizabeth Bennet is automatically one of my favorite people on earth.

BIG MONEY THINKS SMALL, by Joel Tillinghast

Joel is a true long-term investor, and his book brings wisdom to its purpose: to make the average reader an above-average investor. He thinks of portfolio management as gardening, not manufacturing – an approach that benefits investments of time and attention as much as investments of dollars and euros.

THE CLEAN MONEY REVOLUTION, by Joel Salomon

Joel has a wonderful way of weaving together the deeply personal with the urgently global, and this book is a perfect example of that ability. Part memoir, part how-to book, part manifesto, it is both inspiring and informative.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO IMAGINE:

MANHATTAN BEACH, by Jennifer Egan

It's such a treat to find a writer whose books are consistently outstanding, even as their content varies dramatically. Manhattan Beach is nothing like [A Visit from the Goon Squad](#), yet both shine forth as favorites. This latest features a young Irish woman working at the Brooklyn shipyards during WWII, so even if I didn't love Egan it would be required reading in my family. It is a huge compliment to Egan that her description of mid-century Brooklyn sounds just the stories I heard around the Thanksgiving table as a little kid.

[LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE](#), by Celeste Ng

Ng somehow pulls you in to reflect deeply on the nature of family and community, of social norms and divisions, while all along you think you're just enjoying a terrific novel.

[THEFT BY FINDING](#), by David Sedaris

I'm usually hesitant about books based on diaries – usually they are short on editing, and let's face it, most of the stuff in diaries even bores the author. This book is an exception, funny and conversational with a strand of wisdom and reflection woven straight through. A great book for consuming in small portions, as you wait for your boarding announcement or deli number or just-a-little-late friend.

[THE ONE INSIDE](#), by Sam Shepard

Part fiction, part autobiography, often confusing, a little disturbing, and thoroughly compelling... this book will stick with you, its loop-de-loop narrative gradually forming a knotted-together whole. Shepard often worked at the Santa Fe Institute, and I liked to imagine these words echoing through the building there as he typed away. As it turns out, this was also Shepard's last published work, and there can be no more vivid example than this of what was lost in his passing. *I listened to the audiobook version read by Bill Pullman, which added immeasurably to the experience.*

[TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN](#), by John Green

I think this is supposed to be a Young Adult book, but you know, aren't we all young at heart? As you'll know if you read (or watched) [The Fault in Our Stars](#), Green has an uncanny ability to reflect the inner – and outer – dialogue of teens, such that even though I can't describe the story without it seeming saccharine or silly, somehow when you're reading it, it just rolls right along in a wonderful way. In this sense, it is completely true to life.

[THE INHERITANCE OF LOSS](#), by Kiran Desai

[THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS](#), by Arundhati Roy

These were the books I took with me to India earlier in the year, and I was reminded anew of their splendor. If you are looking to visit old book-friends this season, these are two of the best.

Plus some highlights from earlier this year:

[MY NAME IS LUCY BARTON](#), by Elizabeth Strout

[ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE](#), by Elizabeth Strout

[OLIVE KITTERIDGE](#), by Elizabeth Strout

This trio is infused with Strout's signature style – a mix of beautiful prose, quirky detail, plus a current of sadness that somehow does not lead to despair, because it's just so real, and paired with a similarly deep, un-showy, matter-of-fact love.

LILLIAN BOXFISH TAKES A WALK, by Kathleen Rooney

If you are the type who loves the crazy circus like feeling that everyday life can have, this book will delight you. Rooney's story is based on a real life pioneer in 1930's advertising, Macy's Margaret Fishback, and it is clever and witty and – as all truly clever things are – a little bit wise as well. This is the most enjoyable book I have read all year.

BOOKS THAT HELP US TO REFLECT:

THE ART OF LOADING BRUSH, by Wendell Berry

As the weather's turned, I've been spending chilly Sunday mornings with Wendell Berry – well, with his writing – and there could be no better company. In this volume Berry speaks with poetry and frankness, cautioning against ungrounded idealism as much as mindless extraction.

THE RIVER OF CONSCIOUSNESS, by Oliver Sacks

It is always bittersweet to read posthumous writing. These essays bring ongoing delight in Sacks' amazing mind, and a wistful realization that now we will have to re-read his words forevermore, as the new ones have been silenced. A wonderful entryway to year-end big-picture reflections – and while you are at it, review his beautiful [Gratitude](#) as well.

DEVOTIONS, by Mary Oliver

Have you ever toured an exhibit with an especially talented curator? What if that curator is also the artist? In this volume Oliver has arranged highlights from her 50-plus years as a poet – a gift to us all.

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF THEODORE ROETHKE, by Theodore Roethke

I came across Roethke most recently when a [quote](#) of his appeared on my Bloomberg terminal at work. "Deep in their roots, all flowers keep the light." His writing is hopeful precisely because it does not ignore the darkness.

BOOKS THAT NOURISH:

AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS, by Maira Kalman

Oh, how I love this book! Kalman's observations are so sharp that you find yourself smiling and tearing up at the same time, often spinning into your own Proust-like spirals of recollection. This volume describes Kalman's tour of America, and is full of complicated love and grief and pride and hope. One of my favorite books to give others, too.

[GOODNIGHT STORIES FOR REBEL GIRLS](#), by Elena Favilli and Francesca Cavallo

If you are looking to round out the messages received by children in your life, without getting all preachy about it, this is the book for you. Real stories of real women, written in fairy tale style and illustrated beautifully by 60 female artists. If your kids are inclined towards business you could also tell them how the book's creation is one of the greatest successes in crowdfunding. Great as a companion to the terrific and beautiful [Women in Science](#) and [Women in Sports](#), both by Rachel Ignotofsky.

[AT HOME IN THE WHOLE FOOD KITCHEN](#), by Amy Chaplin

Let's face it, some whole food cookbooks (and cooks) just aren't very friendly: they can be complicated, and preachy, and full of bizzaro uses for cashews. Chaplin's guide is the antidote, starting with pantry-stocking and walking straight through to dessert. If you are looking for a kind guide to healthier eating, look no further.

[TARTINE ALL DAY](#), by Elisabeth Prueitt

If you spend most of your time in the Whole Food Kitchen (or even if you don't), a visit to Tartine is a real treat, and this collection includes the full range of offerings, beyond bread and pastries. I've been without a full kitchen setup for much of the year, and have taken to reading this book like a thrilling novel, dreaming of the time when my baking sheets are returned.

[DORIE'S COOKIES](#), by Dorie Greenspan

It is Very Hard Indeed to impress me with a cookie book, especially one that is not vintage or self-published by a community group.... But wow, this book is awesome, and gorgeous. The introductory "techniques" pages alone are worth the price, and then there are 500 (!) more pages chock-full of cookie joy. Traditional and avant-garde, sweet and savory, including all of the recipes from Greenspan's legendary Beurre & Sel bakery. This is my new go-to cookie book, which is saying a lot.

NEED MORE IDEAS?

Really? Well, okay. Here are ideas from some of our favorite recommenders:

- [Powell's](#)
- [Brookline Booksmith](#)
- [Harvard Bookstore](#)
- [Parnassus Books](#)
- [Tattered Cover](#)
- [Barry Ritholtz](#)
- [Farnam Street](#)
- ...and of course our own prior recommendations can all be found in the [Library Archives](#) section on the Honeybee website.

A NOTE ON BOOKSELLERS

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<http://Brooklinebooksmith.com>

<http://www.indiebound.org>

Beware the person of one book.

- Thomas Aquinas

