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# 10 Essential Leadership Books for New Professionals

BILL FOURNIER, PH.D.

## **1 Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts, by Brene Brown**

Brown's research-based guide to courageous leadership emphasizes vulnerability, empathy, and values-based decision-making as essential skills for effective leadership. She introduces the idea that leaders must first work on their own emotional intelligence and self-awareness before they can lead others. New professionals will gain tools to have honest conversations, give and receive feedback, and build trust with colleagues—crucial for rising leaders in today's workplace.

## **3 Turn the Ship Around! A True Story of Turning Followers into Leaders, by L. David Marquet**

Marquet, a former U.S. Navy submarine commander, shares his revolutionary leadership model where authority is pushed down to every level. Instead of issuing orders, he empowers his crew to take responsibility and make decisions. This book teaches a mindset shift: from leader-follower to leader-leader. For new professionals, it's a compelling invitation to step into leadership roles early by practicing ownership and initiative—regardless of job title.

## **2 Working With Emotional Intelligence, by Daniel Goleman**

A follow-up to his landmark book Emotional Intelligence, Goleman applies the concept specifically to the workplace. He identifies five key components—self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills—and provides examples of how these contribute more to professional success than technical expertise alone. For new professionals, mastering these skills helps them stand out, manage relationships, and navigate workplace challenges with emotional maturity.

## **4 How to Win Friends and Influence People, by Dale Carnegie**

One of the best-selling personal development books of all time, Carnegie's work offers practical advice on how to build meaningful relationships, influence others ethically, and become more persuasive in everyday life. His timeless principles—like showing genuine interest in others, remembering names, and listening actively—are especially valuable to professionals who are building networks, managing up, or working cross-functionally in teams.

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## **5** **Never Split the Difference: Negotiating As If Your Life Depended On It, by Chris Voss**

Voss draws from his FBI hostage negotiation experience to deliver unconventional but highly effective strategies for negotiation. Concepts like “mirroring,” “labeling,” and the “accusation audit” help professionals influence outcomes in tense or high-stakes situations. Perfect for early-career individuals negotiating job offers, project deadlines, or working across departments, this book teaches how to stay calm, listen deeply, and secure win-win results.

## **6** **Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't, by Simon Sinek**

Sinek explores why some teams thrive while others disintegrate, pointing to leadership as the key differentiator. He emphasizes creating environments of psychological safety, trust, and cooperation. Using examples from the military, business, and education, Sinek shows that leaders who put others first foster loyalty and long-term success. New professionals will learn how to contribute to - and eventually build - strong, resilient teams.

## **7** **Emotional Intelligence 2.0, by Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves**

This book offers a practical approach to improving EQ with a step-by-step guide and an online assessment. It breaks EQ into four areas: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. Each section includes actionable strategies tailored to different career stages. For emerging professionals, it serves as a hands-on companion to Goleman's theory, giving tools to handle stress, build rapport, and communicate more effectively.

## **8** **The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential, by John Maxwell**

Maxwell's leadership model outlines a growth path from Level 1 (Position—people follow because they have to) to Level 5 (Pinnacle—people follow because of who you are and what you represent). With each level, responsibilities and influence grow. This book helps new professionals understand how to lead without formal authority and provides a blueprint to grow into a respected, high-impact leader over time.

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**9** **Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, by Susan Cain**

Cain's groundbreaking book redefines leadership and success in terms that value introverted qualities like listening, thoughtfulness, and depth. Through research and real-world examples, she argues that introverts often make powerful leaders - especially in a noisy, fast-paced world. New professionals who identify as introverts will feel validated and empowered, while extroverts gain insight into different communication and leadership styles.

**10** **Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us, by Daniel H. Pink**

Pink examines the science of motivation, arguing that intrinsic motivators—autonomy, mastery, and purpose—are far more effective than external rewards. He explains how these principles apply to workplaces and leadership. New professionals can use this knowledge to motivate themselves, understand team dynamics, and design work habits or environments that align with long-term career fulfillment.

**Are you a new professional who wants to accelerate your career by communicating more effectively?**

**I can help!**

**Email me to schedule a 15-minute call and we'll start to accelerate your career**

**Bill Fournier, Ph.D.**

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