

[50]

NON-FICTION BOOKS FOR LIVING FROM THE HEART

I've been working on this list for a few months, and it's finally ready! Here's a list of the top 50 non-fiction books I've read. There's more where this came from, so keep watch for round two sometime in the near future... — xo Jessica

1. A NEW EARTH: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose

By Eckhart Tolle. This is an easy read by one of today's leading teachers on how to live in the present moment. I had the chance to hear him speak in-person in 2018, and I refer to his teachings often in my daily meditation and mindfulness practices.

2. ANAM CARA: A Book of Celtic Wisdom

By John O'Donohue. This is a lovely book on friendship and love that was introduced to me by one of my dearest friends. It's full of so much goodness!

3. AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

By Maira Kalman. A fun book full of Maira's artwork and wise wisdom gleaned from daily living and self-awareness; mixed with loads of humanity and humor.

4. BE THE PERSON YOU WANT TO FIND: Relationship and Self-Discovery

By Cheri Huber. Cheri is one of my ALL TIME favorite authors. This book on being in relationships with others and how most of our issues are really about ourselves, is kind, insightful and easy to read. You'll love it! I promise.

5. BIG MAGIC: Creative Living Beyond Fear

By Elizabeth Gilbert. This is my favorite book by Elizabeth Gilbert. As a creative, she speaks so tenderly to my heart and helps me feel excited about my creative life, especially when it comes to finding inspiration (aka: when inspiration finds you).

6. BROKEN OPEN: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow

By Elizabeth Lesser. This is one of the first books I recommend to anyone on the path of growth, healing and awakening. She tells wonderfully relatable stories, full of wisdom and understanding. Read this!

7. BUDDHA'S BRAIN: The Practical Neuroscience Behind Happiness, Love and Wisdom

By Rick Hanson. I've read few books from a scientific perspective that held my attention enough to finish. Rick has a wonderful way of breaking down information and telling stories that helps you understand the science behind mindfulness.

8. CREATING MONEY: Keys to Abundance

By Sanaya Roman. This is a channeled text that is wildly simple and full of encouragement, ah-ha moments and teachings that are in alignment with spirit. To me it's not really about money but connecting with the abundance you already have.

9. CREATIVE BLOCK: Get Unstuck, Discover New Ideas. Advice & Projects from 50 Successful Artists

By Danielle Krysa. I've known Danielle since she first started her blog, The Jealous Curator, in 2013. She is amazingly attuned to the need for artists to know they are not alone in their creative blocks, negative self-talk and feelings of inadequacy. The projects in this book are also super fun, inspiring and help get you outside your creative box.

10. FAR FROM THE TREE: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity

By Andrew Solomon. This book is very thick and bit heavy to read with lots of words. However, I was drawn to it because it talks about how often children are not the same as their parents and they struggle to feel okay because of their differences. He addresses everything from different personalities and temperaments to sexual orientation and belief systems.

11. HOLD ME TIGHT: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love

By Sue Johnson. This book about attachment styles will help you understand what sort of healthy and unhealthy attachments you formed as a young person, empowering you to change how you relate.

12. HOW TO LOVE (Mindfulness Essentials, #3)

By Thich Nhat Hanh. So simple. So easy to read. Absolutely something you can go back to again and again to remind you how to show up in life and relationships from a deeply loving and kind place.

13. I WILL NOT DIE AN UNLIVED LIFE: Reclaiming Purpose and Passion

By Dawna Markova. The title says it all. The content is beautiful and very helpful for anyone who is on the path of awakening and spiritual growth.

14. LEARNING TO BREATHE: A Yearlong Quest to Bring Calm to My Life

By Priscilla Warner. I learned about this book from Priscilla herself when she contacted me a few years ago. She just wanted to tell me how much she enjoys my meditations and encouraged me to keep doing what I'm doing. Her book highlights further what a thoughtful, loving soul she is. You'll love reading about her journey to bring Calm into her life!

15. LYING

By Sam Harris. This book is about truth-telling and honesty and how it builds trust in relationships. It's a quick read, full of profound truths that will inspire you to be more honest with yourself and others at all times. I HIGHLY recommend!

16. ON BECOMING AN ALCHEMIST: A Guide for the Modern Magician

By Catherine MacCoun. I honestly don't know how to sum up my love of this book. Please, please read it! It's about the magic of the unseen and the connection of our souls to all that IS. Truly, this is one of my MOST FAVORITE books!

17. PARTNERING WITH NATURE: The Wild Path to Reconnecting with the Earth

By Catriona MacGregor. For anyone who wants to connect more deeply with nature, presence and themselves, I can't recommend this beautiful book enough!

18. PEACE IS EVERY STEP: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life

By Thich Nhat Hanh. This book is simple and easy to read with very relatable stories. You'll feel calm, cared for and understood after you read it.

19. QUANTUM SUCCESS: The Astounding Science of Wealth and Happiness

By Sandra Anne Taylor. The definition of "success" has always eluded me. It means something different to everyone. Same things goes for what it means to be wealthy and happy. This book will help you connect with what success, wealth and happiness mean to you, deep in your soul.

20. SELF-COMPASSION: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself

By Kristin Neff. I don't know a single person who doesn't struggle with negative self-talk, guilt and feelings of not being good enough. This very simply written book takes you back to the basics and walks you through how to change your internal dialogues.

21. SLOUCHING TOWARDS BETHLEHEM

Essays by Joan Didion. Joan's cadence and perspective gives her away as a constant observer. Written in 1961, this book also gives you a window into the social and political climate of the time using lots of wit and awareness. My favorite essay in this book is called On Self-Respect.

22. STAYING HEALTHY WITH THE SEASONS

By Elson M. Haas. This is the best book I've read on the connection between our bodies and the natural rhythms of nature. It's very easy to read and can be picked up as-needed, and referred to again and again. While reading this book I was inspired to further study herbology, though that's just one tiny aspect of what this book offers.

23. STEAL LIKE AN ARTIST: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative

By Austin Kleon. This book is FUN and super easy to read. I highly recommend this book to any, and all, artists. You'll feel your spirit expand with excitement at the ideas Austin shares.

24. STYLE STATEMENT: Live By Your Own Design

By Carrie McCarthy & Danielle LaPorte. This is another fun book that has lots of questions and workbook-style sections for you to write in. It's based on the 80/20 rule of how we feel on the inside, and how we express ourselves outwardly. I read this book in 2012. My style statement is: Composed Bohemian. It's still accurate after all these years.

25. THE ART OF SEXUAL MAGIC: Cultivating Sexual Energy to Transform Your Life

By Margot Anand. What a book! You can read this on your own or with a partner. It's one of the MOST HEALING books I've ever read about sex. If you want to heal sexual wounds/trauma and open up to your own sensual energy (sexually and in life), this book will guide you lovingly through mindfulness practices and sexual exercises.

26. THE ARTIST'S WAY: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity

By Julia Cameron. This book was first introduced to me through Danielle Krysa (aka: The Jealous Curator), during one of her art workshops in Portland, Oregon. Upon reading the first few pages, I started crying because someone had finally put words to everything I'd been feeling, and struggling with, as an artist. Julia Cameron single-handedly got me to start journaling every day. It has changed my life in more ways than I can count.

27. THE BOOK OF AWAKENING: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have

By Mark Nepo. This book contains 365 meditative, thoughtful and soulful insights for you to read once a day. You'll feel encouraged and grounded every time you pick up Mark's book.

28. THE CONSCIOUS PARENT: Transforming Ourselves, Empowering Our Children

By Shefali Tsabary. This is my all-time favorite parenting book ever! It's for all parents, with children of any age. You will feel guided to parent from your heart, and will learn to support who your children, in their souls. Truly amazing book!

29. THE DANCE: Moving to the Rhythm of Your True Self

By Oriah Mountain Dreamer. Based on a poem by Oriah, called The Dance, each chapter of this book tells stories and gives insights based on each stanza of the poem. You'll feel deeply connected to your soul self after reading this book.

30. THE DANCE OF ANGER: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Pattern's of Intimate Relationships

By Harriet Lerner. As a woman who has struggled with feeling it's not okay to feel anger, this book was incredibly helpful and encouraging. I discovered anger is a healthy and normal emotion. It's okay to feel angry and look deep into yourself as to why. You can listen to your anger, honor it and let it move through you in healthy, productive ways. Yes!

31. THE DANCE OF THE DISSIDENT DAUGHTER: Woman's Journey from Christian Tradition to the Sacred Feminine

By Sue Monk Kidd. Sue has an amazing way of speaking directly to the heart in a way that's comforting and connecting. Any woman who has been exposed to Christian conditioning, whether from family or society, this book helps bridge the gap between feelings of oppression and finding freedom while still honoring your spirituality.

32. THE FEAR BOOK: Facing Fear Once and for All

By Cheri Huber. This is another one of my favorite books by Cheri. It's so simple and helps guide you to understand where fear and anxiety come from. Based on this understanding, Cheri guides you in how to release fear and create safety for yourself. I recommend this book to everyone!

33. THE FIELD: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe

By Lynne McTaggart. While sitting in a bar with my sweetheart, we got to talking to the bartender. Somehow we stumbled on the subject of quantum physics and I mentioned one of my all-time favorite books on the subject – The Spectrum of Consciousness, – to which he enthusiastically said, "If you like that book, you'll love this one!" Agreed.

34. THE FOUR AGREEMENTS: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom

By Miguel Ruiz. First introduced to me by my aunt, the four agreements are: 1) Be Impeccable with Your Word, 2) Don't Take Anything Personally, 3) Don't Make Assumptions, 4) Always Do Your Best. This book is one of the most insightful books I've ever read. READ THIS BOOK! It will truly set you free!

35. THE GIFTS OF IMPERFECTION: Let Go of Who You Think You're Supposed to Be and Embrace Who You Are

By Brené Brown. You don't need to be familiar with Shame Researcher, Brené Brown, to get everything the title promises out of this book. Check out her 2010 TEDxTalk to get a sense of all the goodness you're in for.

36. THE HIGHTLY SENSITIVE PERSON: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You

By Elaine N. Aron. For most of my life I felt like there was something wrong with me for feeling easily overwhelmed. Within the first few pages of reading this book, I felt seen, understood and validated for who I am as a highly sensitive person. Everyone should read this book no matter your sensitivity level!

37. THE INTROVERT ADVANTAGE: How to Thrive in An Extroverted World

By Marti Olsen Laney. Until reading this book I had no idea I was an introvert. I just thought there was something wrong with me for not wanting to be social all the time or getting tired after too much social interaction. Being an introvert doesn't mean you're shy, quite or anti-social. It means you recharge best by spending time alone, whereas extroverts recharge by being around other people.

38. THE MINDFULNESS CODE: Keys for Overcoming Stress, Anxiety, Fear, and Unhappiness

By Donald Altman. I refer to this book again and again for it's simple way of communicating deep ideas. This book will resonate with your heart, and the stories Donald tells will stick with you as encouraging reminders about what's possible.

39. THE PLACES THAT SCARE YOU: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times

By Pema Chödrön. I first learned about this book from a clerk at my local used bookshop. I was there buying a book by Thich Nhat Hanh and she asked if I ever read Pema Chödrön, a female Zen Buddhist monk. I said, "No, but now I will!" Pema will make you laugh, cry and sigh with every word!

40. THE POWER OF NOW: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment

By Eckhart Tolle. Holy wow! This is the best book I've ever read on how to live in the Present Moment. Eckhart is a truly enlightened teacher, full of so much love and kindness. You will LOVE this book!

41. THE SECOND SHIFT

By Arlie Russel Hochschild. After writing a paper on how few female artists are represented in art galleries, despite how more women go to art school than men, my community college writing teacher suggested I read this book. It talks about how when the women's movement stalled out, women were not only still doing everything they always did at home, they were also working full-time jobs. Essentially, creating twice the amount of work for women. This is an educational and poignant book that everyone would benefit from reading.

42. THE SPECTRUM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

By Ken Wilber. It took me over a year to read this book because every sentence was so mind blowing. I could only read a page or two at a time before needing to sit in contemplation for an hour. This book speaks about great unknowns with so much wisdom and clarity. It brought me great peace and calm to read it. It's worth reading every word.

43. THE SPELL OF THE SENSUOUS: Perception and Language in a More Than Human World

By David Abram. This is the only book on my list I haven't read yet. It was introduced to me by my sweetheart with the agreement that I will read this book while he reads The Spectrum of Consciousness (see #42) – our two favorite books. From what I understand, this book is life-altering. I can't wait to read it!

44. THE TAO OF POOH

By Benjamin Hoff. Who doesn't love Winnie the Pooh and all his forest friends? This book explores the character of Pooh and the lessons he teaches us about presence, acceptance, non-judgement and joy.

45. THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU: Going Beyond Self-Hate

By Cheri Huber. I RECOMMEND THIS BOOK TO EVERYONE. Read it now. Read it today. Then read it 20, 50, 100 more times. Find out how truly good, loved and okay you are, just as you are. Please, read this book!

46. TOUCH: The Science of Hand, Heart, and Mind

By David J. Linden. This book changed how I relate to the world through my skin and touch sensations. Our skin is our body's largest organ, and touch is arguably the most essential sense of all the senses. How I touch and love has changed in really beautiful ways since reading these profound ideas.

47. TRAVELING MERCIES: Some Thoughts on Faith

By Anne Lamott. When I first read this book, I wasn't sure if I liked the author or not. She was so real, abrupt and unapologetically honest. Anne writes in such a raw, human voice it can sometimes feel like she's exposing you. However, what she's really doing is putting words to what it is to be human and live with grace for ourselves.

48. WHATEVER YOU THINK, THINK THE OPPOSITE

By Paul Arden. This book is curious and fun. You will delight in the contradictions and stories Paul tells because he shows you that there's no good or bad ideas. There's no right or wrong. There's just creative people being inspired and learning to follow their joys, quirks and curiosities!

49. WHEN THE HEART WAITS: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions

By Sue Monk Kidd. This book tells the story of Sue's awakening... or, perhaps her journey from sleep to awakening – the moments before fully waking up spiritually. I found this book to be incredibly soothing and comforting. It helped me feel okay with the mix of joy and sorrow, pain and healing I experienced during my own awakening.

50. WOMEN WHO RUN WITH THE WOLVES: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype

By Clarissa Pinkola Estés. I've heard this book called The Bible for Women. I couldn't agree more. It's deep, full and rich like the soul of a woman. The archetypes that Clarissa writes about will speak to women of all ages, backgrounds, and nationalities.

*Is there a book you love that didn't make this list?
I'd love to hear about it.*

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