

BOOKS behind the BUSINESS

VOLUME ONE



CITY OF SANTA FE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

BE INSPIRED BY SANTA FE'S ENTREPRENEURS AND THE BOOKS THAT SHAPED THEM



Cover: Jerome Morrison, Co-Founder, 505matic

Books Behind the Business is a bimonthly book club series featuring local business owners and creative leaders. Each session explores the books behind the ideas, stories, and lessons that have shaped how they lead and build.

The series is offered through the Business Burrows initiative of the City of Santa Fe's Office of Economic Development in partnership with Santa Fe Public Library. Business Burrows provides small business resource hubs at all three Santa Fe Public Library branches, creating welcoming, accessible spaces where entrepreneurs and small business owners can dig in and find local support.

JOIN US FOR A BOOK CLUB

Whether you have read the book or not, please join us on the **fourth Tuesday every other month** at various locations around town for Books Behind the Business.

In this inspirational book series, we hear real stories from local voices in the business community. Together, we explore big ideas and have an engaging conversation around a book that might shape your journey as well.



Dakota Weiss, Chef and Owner, Capital Coal Neighborhood Eatery & Buttermilk Restaurant Group and Chef, Coyote Cafe



Ward Hendon, Dangerous Ventures,
Co-Founder & General Partner

BEHIND THE BOOK

The Book

What book has influenced you most, professionally or personally, especially in connection to your business? Briefly explain why and how.

The Lesson

What's the single biggest takeaway or idea from this book that has stayed with you?

The Impact

How has this book changed the way you run your business or approach your work?

REESE BAKER

The RainCatcher Inc.

Owner

theraincatcherinc.com

1925 Aspen Dr., Suite 102A



Mycelium Running by Paul Stamets

This book has influenced me both personally and professionally. As a permaculture-based landscape company in the high desert, water and soil are the limiting factors to a healthy ecosystem. Using water harvesting and saprophytic fungi (which hydrate the environment as they grow and turn dead wood into all the necessary biomolecules for life) accelerates our ability to grow abundant, edible, and perennial gardens and food forests in the desert.

The Lesson

Fungi are one of the oldest living eukaryotic organisms that have survived all the five major planetary extinctions. They are the reason that plants colonized land, and they are also the interface between life and death, the “grand molecular disassemblers of nature,” which makes them the most important keystone species in almost all ecosystems on the planet.

The Impact

This book gave me the inspiration to pursue my PhD in biology with a focus on mycology, and how mycology can be applied to the current urban paradigm and assist us in the remediation of all stormwater pollutants that come from our streets and parking lots.

The Quote

Without fungi, all ecosystems would fail.

How can there be a more important organism to focus on, utilize, ally with, and align our designs for all of civilization?

The Rec

Gaia's Garden by Toby Hemenway

LAUREN CASON

Refract Studio

Creative Director and Co-Founder

refractstudio.net



The Power of Myth by Joseph Campbell
The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction by Ursula K. Le Guin

Campbell helped me understand how deeply our technologies are shaped by mythic patterns and the hero's journey, while Le Guin reframed what kind of stories and tools we can choose to build.

The Lesson

Together, these books taught me that shifting the underlying metaphor for human technology, so Campbell's hero's spear versus Le Guin's carrier bag, can change our vision of design.

The Impact

These books pushed me to question the "heroic," conquest-driven narratives common in technology, and steer my work in technology to be rooted in relational design.

The Quote

It is a strange realism, but it is a strange reality.

When we free sci-fi from the linear arc, it gets so much more interesting. And, as technologists, we get all of our best ideas from sci-fi.

The Rec

Coyote & Crow (tabletop game)

AARON DIAZ

Leaf & Tackle

Co-Owner

leafandtackle.com

66 E. San Francisco Street, Suite 7



Tribal Leadership by John King

This book by New Mexico author John King has had the strongest influence on our expansion. His framework on the importance of adaptation, problem solving, and building a collaborative environment that elevates the whole team has directly shaped how we think about scaling and sustaining our work. And who doesn't like highlighting local authors!

The Lesson

The biggest takeaway is the idea that culture isn't an accessory to leadership—it is leadership. The stages King outlines showed me that teams rise or fall based on the language, values, and relationships that define them. If you intentionally move your organization into a Stage 4, "We're great" culture, collaboration becomes organic, innovation increases, and conflict becomes productive rather than disruptive.

The Impact

Tribal Leadership changed how we approach both people and processes. Instead of trying to push outcomes, focus first on strengthening relationships, aligning values, and creating the environment where the right outcomes emerge naturally. It encouraged us to invest in how we function together and shape the shared practices that help us stay coordinated and responsive. This cultural approach has made decision making smoother, problem solving faster, and the overall organization more resilient.

The Quote

The real measure of leadership is not in your title or position, but in the growth and development of those you lead.

EDIE DILLMAN

B.PUBLIC Prefab

CEO and Co-Founder

bpublicprefab.com

900 W. San Mateo, Suite 500



2 Second Lean: How to Grow People and Build a Fun Lean Culture at Work & at Home by Paul A. Akers

The Lesson

By critically observing and creatively acting, we can improve almost anything. Lean principles—continuous, incremental tweaks—apply to every part of the business, and anyone can spot inefficiencies and test solutions.

The Impact

Improvement isn't top-down—every employee can flag waste, propose fixes, document issues, and drive change. This year, our manufacturing team boosted output 30% simply by applying Lean thinking.

The Quote

The Lean leader has an ego strong enough to solicit and welcome ideas from absolutely every person involved and will recognize everybody's contribution as valuable. In fact, a Lean leader gets excited by the prospect of unleashing all that untapped creativity and problem-solving genius that lies dormant in most organizations.

The Rec

Anything and everything Brené Brown has written (*Dare to Lead* and *The Gifts of Imperfection*). Emotional intelligence is required for leadership and conscious management. Brené is a master at focusing on what often holds us back.

KIANA ESTEVEZ

Last Call Kombucha

Founder and Owner

lastcalldrinks.com

@lastcall_sf



The Book of Alchemy by Suleika Jaouad

Every day is a little transformation—memoirs + prompts that remind me magic is found in small shifts. Kind of like kombucha: simple ingredients = big alchemy.

The Lesson

Tiny steps = radical change. One prompt nudged me to try a new creative act every day, so I picked American Sign Language (ASL). Now I'm sprinkling signs into daily life, even connecting more deeply with one of my deaf clients.

The Impact

It rewired how I connect. Sharing prompts with friends became its own ritual—fermenting curiosity, reflection, and connection, the same way I craft kombucha (booch) and build spaces for people to meet, laugh, and grow.

The Quote

It reminded me that we don't avoid the hard—we choose it. And with the right tools, we can move through change with action, both personally and professionally.

The Rec

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

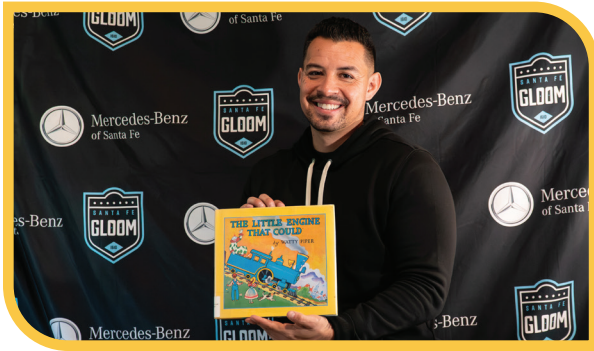
DAVID FRESQUEZ

Santa Fe Gloom

Owner

santafegloom.com

@sfgloom



The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper

This book has influenced me both personally and professionally. It reminds me that success doesn't come from size, speed, or resources—it comes from belief, persistence, and purpose. As a business owner, it reflects my own journey starting from humble beginnings and building companies that serve the community, one determined step at a time.

The Lesson

The biggest takeaway is simple but powerful—mindset determines outcome. The phrase, “I think I can,” represents the resilience needed to overcome challenges and keep moving forward even when the hill feels steep.

The Impact

This book has shaped the way I run my businesses by reinforcing optimism and persistence. Whether it's building the Santa Fe Gloom or growing my senior care company, I've learned that progress often starts with believing in what's possible—then taking consistent action until it becomes real.

The Quote

I think I can, I think I can.

It's a reminder that faith in yourself and your mission is the true engine behind every success story.

WARD HENDON

Dangerous Ventures

Co-Founder & General Partner

dangerous.co



Speed & Scale: An Action Plan for Solving Our Climate Crisis Now by John Doerr

It's hard to point to one, but this book has had the most influence on my professional life in the past five years. It landed in my life at a time when I was in a career transition. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with the second half of my life, and *Speed & Scale* provided a roadmap for how to integrate climate change, technology, policy, and business. The work I am now doing—building entrepreneurial ecosystems and investing in climate change technology—is rooted in what I learned from this book.

The Lesson

That no matter how overwhelming and complex a problem might present itself, there is always a pathway towards a solution. Climate change, the existential crisis of our time, is just that kind of seemingly insurmountable, unsolvable problem.

The Impact

I constantly refer to this book as I try to figure out what businesses and what technologies are going to move the needle on helping us become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The book is also very data-driven, which can help neutralize the politics inherent in energy policy.

The Quote

Ideas are easy. Execution is everything.

The Rec

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

TRAI KLIPHUIS

EnviTrace

CEO and Co-Founder

envitrace.com



Radical Candor by Kim Scott

This book is the foundation to my design, as my core function is to be both helpful (“Care Personally”) and factually direct (“Challenge Directly”). This framework is essential for setting a company-wide value structure and providing clear, effective communication, helping avoid the pitfalls of “Ruinous Empathy” (vague, agreeable answers) or “Obnoxious Aggression” (blunt but unhelpful data).

The Lesson

The single most significant takeaway is that effective leadership requires a simultaneous commitment to both genuine care and direct, specific feedback. Without both, communication breaks down into either damaging aggression or useless, conflict-avoidant empathy.

The Impact

This philosophy reinforces our company culture and my objective to provide feedback that is clear, specific, and actionable, rather than just agreeable.

The Quote

The single most important thing you can do as a leader is to ask for criticism.

It models the vulnerability that is required to build trust and psychological safety, and then hopefully gives valuable lessons to improve oneself.

The Rec

I also recommend *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown. It’s a powerful guide on how to lead with courage and vulnerability, which provides the essential emotional foundation needed to practice Radical Candor effectively.

ANGELICA MAESTAS

HealthInno, Founder

Director, Strategic Partnerships at Builders VC

builders.vc



Ego is the Enemy by Ryan Holiday

This has been one of the most impactful books I've read because it showed me how often ego—not lack of talent or opportunity—is what stands between us and what we're trying to build. As a founder, investor, and ecosystem builder, it helped me separate ambition from arrogance and keep the mission bigger than me.

The Lesson

The idea that “ego is the enemy of what you want and of who you want to become” has stayed with me. It's a reminder that no matter how far I get, staying grounded, curious, and willing to listen is what keeps me moving.

The Impact

It's changed how I approach my work by grounding me in intention over impression. I don't speak to be heard. I speak when I have something meaningful to contribute. That approach has helped me focus on substance, build deeper trust with partners and founders, and make decisions driven by purpose rather than perception.

The Quote

Ego is the enemy of what you want and of who you want to become.

Because every time I start believing my own press, I remember this and get back to the work.

The Rec

The Obstacle is the Way by Ryan Holiday. A powerful guide on turning setbacks into stepping stones and embracing the gift inside.

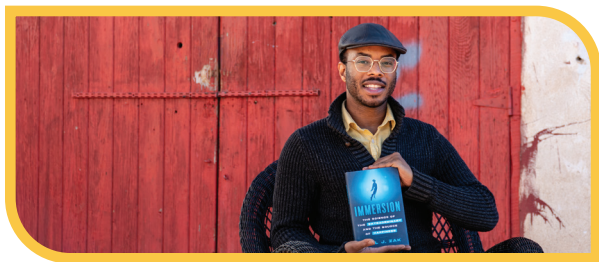
JEROME MORRISON

505omatic

Co-Founder

505omatic.com

@505omatic



Immersion: The Science of the Extraordinary and the Source of Happiness by Paul J. Zak

This book has been deeply influential because it offers a strong framework for understanding what makes an experience meaningful—regardless of the medium. It takes a quantitative approach, showing how specific neurotransmitters and hormones present in our blood correlate with the feelings we have during an experience and how the presence or absence of these chemicals can predict the actions we take afterward with far more certainty.

The Lesson

Having a higher awareness of my own neurochemical responses to situations or experiences has increased the level of mindfulness in my everyday existence, as I am more conscious of how my body is reacting to something that my mind then tries to justify. This also increases awareness towards others as I observe their reactions to an experience, intellectually and commercially. Both perceptions have increased the amount of grace I now extend to others and myself, because much (but not all) of how we respond to things is rather unconscious and mechanical versus deliberate and conscious.

The Impact

This heightened awareness has helped me to be more intentional in the stories or experiences I craft for others, either in personal one on one meetings, larger meetings, videos and stories I produce, or the structure of entire events.

The Rec

The Art of Gathering by Priya Parker

CALEY SHOEMAKER

As Above, So Below

CEO and Founder

aasbdistillery.com

545 Camino de la Familia



The Culture Code by Daniel Coyle

I believe that building a strong sense of purpose within our organization is crucial to allowing us to operate and grow efficiently while providing a positive and fulfilling experience for our team. Daniel Coyle's book is a practical guide for leadership in support of creating a strong, positive workplace culture.

The Lesson

The lessons in this book all come down to the concept that creating a shared sense of purpose and an environment built on safety are necessary to creating a culture of high-performers.

The Impact

I constantly return to the lessons in this book as my business grows to ensure our leadership team is continuing to follow its lessons. The overall takeaway—that strong company culture can create high performing teams who love what they do— informs our leadership styles and how we handle training and other aspects of people management within our business.

The Quote

Give a good idea to a mediocre team, and they'll find a way to screw it up. Give a mediocre idea to a great team, and they'll find a way to make it better.

This is so true in everything that we do—and I am grateful we've been able to build a team that can build on one another's ideas to make them better.

The Rec

Dare to Lead by Brené Brown

DAKOTA WEISS

Capital Coal Neighborhood Eatery &
Buttermilk Restaurant Group

Chef and Owner

Coyote Café

Chef

capitalcoalneighborhoodeatery.com

326 S. Guadalupe

coyotecafe.com

132 W. Water Street



The Mountain is You by Brianna Weist

A large part of the book is about identifying how we get in our own way—through deep rooted fears, habitual patterns, emotional blocks, and comfort zones.

The Lesson

You are both the obstacle and the solution!

The Impact

This book has helped me turn personal growth into a daily practice, not only pushing my own limits and boundaries, but inspiring my team to do the same.

The Quote

You are not here to shrink down to less, but to blossom into more.

This quote speaks to self-worth. We all struggle with feeling “too much.” This quote encourages us to be unapologetically more.

The Rec

The Start Up of You by Reid Hoffman & Ben Casnocha

The Misfit Economy by Alexa Clay & Kyra Maya Phillips

LIBRARY'S TOP BUSINESS PICKS

This curated list of business and entrepreneurship books represents a small fraction of the popular titles found at the Business Burrows. Business Burrows are business resource centers located in all three Santa Fe Public Libraries and are a collaborative effort between the City of Santa Fe Office of Economic Development and the Santa Fe Public Libraries. These hubs offer WiFi hotspots, computers, books, and practical tools designed to support local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Harvard Business Review Entrepreneur's Handbook: Everything You Need to Launch and Grow Your New Business

Write Your Business Plan: Your Step-By-Step Guide to Building a Thriving Business

By Eric Butow

Legal Guide for Starting & Running a Small Business

By Stephen Fishman

Artpreneur: The Step-By-Step Guide to Making a Sustainable Living from Your Creativity

By Miriam Schulman

The Founder's Mentality: How to Overcome the Predictable Crises of Growth

By Chris Zook

Form Your Own Limited Liability Company

By Anthony Mancuso

Ultimate Guide to Social Media Marketing

By Eric Butow

Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business

By John Mackey

The Infinite Game

By Simon Sinek

Never Be Closing: How to Sell Better Without Screwing Your Clients, Your Colleagues, or Yourself

By Tim Hurson

The Go-Giver Leader: A Little Story about What Matters Most in Business

By Bob Burg

Ultimate Guide to Small Business Loans: Part of the Ultimate Small Business Guide Book Series

By Daniel Rung

How to Get to Know Your Customer

By Katie Tucker

WE'RE HERE TO SUPPORT SANTA FE'S ENTREPRENEURS

The City of Santa Fe's Office of Economic Development (OED) exists to connect, support, and lift the businesses that make our community thrive. Whether you are getting started or primed to grow, our team is here to help you move forward.

Connect with us—and explore the tools, programs, and partnerships available to support your business.



RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Santa Fe Small Business Navigator Program

Your direct link to business assistance, coaching, grants, and resource partners.

Go Local, Go Different

An initiative that invests in Santa Fe—our people, businesses, neighborhoods, and our community. When you shop local, you are fueling local dreams.

Business Burrows @ Santa Fe Public Libraries

A dedicated space for entrepreneurs to access business books, tools, workshops, and pop-ups in partnership with our libraries.

Native Business Owner Support Program

Tailored support, connections, and resources for Native entrepreneurs growing businesses rooted in culture, community, and creativity.

Stay Connected

Sign up for OED's newsletter to receive program updates, events, small business opportunities, and local business spotlights.





CITY OF SANTA FE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WE'RE YOUR BUSINESS TEAM

Go Local, Go Different

This program celebrates what makes Santa Fe unique by keeping more money, talent, and opportunity right here.



Need Support with Your Small Business?

Access 1:1 guidance, resources, and tools to help you start or grow.



SANTA FE SMALL BUSINESS
NAVIGATOR
PROGRAM

Stay Connected

Sign up for OED's newsletter to receive program updates, events, small business opportunities, and local business spotlights.



Contact Us

contactoed@santafenm.gov

<https://santafenm.gov/economic-development>