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## The Leader's Bookshelf

### 25 Great Books and Their Readers

By Martin Cohen

**Which books inspired some of the world's most successful people – and why? Come on a journey of literary exploration and find out how books can impact your life.**

It turns out that the life stories of many famous people start out with a particular book that inspired them when young. Here, Martin Cohen explores the lives of some remarkable people – inventors, scientists, business gurus and political leaders – and the books that have challenged, inspired, and influenced them. And so exploring the ideas, dreams and inspirations that this diverse group shared is at the heart of this book too. Inspiration, in particular, is the thread that ties together individuals with characters and backgrounds as diverse as Jane Goodall and Barack Obama, Malcolm X and Judge Clarence Thomas, Oprah Winfrey and Malala Yousafzai, Rachel Carson and Frans Lanting.

Often, behind many tales of achievement lies much more than a collection of smart tactics. There are beliefs and values that guide many a grand strategy, too. And the strategies are often very different, which if you think about it, shouldn't come as a surprise. If there really were just one recipe for success, well, everyone would be using it already. No, the thing that unifies these disparate

approaches is that they all provided for their owners a kind of conceptual grid onto which a wide range of day-to-day creative, scientific, or business practices are able to develop and grow. For Sergey Brin and Larry Page, the founders of Google, for example, the grid was Charles Darwin's notions of natural mutation and iteration. With Henry Ford, the man who pioneered the method of the assembly line, the grid was an obscure, ethereal theory of life as a sequence of reincarnations. And for both Oprah Winfrey and Steve Jobs, the grid was existentialist ideas about the pursuit of authenticity. In all these cases, a grand, indeed often philosophical, theory meshed perfectly with a practical business strategy. All of these remarkable people, and the books that most inspired them, are explored in this book.

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#### About the Author

**Martin Cohen** is an author, editor and philosopher who has written many popular books in philosophy and social science including 101 Philosophy Problems, 101 Ethical Dilemmas, Mind Games, Philosophical Tales and Wittgenstein's Beetle, all enthusiastically reviewed and widely translated. He has also written key reference works for the for Dummies series on Critical Thinking Skills and Philosophy. He is currently Visiting Lecturer in English at the University of Pau in France.

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