



Small Law: Food for Thought

Community

Skills and Professional Development



I'm not a social media person. I don't "FaceLinkInstaTweet."

Some may label me a troglodyte, but my absence from social media has its perks: Friends end up calling me to tell me their news everyone else receives instantly. I may be late to the party, but I can still celebrate with the best of them.

While I'm not a social media person, I am a book person. In the YouTube, TedTalk, Podcast-world we now live in, I still prefer a good book. As a book person, I haven't been able to resist one online forum for book lovers: [Goodreads](#).

Goodreads allows me to search for books, keep a running log of books already read and books to read, connect with other readers, and share book recommendations and reviews. It's a reader's nirvana.

Books for me remain a constant source of knowledge, escape, information, encouragement, and education.

Books for me remain a constant source of knowledge, escape, information, encouragement, and education. As we move into a new year, which hopefully affords you, my fellow ACC colleagues, a chance to recline with a beverage as you enjoy a good book. I offer the recommendations below (in no particular order).

Where noted, I recommend the audio over the written version to allow the ideas to really take hold in your mind. However, with a really good read, you may prefer to use a highlighter and some Post-Its to consume it.

Happy New Year and happy reading!

[*You're Not Listening*](#) (Kate Murphy - audiobook) provides valuable insight into honing our listening skills.

Too often we engage without truly hearing people, working too hard to formulate a response before we've really made an effort to understand what is being said. With colorful anecdotes and settings, Murphy demonstrates what we may be missing and how we can use listening to become better and more emotionally intelligent communicators in every situation.

[*Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone*](#) (Brené Brown - audiobook) reminds us that to be understood is to seek to understand.

Brown, an expert in vulnerability, discusses our human need for belonging. Against the backdrop of the polarization plaguing society, she explores what it means to belong as well as to stand alone. She challenges us to see people as their multi-faceted selves instead of marked with the societal labels we rush to apply.

[*Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*](#) (Bill Burnett and Dave Evans) offers a unique approach to decision-making and exploring options for your career and life path.

Burnett and Evans apply the concept of beta testing used in product design to weigh opportunities. When faced with a myriad of good choices, shifting our thinking from "either-or" to "and" may achieve more beneficial results. In considering career options, the idea of interviewing someone who is actually engaged in the career that interests you is not a novel concept, but it is good reminder to mine the knowledge and experience of others.

[*Holy Silence*](#) (J. Brent Bill) invites the reader to contemplate the role and value of silence in the Quaker tradition. The author weaves together personal stories and meditative exercises to create a profound and truly enjoyable, easy, and peace-instilling read. The "mindfulness" movement of today is the progeny of the age-old practice of silence.

[*Is Paris Burning?*](#) (Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins) is a page-turning historical account of the Allies' liberation of Paris during WWII. Personal records, diaries, and letters are compiled to create a truly captivating tale of how Paris was saved by one German officer from being leveled by Hitler.

[*Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less*](#) (Greg McKeown - audiobook) landed in my read pile a couple of years ago and its concepts continue to resonate with me.

McKeown encourages us to take an introspective look at paring down our lives to reduce the emotional and psychological clutter resulting from trying to do too much. He explains how saying no at the right time can actually benefit others. He also reminds us that we need to take control of our tasks instead of letting emails we receive set our agenda.

[*Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*](#) (James Clear) reminds readers that big improvements result from daily steps, taken inch-by-inch.

Big sweeping changes may make a difference for a short time; however, people have a tendency to drift back into old habits, old lifestyles. True, lasting change comes from incremental steps - as little as one percent a day. By taking the first step daily and consistently, it becomes easier to take the

next step and so on.

[*The Library Book*](#) (Susan Orlean) chronicles the history of the Los Angeles Public Library including its burning in 1986 and restoration. Orlean introduces a cornucopia of eccentric characters in the many librarians, patrons and even the arsonist himself. More than a simple record of events, *The Library Book* is a love letter to the library in which the building itself rises from the ashes to offer a refuge for those seeking knowledge, training, entertainment and even shelter.

“The book to read is not the one that thinks for you but the one which makes you think.”

- Harper Lee

[Maryrose Delahunty](#)



Vice President and General Counsel

Invocon Inc.