

WE² Book Club




Hosted by the IAC Women for Energy Efficiency (WE²) Network

Participants are expected to follow the WE² Network's official Code of Conduct for Virtual Meetings and Discussions, as this program is intended to help facilitate a space for **safe and inclusive discussion** on topics surrounding **gender diversity in the engineering and energy efficiency work forces**.

Who can join?

Anyone affiliated with the IAC Program or connected to the our WE² LinkedIn page.
MALE ALLIES WELCOME.

How it works?

1. A book will be selected and announced quarterly from our ever-growing suggested reading list.
2. A virtual discussion will be hosted over zoom or other video call service 2 to 3 months after the book is selected. (Summer event scheduling may differ.)
3. Moderators will be prepared with questions, quotes, or audio clips (from the audiobook format) to prompt discussions on relevant themes and memorable moments in the book.
4. Participants are encouraged to come with questions/topics of their own. (We encourage bookmarks.)
5. The conversation is encouraged to become an open discussion format. The book is only a launching point, so even people who did not read/finish the book are encouraged to attend.
6. Members will be added to a  Slack.com workspace for continued discussion between events.
7. Events will not be recorded.

How can I participate if money is tight?

There are some free options to consider. First off, library access is always a plus. It should be relatively easy to get a library card. [Libby](#) is an excellent FREE app that allows you to borrow ebooks and audiobooks from your local county library remotely. There are also a few low-cost audiobook services you can create an account for such as [Audible](#) and [Libro.fm](#), both of which give you the first month free.

If you are struggling with the cost of books, please contact WE² Program organizers so we can work something out. (If cost ends up being an issue for a lot of participants, we can intentionally pick books that have been out for longer to increase likelihood of them being available at your local and school libraries.)

What kind of books are on the reading list?

It is an intentional mixture of genres. We will alternate between book genres and writing styles on the list. The books are chosen for their themes on gender, diversity in STEM and the workforce, advancing technology, energy crisis, women in leadership, intersectionality and identity, and other important topics for women in energy and engineering fields. [Skip to WE² Reading List.](#)

Why include works of science fiction and fantasy on the reading list?

As engineers and other members of the STEM community, it is important for us to recognize the impact science fiction has had and continues to have in the advancement of technology. Engineers, especially women and minority engineers, have a responsibility to think about how individuals and society interacts with this technology. Furthermore, much speculative fiction is not actually a prediction of the future but actually about the society of today. Science fiction has the power to allow us to explore the themes being discussed in through a different lens – or new world – so as to help strip away our unconscious biases that otherwise still exist in other formats.

“The purpose of a thought-experiment, as the term was used by Schrödinger and other physicists, is not to predict the future - indeed Schrödinger most famous thought experiment goes to show that the "future," on the quantum level, cannot be predicted - but to describe reality, the present world.

“Science fiction is not predictive; it is descriptive.”

- Ursula K. Le Guin, [The Left Hand of Darkness](#)

Can I start reading today?

Feel free to use the WE² list as your personal reading list. We will be continuing to add to it periodically and will not be able to get to every book. Additionally, some books share themes and may be relevant in discussions for other books. That being said, make sure you have a way to jog your memory if that book later is chosen for discussion.

Can I submit a book to be added to the list?

YES, PLEASE SUBMIT BOOK SUGGESTIONS TO THE WE² PROGRAM TEAM.

You can also bring them up at book discussion events. However, the final decision to add a book to the official list will be left up to the WE² program managers.

WE² Reading List

(Books are listed in no particular order. The list will be expanded continually and is subject to change.)

Lean In – First Book – Discussion October 2020

Becoming

Parable of the Sower – Second Book – Discussion January 2021

The Left Hand of Darkness

The Confidence Code

Technically Wrong

Eloquent Rage

Red Mars

The Alchemy of Us – Current Book / Third Book – Discussion March 2021 (Women's History Month)

The Circle

Designing Your Life

Prime Meridian

The Memo

The Bridge Called My Back

Bossypants

The Power of Habit

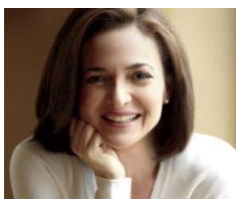
The Pearl that Broke the Shell

Shrill

Silent Spring

See below for more information on each book.

First Book (Oct 2020)



Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead

Authors: Sheryl Sandberg, Nell Scovell (Co-Writer)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Business, Feminism, Leadership, Self-Help

[12,910 reviews](#)

Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* is a massive cultural phenomenon and its title has become an instant catchphrase for empowering women. Ask most women whether they have the right to equality at work and the answer will be a resounding yes, but ask the same women whether they'd feel confident asking for a raise, a promotion, or equal pay, and some reticence creeps in. The statistics, although an improvement on previous decades, are certainly not in women's favour – of 197 heads of state, only twenty-two are women. Women hold just 20 percent of seats in parliaments globally, and in the world of big business, a meagre eighteen of the Fortune 500 CEOs are women. In *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg – Facebook COO and one of *Fortune* magazine's Most Powerful Women in Business – draws on her own experience of working in some of the world's most successful businesses and looks at what women can do to help themselves, and make the small changes in their life that can effect change on a more universal scale.



Becoming

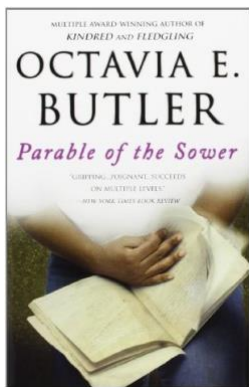
Author: [Michelle Obama](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Autobiography, Memoir, Feminism

[46,867 reviews](#)

In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her—from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it—in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations—and whose story inspires us to do the same.

Current Book (Jan 2021)



Parable of the Sower (Earthseed #1)

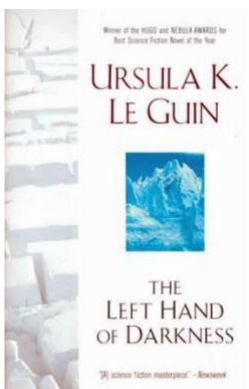
Author: Octavia E. Butler

Genre: **Fiction**, Science-fiction/Fantasy, Dystopian

[5,939 reviews](#)

In 2025, Lauren Olamina and her family live in one of the only safe neighborhoods remaining on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Behind the walls of their defended enclave, Lauren's father, a preacher, and a handful of other citizens try to salvage what remains of a culture that has been destroyed by drugs, disease, war, and chronic water shortages. Lauren struggles with hyperempathy, a condition that makes her extraordinarily sensitive to the pain of others.

When fire destroys their compound, Lauren's family is killed and she is forced out into a world that is fraught with danger. With a handful of other refugees, Lauren must make her way north to safety, along the way conceiving a revolutionary idea that may mean salvation for all mankind.



The Left Hand of Darkness (Hainish Cycle #4)

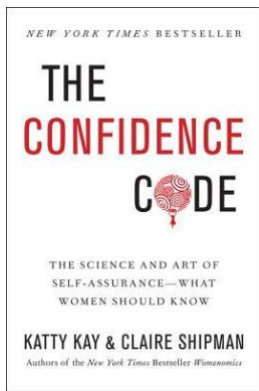
Author: Ursula K. Le Guin

Genre: **Fiction**, Classic Science-fiction, Speculative fiction, Gender, Feminism

[8,874 reviews](#)

A groundbreaking work of science fiction published in 1969, *The Left Hand of Darkness* tells the story of a lone human emissary to Winter, an alien world whose inhabitants can choose - and change - their gender. His goal is to facilitate Winter's inclusion in a growing intergalactic civilization. But to do so he must bridge the gulf between his own views and those of the completely dissimilar culture that he encounters. Embracing the aspects of psychology, society, and human emotion on an alien world, *The Left Hand of Darkness* stands as a landmark achievement in the annals of intellectual science fiction. This book is often cited as

the first to explore the idea of an androgynous culture, and the series itself is cited as the creation of "ansible," the concept of instantaneous interstellar communication.



The Confidence Code: The Science and Art of Self-Assurance – What Women Should Know

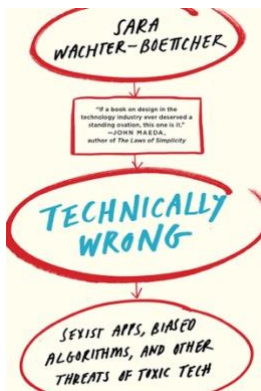
Authors: [Katty Kay](#), [Claire Shipman](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Self-Help, Leadership, Business, Psychology

[912 reviews](#)

Following the success of *Lean In* and *Why Women Should Rule the World*, the authors of the bestselling *Womenomics* provide an informative and practical guide to understanding the importance of confidence—and learning how to achieve it—for women of all ages and at all stages of their career. Working women today are better educated and more well qualified than ever before. Yet men still predominate in the corporate world. In *The Confidence Code*, Claire

Shipman and Katty Kay argue that the key reason is confidence. Combining cutting-edge research in genetics, gender, behavior, and cognition—with examples from their own lives and those of other successful women in politics, media, and business—Kay and Shipman go beyond admonishing women to "lean in." Instead, they offer the inspiration and practical advice women need to close the gap and achieve the careers they want and deserve.



Technically Wrong: Sexist Apps, Biased Algorithms, and Other Threats of Toxic Tech

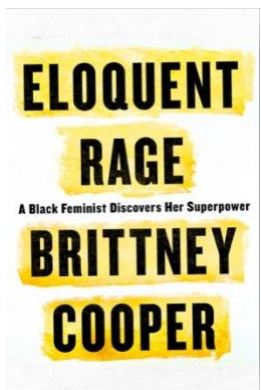
Author: [Sara Wachter-Boettcher](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Technology, Feminism

[239 reviews](#)

Buying groceries, tracking our health, finding a date: whatever we want to do, odds are that we can now do it online. But few of us realize just how many oversights, biases, and downright ethical nightmares are baked inside the tech products we use every day. It's time we change that. In *Technically Wrong*, Sara Wachter-Boettcher demystifies the tech industry,

leaving those of us on the other side of the screen better prepared to make informed choices about the services we use—and to demand more from the companies behind them.



Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower

Author: [Brittney Cooper](#)

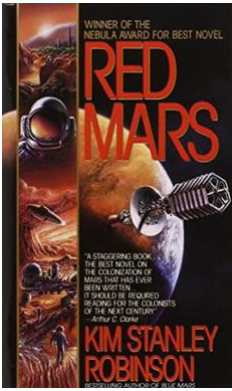
Genre: **Nonfiction**, Memoir, Intersectional Feminism, Race

(recommended on audiobook)

[1,051 reviews](#)

Far too often, Black women's anger has been caricatured into an ugly and destructive force that threatens the civility and social fabric of American democracy. But Cooper shows us that there is more to the story than that. Eloquent rage keeps us all honest and accountable. It

reminds women that they don't have to settle for less. When Cooper learned of her grandmother's eloquent rage about love, sex, and marriage in an epic and hilarious front-porch confrontation, her life was changed. And it took another intervention, this time staged by one of her homegirls, to turn Brittney into the fierce feminist she is today. This book argues that ultimately feminism, friendship, and faith in one's own superpowers are all we really need to turn things right side up again.



Red Mars (Mars Trilogy #1)

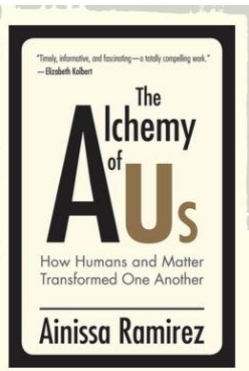
Author: Kim Stanley Robinson

Genre: **Fiction**, Hard Science-fiction, Space, Technology

[3,263 reviews](#)

For eons, sandstorms have swept the desolate landscape. For centuries, Mars has beckoned humans to conquer its hostile climate. Now, in 2026, a group of 100 colonists is about to fulfill that destiny. John Boone, Maya Toitavna, Frank Chalmers & Arkady Bogdanov lead a terraforming mission. For some, Mars will become a passion driving them to daring acts of courage & madness. For others it offers an opportunity to strip the planet of its riches. For the genetic alchemists, it presents a chance to create a biomedical miracle, a breakthrough that could change all we know about life & death. The colonists orbit giant satellite mirrors to reflect light to the surface. Black dust sprinkled on the polar caps will capture warmth. Massive tunnels, kilometers deep, will be drilled into the mantle to create stupendous vents of hot gases. Against this backdrop of epic upheaval, rivalries, loves & friendships will form & fall to pieces--for there are those who will fight to the death to prevent Mars from ever being changed.

Current Book (Mar 2021)



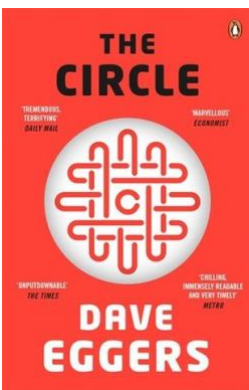
The Alchemy of Us: How Humans and Matter Transformed One Another

Author: Ainissa Ramirez

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Science, History, Technology

[37 reviews](#)

In *The Alchemy of Us*, scientist and science writer Ainissa Ramirez examines eight inventions--clocks, steel rails, copper communication cables, photographic film, light bulbs, hard disks, scientific labware, and silicon chips--and reveals how they shaped the human experience. Ramirez tells the stories of the woman who sold time, the inventor who inspired Edison, and the hotheaded undertaker whose invention pointed the way to the computer. She describes, among other things, how our pursuit of precision in timepieces changed how we sleep; how the railroad helped commercialize Christmas; how the necessary brevity of the telegram influenced Hemingway's writing style; and how a young chemist exposed the use of Polaroid's cameras to create passbooks to track black citizens in apartheid South Africa. These fascinating and inspiring stories offer new perspectives on our relationships with technologies.



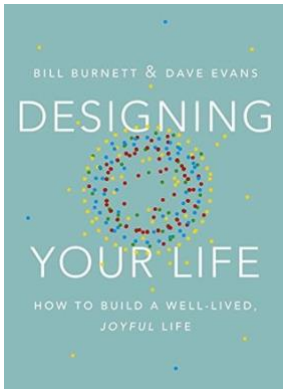
The Circle

Author: Dave Eggers

Genre: **Fiction**, Science-fiction, Thriller, Technology

[23,030 reviews](#)

This sci-fi thriller opens when Mae Holland is hired to work for the most important tech company in the world, The Circle. But what seems too good to be true turns out to be just that. As she rises in the ranks at The Circle, she simultaneously uncovers the dark underbelly of privacy, knowledge, and information tangled up in tech. Not only does *The Circle* capture the Silicon Valley zeitgeist, but it illuminates the unique challenges for the women at the top.



Designing Your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life

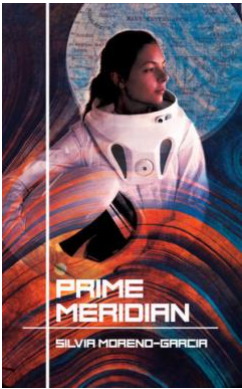
Author: [Bill Burnett](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Self-Help, Productivity

[1,054 reviews](#)

Whether we're 20, 40, 60 or older, many of us are still looking for an answer to that perennial question, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?' In *Designing Your Life*, Silicon Valley design innovators Bill Burnett and Dave Evans use their expertise to help you work out what you want – and how to get it. Using real-life stories and proven techniques

like reframing, prototyping and mind-mapping, you will learn how to build your way forwards, step-by-positive-step, to a life that's better by a design of your own making. Because a well-designed life means a life well-lived.



Prime Meridian

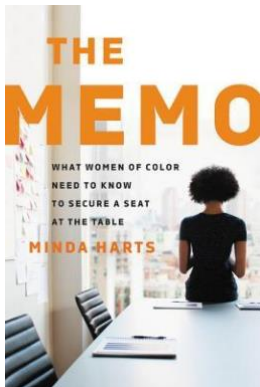
Author: [Silvia Moreno-Garcia](#)

Genre: **Fiction**, Science-Fiction, Speculative Fiction, Space

[141 reviews](#)

Love, life, dreams, and a world beyond reach. Amelia dreams of Mars. The Mars of the movies and the imagination, an endless bastion of opportunities for a colonist with some guts. But she's trapped in Mexico City, enduring the drudgery of an unkind metropolis, working as a rent-a-friend, selling her blood to old folks with money who hope to rejuvenate themselves with it, enacting a fractured love story. And yet there's Mars, at the edge of the silver screen, of

life. It awaits her.



The Memo: What Women of Color Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table

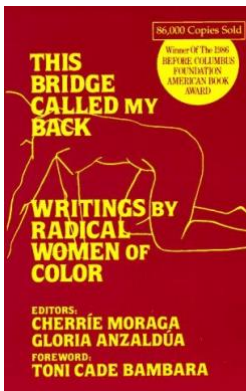
Author: [Minda Harts](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Self-Help, Business, Intersectional Feminism, Race

[100 reviews](#)

From microaggressions to the wage gap, *The Memo* empowers women of color with actionable advice on challenges and offers a clear path to success. Most business books provide a one-size-fits-all approach to career advice that overlooks the unique barriers that women of color face. In *The Memo*, Minda Harts offers a much-needed career guide tailored

specifically for women of color. Drawing on knowledge gained from her past career as a fundraising consultant to top colleges across the country, Harts now brings her powerhouse entrepreneurial experience as CEO of The Memo to the page. With wit and candor, she acknowledges "ugly truths" that keep women of color from having a seat at the table in corporate America. Providing straight talk on how to navigate networking, office politics, and money, while showing how to make real change to the system, *The Memo* offers support and long-overdue advice on how women of color can succeed in their careers.



This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color

Authors: [Cherríe L. Moraga](#) (Editor), [Gloria E. Anzaldúa](#) (Editor), [Toni Cade Bambara](#) (Foreward) Genre: **Nonfiction**, Essays, Feminism, Race, Gender

4.49 · [Rating details](#) · [7,746 ratings](#) · [269 reviews](#)

This groundbreaking collection reflects an uncompromised definition of feminism by women of color. Through personal essays, criticism, interviews, testimonials, poetry, and visual art, the collection explores, as coeditor Cherríe Moraga writes, “the complex confluence of identities—race, class, gender, and sexuality—systemic to women of color oppression and

liberation.”



Bossypants

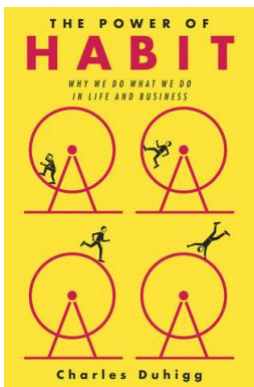
Author: [Tina Fey](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Autobiography, Memoir, Humor, Feminism, Leadership (recommended on audiobook)

[39,079 reviews](#)

Before Liz Lemon, before "Weekend Update," before "Sarah Palin," Tina Fey was just a young girl with a dream: a recurring stress dream that she was being chased through a local airport by her middle-school gym teacher. She also had a dream that one day she would be a comedian on TV. From her youthful days as a vicious nerd to her tour of duty on *Saturday Night Live*; from her passionately halfhearted pursuit of physical beauty to her life as a

mother eating things off the floor; from her one-sided college romance to her nearly fatal honeymoon—from the beginning of this paragraph to this final sentence. Tina Fey reveals all, and proves what we've all suspected: you're no one until someone calls you bossy.



The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business

Author: [Charles Duhigg](#) (Goodreads Author)

Author: **Nonfiction**, Self-Help, Psychology, Business, Productivity, Leadership [16,684 reviews](#)

In *The Power of Habit*, award-winning *New York Times* business reporter Charles Duhigg takes us to the thrilling edge of scientific discoveries that explain why habits exist and how they can be changed. Along the way we learn why some people and companies struggle to change, despite years of trying, while others seem to remake themselves overnight. We visit

laboratories where neuroscientists explore how habits work and where, exactly, they reside in our brains. We discover how the right habits were crucial to the success of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, and civil-rights hero Martin Luther King, Jr. At its core, *The Power of Habit* contains an exhilarating argument: The key to exercising regularly, losing weight, raising exceptional children, becoming more productive, building revolutionary companies and social movements, and achieving success is understanding how habits work. Habits aren't destiny. As Charles Duhigg shows, by harnessing this new science, we can transform our businesses, our communities, and our lives.



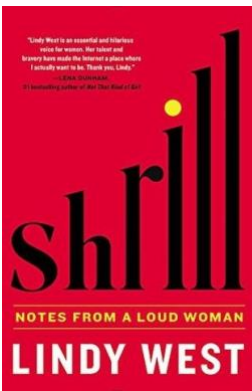
The Pearl That Broke Its Shell

Author: [Nadia Hashimi](#)

Genre: **Fiction**, Historical Fiction

[3,871 reviews](#)

In Kabul, 2007, with a drug-addicted father and no brothers, Rahima and her sisters can only sporadically attend school, and can rarely leave the house. Their only hope lies in the ancient custom of bacha posh, which allows young Rahima to dress and be treated as a boy until she is of marriageable age. As a son, she can attend school, go to the market, and chaperone her older sisters. But Rahima is not the first in her family to adopt this unusual custom. A century earlier, her great-aunt, Shekiba, left orphaned by an epidemic, saved herself and built a new life the same way. Crisscrossing in time, *The Pearl the Broke Its Shell* interweaves the tales of these two women separated by a century who share similar destinies. But what will happen once Rahima is of marriageable age? Will Shekiba always live as a man? And if Rahima cannot adapt to life as a bride, how will she survive?



Shrill: Notes from a Loud Woman

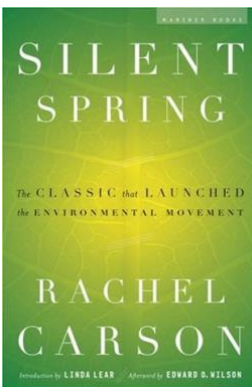
Author: [Lindy West](#)

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Autobiography, Memoir, Feminism, Essays, Humor

(recommended on audiobook)

[5,461 reviews](#)

From a painfully shy childhood in which she tried, unsuccessfully, to hide her big body and even bigger opinions; to her public war with stand-up comedians over rape jokes; to her struggle to convince herself, and then the world, that fat people have value; to her accidental activism and never-ending battle royale with Internet trolls, Lindy narrates her life with a blend of humor and pathos that manages to make a trip to the abortion clinic funny and wring tears out of a story about diarrhea. With inimitable good humor, vulnerability, and boundless charm, Lindy boldly shares how to survive in a world where not all stories are created equal and not all bodies are treated with equal respect, and how to weather hatred, loneliness, harassment, and loss--and walk away laughing. *Shrill* provocatively dissects what it means to become self-aware the hard way, to go from wanting to be silent and invisible to earning a living defending the silenced in all caps.



Silent Spring

Author: [Rachel Carson](#),

Genre: **Nonfiction**, Environmentalism, Science and Technology

[2,212 reviews](#)

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was first published in three serialized excerpts in the *New Yorker* in June of 1962. The book appeared in September of that year and the outcry that followed its publication forced the banning of DDT and spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water. Carson's passionate concern for the future of our planet reverberated powerfully throughout the world, and her eloquent book was instrumental in launching the environmental movement. It is without question one of the landmark books of the twentieth century.