

When deciding on books for the MBA Business Readings class, I ended up with the following list: Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzer; First Things First by Stephen R. Covey; Jack: Straight from the Gut by Jack Welch; First, Break All the Rules by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman; What Got You Here Won't Get You There by Marshall Goldsmith; The MBA Oath by Max Anderson and Peter Escher; How to Win Friends and Influence People by Dale Carnegie; Good to Great by Jim Collins; Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office by Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D.; Think Big and Kick Ass by Donald Trump. It was a mix of the basics, such as communication and time management skills to learning what has or has not work in business to CEO personal experiences. What I found to be the most important concepts were usually discussed in multiple books, such as finding the right people and then deciding on the right direction.

Since I began with Crucial Conversations and First Things First, I also started with the basics. While one was more about communication to or between people, the other discussed time management skills. Improving communication, and, more specifically, listening skills, is something I could work on immediately. It applies in daily life. The time management skills are more challenging to apply because it takes additional work. What I really liked was that it defined a new generation and what was used from the old systems. For example, I like using my planner because I can see the month and each week. When deciding on the priorities for the week, the new system puts items into categories. The categories are based on roles, such as family member, friend, student and employee. One role that is supposed to be automatic and I definitely want to add more often, is called “sharpening the saw.” Without a renewal time, all the other areas may suffer, too.

The next set of books, What Got You Here Won't Get You There and Nice Girls Don't Get the Corner Office described what personal attributes were helpful or hurtful going forward. They both gave examples of why what worked before might not work in the future. The second book started with an assessment with the suggestion of reading the lowest scored areas first. How I sound was one of my

lowest scores and definitely may have hurt my opportunities. It also seems to be a symptom of a lack of at least perceived confidence. As I speak or write I am paying closer attention to the wording. The difference in language use, also relating to communication, is a big part of it. This concept leads to the discussions that were in the first book, since these attributes become more important as promotions occur.

Three books applied directly to the business world: First, Break All the Rules, How to Win Friends and Influence People, and Good to Great. The bottom line to all of these was summed up by the title of the third book. A difference does exist between companies that are good, and companies that are great. When they are great, they are sustaining in employees and growth. This is where the idea of having the right employees in the right spot is important before knowing the direction. Probably the biggest reason for the bottom line is the manager. Whatever brings an employee into a company, it is the relationship with the manager, and how that manager communicates that may determine what keeps that employee. I have seen how that works in my own experiences and understand and am determined to be that great manager. One step is to create open and safe communication. Without the basics, it does not have a chance of working.

All of these concepts are combined to create the The MBA Oath and portrayed by CEO experiences in Jack: Straight from the Gut and Think Big and Kick Ass. I find the first book especially important as an MBA student. The book was about how an MBA is and could be portrayed, especially if considered a professional similar to doctors or lawyers. The most important part that is constantly brought up in my classes is ethics. Deciding to do something because it is the culture does not mean it is the correct something. Jack Welch proved that by contributing to the change in culture at General Electric. What I found most interesting was in the third book and the idea of momentum. Before I read it, I thought my calendar was too full and that I tended to think too much. Based on the book, not looking ahead can have an adverse effect. Other than the need to “sharpen the saw” more often, it confirmed that I am on the right track. It was similar to a mentorship when reading the two books about

the CEO experiences. They each had interesting backgrounds which lead them to their particular roles. My past experience is leading me to the fact that I want to change the path that I have had, such as with graduate school.

The business books I chose and the insights I gained have been a great way to learn new ideas. I plan to continue reading more business books and I have already started a list based on recommendations. The recommendations may be from classmates, the references, or a book club.