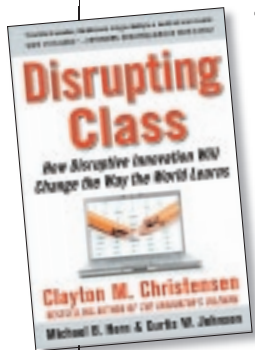


Bookshelf

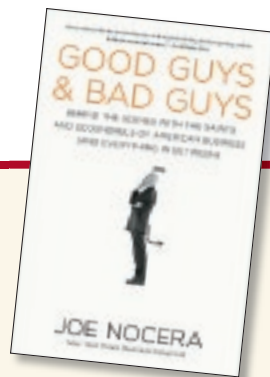
Clayton Christensen isn't one of those authors who believes the traditional U.S. school system is broken. But he sure thinks it could stand improvement—and he expects disruptive technology to do the heavy lifting. In *Disrupting Class*, Christensen and co-authors Michael B. Horn and Curtis W. Johnson note that teaching methods have changed very little in the last few decades, despite the fact that a large number of stu-

dents do not learn well in lecture-style classrooms. But Christensen and his co-authors believe that, within the next ten years, student-centric online learning methods will revolutionize the way education is delivered, allowing all students to progress at their own speeds and absorb information in ways that make sense to them. They predict that student-centered computer-enabled learning will only take off—as all disruptive technologies do—when it primarily competes against the alternative of no learning at all. For instance, schools that don't offer live classes in AP calculus or Mandarin Chinese will set up learning labs for the small number of students who want those classes and have no other access to them. From there, they argue, rapid improvements in technology will turn computer-enabled learning into the educational delivery method of choice. It's utterly fascinating to see the principles of disruption applied to the educational system. Most of the book focuses on K–12 learning, but the lessons apply to any classroom. (McGraw Hill, \$32.95)



The world of business is an endlessly fascinating panorama

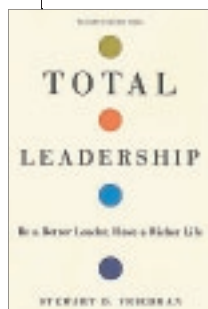
of brilliant minds, shady characters, game-changing deals, and shocking reverses. Joe Nocera, a business journalist who has written for *The New York Times*, *Fortune*, and *Esquire*, loves every complex minute of it. In *Good Guys & Bad Guys*, he gathers together 20 years' worth of columns about some of the larger-than-life characters that have tramped across the American business stage. Steve Jobs, Warren Buffet, Charles Merrill (and his descendants) all make unforgettable appearances within Nocera's pages. "When you start out on a business story...you really have no idea which of your main characters are going to turn out to be memorable and which are going to be dull as dishwater," Nocera writes. Maybe he just picked the memorable ones; maybe he just has such a fascination with his subjects that he's able to bring them masterfully to life. His book feels like the best deal on Wall Street—one that repays the investment with interest. (Portfolio, \$25.95)



Most working adults struggle to find

enough time for all the things that matter to them: their jobs, their families, their social networks, and themselves. In *Total Leadership*, Stewart D. Friedman—founding director of the Wharton School's Leadership Program and its Work/Life Integration Project—attempts to help readers find their balance by better aligning those four separate domains of their life. He believes people can be more content and more productive in all phases of their lives if they identify what matters to them, who matters to them, and how they are apportioning their time and energy among the quadrants of their lives. A man who is a better father, for instance, becomes a better boss; a woman who learns to accept her parents for who they are similarly learns to appreciate her diverse employees.

Total Leadership, which is full of exercises that make readers reflect on their own values, is part self-help book, part motivational tool, but Friedman backs up his premise with



some hard numbers. He launched the Total Leadership program at a *Fortune* 50 company with 35 high-profile managers. The changes they implemented produced a combined \$5.8 million in cost savings and \$700,000 in new revenue—and presumably improved all the other areas of their lives as well. (Harvard Business School Press, \$25.95)

Paul B. Carroll and Chunka Mui pose an interesting question in the introduction to *Billion Dollar Lessons*:

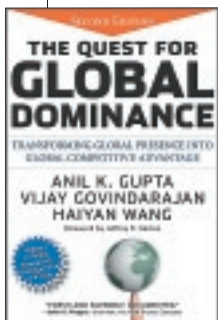
"Why spend \$500 million, and a decade of your life, repeating someone else's mistake when you could learn to avoid it by spending a few hours with a \$26 book (less on Amazon)?" Their book delivers the goods. It's a brisk detailing of some of the worst failures in business, an analysis of the seven most disastrous business strategies, and an examination of the human behaviors that are likely to lead even smart people into making really bad decisions. But even though the authors note that "humans are hardwired to come up with bad strategies," CEOs



can overcome strong psychological biases toward making and sticking to unfortunate choices. One key is to “build disagreement into the formulation of strategies”—in other words, to invite other top executives to disagree with a plan, or try to find its flaws. The book is fun to read, because Carroll and Mui write in an effortless and engaging style, but the lessons are pretty sobering. (Portfolio, \$25.95)

■ **“The twin forces of ideological change and technology revolution are making globalization one of the most important strategic and organizational issues facing companies today,”** note Anil K. Gupta, Vijay Govindarajan, and Haiyan Wang in *The Quest for Global Dominance*. The authors—Gupta from the University of Maryland, Govindarajan from Dartmouth, and Wang from the

China India Institute—have written an ambitious and wide-ranging book that covers all angles a business leader might need to consider before formulating a global strategy. Then they take an in-depth look at specific issues. For instance, they ask, when a company wants to exploit its global presence, how does it adapt to local market differences? Does it know how much customers are willing to pay for adapted products? Are market research systems in place to gauge customer satisfaction? Two of the most interesting chapters in the revamped second edition of this book have an even



narrower focus. One looks closely at Wal-Mart’s experiences with globalization, and another analyzes how China and India will reshape international business within the next 40 years. Throughout the book, the authors have one clear message: “Get on board, or get left behind.” (Jossey-Bass, \$34.95)

■ **The U.S. government can be considered one of the largest, most unwieldy corporations that ever existed—and one of the most poorly run. That’s the premise of Wharton professor Lawrence G. Hrebiniak in *The Mismanagement of America, Inc.*** He first lays out the case for America as a corporate entity, albeit one with a confusing organizational chart, and then makes his basic charge: “The U.S. is being managed in ways that no large, for-profit company could tolerate if it



hoped to survive and prosper.” Few of his observations are surprising—for instance, is there anyone who doesn’t agree that a \$9 trillion debt is evidence of poor fiscal management? Nonetheless, his cumulative presentation of hard data is increasingly worrisome. Hrebiniak does believe that proven management practices such as organizational restructuring, cost-cutting, strategic planning, goal setting, and leadership can put the country back on the right track, but he doesn’t believe there’s any time to waste. “It’s necessary, more than ever before, to focus on sound management and organizational design to compete effectively and remain viable in an increasingly complex and turbulent world,” he writes. “The U.S. is not a business, of course, but there certainly are important lessons in management that can be borrowed from the private sector to solve the impending problems.” (iUniverse, \$28.95)

Business schools turn out thousands of graduates who take corporate jobs and climb the management ladder—but those jobs don’t always turn out to be as satisfying as people hope. Is there something better? In *Escape from Corporate America*, Pamela Skillings examines life in the cubicle farm, honestly praising its good points, but with equal bluntness describing where it can go horribly wrong. Bad bosses, toxic co-workers, overwork, and boredom are only some of the hazards of the corporate workplace. Even so, many people are afraid to bail out, leaving behind a hefty paycheck, job security, and useful benefits. Skillings thinks they’re making a mistake. “The supposed stability of a corporate job is an illusion. In Corporate America today, you can be sent packing with little notice... . If all jobs have risks, why not go for one that inspires you?” She shepherds readers through fantasizing exercises that will help them identify their dream jobs and cheerleads them past their insecurities and fears. The book is a great read for

anyone thinking about dropping out of investment banking and taking a job as a chef—or anyone preparing to graduate from business school and trying to figure out how to spend the next forty years. (Ballantine Books, \$15) ■

