

Why Aren't There More Books About Communication On Military Reading Lists?

Reading Lists?



By [Megan Jantos](#)

Leadership is communication, and communication is leadership. Don't believe me? Try influencing others by providing purpose, direction, and motivation without communication. On the flip side, people naturally follow those who communicate ideas and thoughts effectively.

Yet, senior leader reading lists lack books that directly discuss the topic of communication. The last five *U.S. Army Chief of Staff Professional Reading Lists* only mention communication a total of six times. And, when mentioned it was typically from a technical perspective of physical equipment and networks (i.e. communications).

This baffles me because the foundations of communication remain constant regardless of

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history or echelon of command. During a typical interpersonal communication class, the first rule taught is “you cannot NOT communicate.” Every action — or inaction — is a message sent.

Understanding the message you want to communicate is the first and arguably the most important stage of the communication process. There are so many opportunities for misinterpretation, which is why I encourage leaders to dedicate time exploring the ‘sender’ stage.

In the ‘sender’ stage, a leader contemplates the message to be sent. Realizing that our message begins with nonverbal communication long before we even open our mouths or put pen to paper, we should first consider the messages we send as an individual:

Who am I? How do I want to be perceived? How will my presence impact my ability to influence others?

Leaders who want to influence others will take time to master communication. That mastery begins with understanding your own purpose, visualizing your future, and driving yourself there. When you are able to lead yourself, others will follow.

So, if I could recommend three books that should be on every *U.S. Army Chief of Staff Professional Reading List* and help us all be a better communicators, it would be these:

[Brand You: Turn Your Unique Talents into a Winning Formula](#) by John Purkiss & David Royston-Lee

[Drive: The Truth About What Motivates Us](#) by Daniel Pink

[To Sell is Human: The Surprising Thing About Moving Others](#) by Daniel Pink

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Have you read a book that helped you improve your communication skills? If so, please share in the comments section below!

[Megan Jantos](#) is a communication advisor to military leaders and working women. She believes effective communication—a firm handshake or well-aimed bullet—can solve any problem. You can find her rowing hard as an iron major at 3rd Infantry Division, crushing weights at the gym, or helping the nearest woman unleash her potential.

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