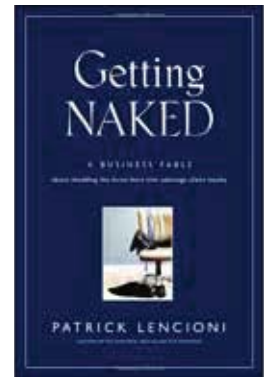
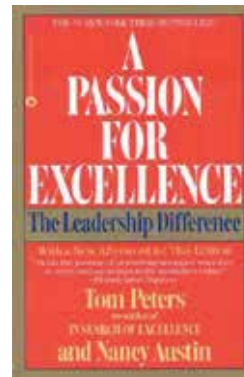
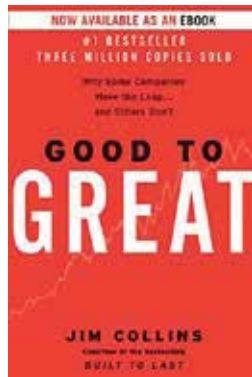
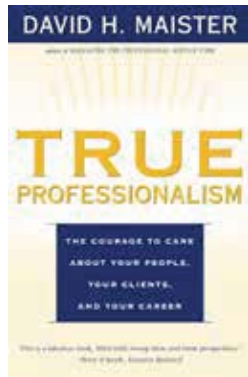
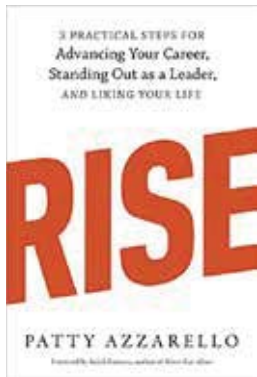


# Recommended Reading

BY ANDREA DIAZ, CPA, SKC AND CO., CPAs, LLC



What do most successful people have in common? They read! It's no surprise that when I asked the folks at my firm for their favorite professional development books, the partners were the first to respond. All the partners I spoke with followed advice from various books they've read over the years of their career, and one partner even stated that one of the books mentioned below had a big influence on building our firm, which has a long-standing reputation for sincere and exceptional client interaction.

I know you're probably thinking that you barely have time to read to keep up with current tax law changes or recent Financial Accounting Standards Board implementations, but I guarantee you that an investment in your professional development will help you to become one of the most valuable staff at your company. Reading books outside of industry-specific material will not only increase your awareness of your clients, but it will improve your professionalism towards everyone in your organization, from entry-level staff to managing partner or CEO, which will set you apart from the accountant who knows only how to perform technical responsibilities. I've compiled a short list of books that were instrumental in my professional development during various stages of my career.

✓ **Early on:** *Rise: 3 Practical Steps for Advancing Your Career, Standing Out as a Leader, and Liking Your Life* by Patty Azzarello. Rise may have the most simplistic and real-world advice

on getting to where you want to be in your career written by an expert whose experience is impressive to anyone reading her work.

✓ **Next steps:** *True Professionalism: The Courage to Care about Your People, Your Clients and Your Career* by David Maister. What's the difference between a true professional and someone who just clocks in from nine to five? According to David Maister: passion. In this book, Maister focuses on professional service organizations, such as accounting firms, and captures and defines what it is to be a true professional. He writes about having passion for your profession and how the difference is so clearly reflected between those who do not share the sense of passion and care towards their clients, their staff and their career. He writes, "Believe passionately in what you do, and never knowingly compromise your standards and values. Act like a true professional, aiming for true excellence, and the money will follow." These are words to live by.

✓ **Getting better:** *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't* by Jim Collins. This book details a case study of 25 public companies that went from good to great during a 10-year period while other comparable companies in their same sector did only mediocre as evidenced by their stock prices. While the study is on large public companies as a whole, it speaks deeply about the people in

the good-to-great organizations and the difference in the characters of the leadership to those in the comparable mediocre companies. The people on your team, including you, will be the difference between good and great. "The old adage 'People are your most important asset' is wrong. People are not your most important asset. The right people are," says Collins.

✓ **A classic worth re-reading at all levels:** *A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference* by Tom Peters. This is the book that largely influenced the founding values of our firm. More than one partner gave high praise to this literary piece. Although an older book, it is still extremely relevant and well worth taking the time to read.

✓ **Last but not least:** *Getting Naked: A Business Fable About Shedding the Three Fears That Sabotage Client Loyalty* by Patrick Lencioni. Unconventional to most professional development books, it is narrated as a fictional story, but the message is clear. Exposing your vulnerabilities, or "getting naked," will improve your relationships with clients and others in your organization.

As you continue to grow and advance in your career, it will become apparent that the importance of your professional interaction is as important as your technical skills. Happy reading! 📖

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