

Non Fiction Book Groups

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I admit that I am quite unfamiliar with the nonfiction genre. Although there are many subjects I'm interested in exploring, I just don't reach for the nonfiction titles as readily as the fiction ones. However, every time an intriguing title comes in, I make a note of it to add to my ever-growing to-be-read list. Like many others, I'm sure, my list (both fiction and nonfiction) is lengthy.

To illustrate how slowly I am checking off titles, this past month I finally sat down and read *Doctor Sleep* (2013), Stephen King's follow-up to his 1977 novel, *The Shining*. This book had been on my list since the year it was published. Prior to that, I was able to check off one title from my list of nonfiction: *The Art Thief: A True Story of Love, Crime, and Obsession* (2023) by Michael Finkle. While this wasn't my first foray into the genre, it was only the seventh nonfiction book I've read in my life. The book was so good that it forced me to say "why have I been so intimidated by nonfiction?"

In high school I forced myself to read a couple of David McCullough's books because I was procrastinating on a few projects and I was looking for topics I thought I knew everything about. I read *1776* (2005) like I had to breathe. This is a book I still love today, but my rebellious high school self said "no more nonfiction." I stuck with that self-imposed ban for about five years until I read famed director and theatre theorist Peter Brook's *The Empty Space* (1995). Again, another book I adore, but also made me say "self, don't you know Stephen King just released a new one? You love that guy."

So, why have I been so intimidated by nonfiction? The answer is I have no clue. Just last year, I read Joseph Posnanski's *Why We Love Baseball: A History in 50 Moments* (2023) and Kieth O'Brien's *Charlie Hustle: The Rise and Fall of Pete Rose, and the Last Glory Days of Baseball* (2024). Two incredible books for both avid and casual baseball fans. I love nonfiction! I am ashamed to admit that my problem is that I just don't think about it.

If you also want to read more nonfiction books, the wonderful news is that the Kirkland Town Library has a brand new book group dedicated to nonfiction. This group meets the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. During their next meeting (**June 9**), they will be discussing Simon Winchester's *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary* (2023), in which Winchester tells the extraordinary true tale of the creation of the OED. You think the creation of the world's most popular dictionary would be pretty straightforward, right? As the subtitle suggests, creating the dictionary is only half of the story. This is a tale of genius, madness, and obsession. I'm sure the discussion about this book will be absolutely riveting.

There is still time to come by the Kirkland Town Library and pick up your copy of Winchester's book before the next meeting! If you can't join this month, there will be other chances and more exciting books to read and discuss. Keep an eye out in our monthly newsletter, website, and social media for the group's full list of titles. Happy (nonfiction) reading!