

A Venture Capitalist's eclectic reading list: Escaping the VC grind

Exclusively for Maddyne, Noa Khamallah of Don't Quit Ventures shares his late summer reading list and explains the long term benefits of expanding horizons through literature.

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Being a venture capitalist is an intense and demanding profession. The constant pressure to find promising deals, manage investments, and navigate economic uncertainties can be overwhelming. That's why it's crucial for VCs to disconnect and broaden their horizons through diverse reading material. Here's a curated list of books that have recently captured my attention, offering a refreshing escape from the VC world:

How the World Made the West by Josephine Quinn

Quinn's 4000-year history challenges conventional narratives about Western civilization's origins. This thought-provoking book explores how diverse global influences shaped the West, from Babylonian law codes to Arabic scholarship. It offers a fresh perspective on cultural exchange and innovation, concepts that are highly relevant to the VC industry's global outlook. Understanding what was true centuries ago can very much still apply today!

Des Gens Comme Il Faut by Florence Chataignier

This debut novel delves into the complexities of family dynamics and

societal expectations. The phrase "Don't go gentle into that good night" resonates throughout the book, echoing the characters' struggles against conformity and their search for authenticity. Chataignier's work serves as a poignant reminder of the human elements often overlooked in the fast-paced world we live in today. Anyone in the world could relate to the character's dilemma, this book written in French truly deserves some English translation to address a wider audience across the globe.

La prophétie de Dali by Balla Fofana

Fofana's autobiographical novel provides a child's-eye view of exile and immigration. The author's unique voice and humour shine through as he recounts his family's journey from Mali to France. This book offers valuable insights into cultural adaptation and resilience, qualities that are essential in the ever-changing landscape of venture capital.

Pause by Alexandre Mars

Alexandre Mars' latest book, is a thought-provoking exploration of personal alignment and its potential for societal impact. Drawing from his popular podcast PAUSE, Mars takes readers on a journey towards self-fulfillment and success that goes beyond mere financial gain. The book features insights from a diverse array of successful individuals, including myself Noa, proving that even a checkered past can lead to a bright future in the world of startups and Venture Capital. Mars also highlights the iconic shoe designer Christian Louboutin, whose red-soled creations have elevated the fashion world to new heights - quite literally. With a touch of humour, Mars reminds us that whether you're scaling mountains in venture capital or designing shoes that make people feel like they're walking on air, success comes in many shapes and forms - sometimes with a distinctive red bottom.



Read also

Align and achieve: PAUSE by Alexandre Mars, between intimate and incredible

The Expectant Father by Armin A. Brott and Jennifer Ash

As a recent father myself, this comprehensive guide for dads-to-be has been invaluable. It offers month-by-month advice on supporting your partner, preparing for the baby's arrival, and navigating the challenges of new parenthood. Balancing the demands of VC work with family life is a crucial skill, and this book provides practical strategies for doing so with practicalities very much needed for dads to be.

Generation Impact by Romain Sion

On one side, there's Romain, a thirty-year-old who embodies Generation Y, working in an investment fund. On the other, he dedicates much of his free time to serving the poorest, actively engaging with NGOs in places like the Ugandan jungle, the northern neighbourhoods of Marseille, the favelas in Brazil, or vast Indian landfills.

His story, rich with anecdotes, prompts a critical question: why constantly oppose the business world and that of humanitarianism? The resources

of the former enable large-scale initiatives and provide comfort, while the latter strives to imbue actions with deep meaning. So, why choose between the two? Is it possible to find purpose in one's work without abandoning everything? How can one act from within the system?

The extreme challenges of our time demand that we take action. The good news: everyone, including you reading this, can contribute to meaningful change. How? By working toward a society that is peaceful, responsible, and compassionate.

This is the credo of Generation Impact: “At our own pace and scale, Everyone can aspire to change the world”

The importance of diverse reading for VCs

The venture capital world is known for its long hours, high pressure, and constant need to stay ahead of market trends. While industry-specific knowledge is crucial, expanding one's literary horizons can provide numerous benefits:

1. Enhanced creativity: Exposure to diverse narratives and ideas can spark innovative thinking in deal evaluation and problem-solving.
2. Improved empathy: Reading fiction and personal accounts can help VCs better understand and connect with entrepreneurs from various backgrounds.
3. Stress relief: Engaging with non-work-related content allows for mental breaks and reduces burnout risk.
4. Broader perspective: Exploring history, culture, and global issues can inform investment decisions in an increasingly interconnected world.

By embracing a varied reading list, venture capitalists can not only find respite from their demanding careers but also cultivate skills and insights that ultimately enhance their professional performance.

Remember, the path to becoming a successful VC is paved with both hard work and a willingness to explore beyond the confines of the industry.

Noa Khamallah is General Partner at [Don't Quit Ventures](#).



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