



Relax over the holidays with our top book picks

December 22, 2020

After a demanding year, it's time to take a well-deserved break at the holidays. We asked our colleagues to share a book (or podcast) that they enjoyed in 2020.

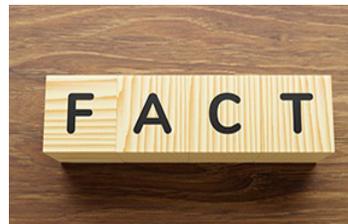
Ed Al-Hussainy, Senior Interest Rate & Currency Analyst

I really enjoyed *The Mirror and the Light* by Hilary Mantel. It's historical fiction on the life of Thomas Cromwell and the Tudor court from 1536-1540, and I found it fascinating.



Anwiti Bahuguna, Head of Multi Asset Strategy

I loved *Factfulness: Ten Reasons We're Wrong About the World — and Why Things are Better Than You Think* by Hans Rosling, Anna Rosling Ronnlund and Ola Rosling. This book was an eye-opener for me because they reveal ten instincts that distort our perspective — from our tendency to divide the world into “us” vs “them,” to the way we consume media (where fear rules). Most importantly, the book talks about how we perceive progress: it turns out that the world, for all its imperfections, is in a much better state than we might think.



Fred Copper, Senior Portfolio Manager

My pick is *Infinite Jest* by David Foster Wallace. I would argue that it's up there with the best books ever written. Wallace writes the way LeBron James plays basketball — he just decides he's going to do something, and there's nothing and no one that's going to be able to stop him. His talent is simply that prodigious. Fair warning, the book is a beast: over 1,000 pages of dense text, prose and thought, but worth every minute/hour/day/month, if you have the time.



Josh Kutin, Head of North America Asset Allocation

Trajectories in Near Eastern Apocalyptic by John C. Reeves is a comparative study of predictions for how the end of days will look in medieval Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. I've had it on my shelf for a while and thought: if I'm not going to read this in the crazy year of 2020, will I ever? Spoiler alert: I think we're all going to be okay. But wearing my asset allocation hat, I'll continue to advocate for diversification just in case.



Colin Lundgren, Global Head of Fixed Income

The Answer Is ...: Reflections on My Life by Alex Trebek is a collection of heartwarming stories and reflections of the longtime *Jeopardy!* host who recently passed away. The show encouraged learning, while the host inspired us by his grace, humor and courage. And if his day job had not worked out, I think this quote from Alex shows that he would have made a great bond manager: "I don't gamble because winning a hundred dollars doesn't give me great pleasure. But losing a hundred dollars pisses me off."



Melda Mergen, Deputy Global Head of Equity

Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of The Teenage Brain by Daniel J. Siegel is a great read — not only for the teens and parents of teens, but also for any adult to discover how they became who they are today. The book busts many commonly held myths about adolescence — dispelling things like "it's merely a stage of immaturity" filled with "crazy behavior." According to Siegel, during adolescence, we learn vital skills such as how to leave home and enter the larger world, connect deeply with others, and safely experiment and take risks.



Colin Moore, CIO, Columbia Threadneedle Investments

I recommend *The Expanse* series by James Corey. It's a sprawling science fiction story (novels and short stories) that takes a look at politics and greed playing out across our solar system. This series is a great demonstration of how a small group of people can make a big difference.



Tom Murphy, Head of Investment Grade Credit

A Dream Too Big by Caylin Moore tells the story of the author's journey from Compton to Oxford (with a stop at TCU) and provides some great insight on real adversity. It really puts the challenges of pandemic life into context.



Dara White, Head of Global Emerging Markets Equity

Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin shows how one very determined person can make an inspiring difference. Mortenson got lost after a failed climb of K2 in Pakistan and came across a village. Inspired by the people, he returned to build a school, and eventually 50 more.



Bryan Sanchez, CIO, Lionstone Investments

The Splendid and the Vile by Erik Larson is a great read about the first year of WWII in Britain. Whenever we think we have problems, consider having bombs dropped on your head every night. This book provides inspiration for perseverance in the face of adversity.



Ted Truscott, CEO, Columbia Threadneedle Investments

Nice White Parents from the New York Times (reported by Chana Joffe-Walt and produced by Julie Snyder) is a fascinating podcast that tackles a host of diversity and inclusion issues. There are five episodes so far, and I really got something out of each one. It's a must-listen for anyone who wants to build a better school system for our kids.



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