

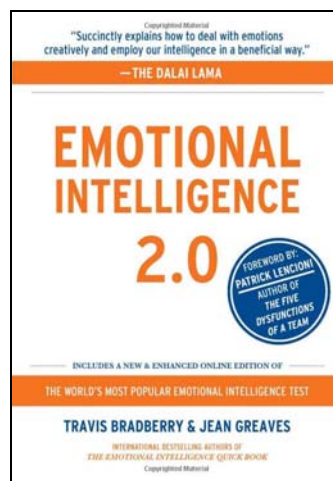


## Three Great Books

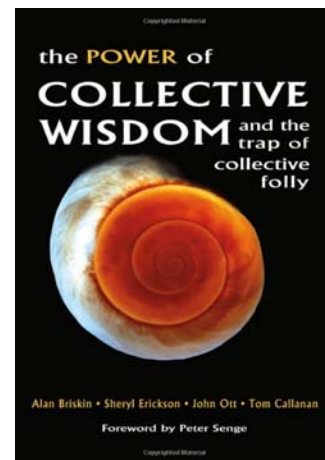
*"The books which help you most are those which make you think the most. The hardest way of learning is by easy reading; but a great book that comes from a great thinker—it is a ship of thought, deep freighted with truth and beauty."*

*- Theodore Parker*

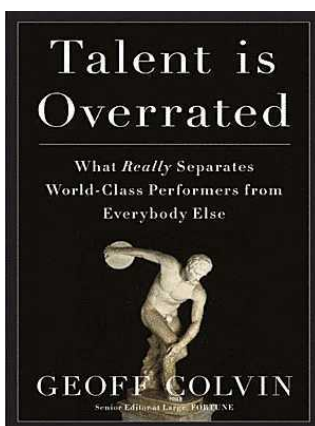
As professionals, our job is to keep learning so we can share useful knowledge with our clients. We hunt and gather so you can feast on provocative and pragmatic ideas. This year, we want to share with you our top picks for 2009. These three books challenged and inspired us and we think they are worth your time and attention.



**Emotional Intelligence 2.0**  
Written by Travis Bradberry and  
Jean Greaves



**The Power of Collective Wisdom:  
And the Trap of Collective Folly**  
Written by Alan Briskin, Sheryl  
Erickson, John Ott, and Tom



**Talent is Overrated: What Really  
Separates World-Class Performers  
from Everybody**  
Written by Geoff Colvin

# Claros Group Book Review by Sharon Keating

## Emotional Intelligence 2.0

By Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves

### THE BIG IDEA

Career success requires knowing yourself and working well with others. Researchers found that emotional intelligence is the single biggest predictor of performance in the workplace, more than training, education and experience. Those who develop their emotional intelligence skills tend to be successful on the job and tend to earn a higher income than those who have not developed the four core skills of emotional intelligence: self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; and relationship management.

*“Emotional awareness and understanding are not taught in school,” the authors write. “We enter the workforce knowing how to read, write and report on bodies of knowledge, but too often, we lack the skills to manage our emotions in the heat of the challenging problems that we face.”*

### HIGHLIGHTS

- A pass code gives you access to an online appraisal that can be completed in seven minutes. It gives you a personal report that includes short video clips and recommends strategies from the book that will help you improve.
- An explanation of emotional intelligence and why it’s important, along with great descriptions of how people with high and low emotional intelligence sound, look and act.
- An action plan so you can track your progress.
- 66 strategies on how to recognize and manage emotions starting with the basics and building to expertise.

### WHY WE LIKE THIS BOOK

- Increasing your emotional intelligence enhances your ability to achieve what you want in life.
- It is filled with wisdom and inspiration, the advice is based on current research, and the narrative is lively and easy to read.
- It describes simple strategies you can put into practice immediately that complement your technical expertise.
- It’s a must-read for leaders to gain insight and create a plan to improve their effectiveness as well as the success of their organization.

## Claros Group Book Review by Gail Ginder

### Talent is Overrated: What Really Separates World-Class Performers from Everybody Else

*By Geoff Colvin*

#### THE BIG IDEA

The single factor that makes the biggest difference in achieving excellent performance is called “deliberate practice.” Great performers isolate highly specific aspects of what they do and focus on those aspects until they improve. They repeat (practice) to an extent far beyond what most of us would and they seek out and respond to feedback on their practice.

Deliberate practice is above all an effort of tremendous focus and intense concentration. And, it’s not much fun. Top performers identify the painful and difficult activities that will make them better, and they do them over and over, until they are mentally (and sometimes physically) exhausted.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Set specific and clear goals for what you want to learn, starting with what you will learn today. Focus not just on outcome, but on process. For example, you could focus on earning or discerning the customer’s unstated needs.
- Design your plan for how to reach the goal. For example, listen for certain key words the customer might use, or ask specific questions to bring out the customer’s crucial issues.)
- Observe yourself closely. Step outside yourself, monitor what is happening in your own mind, and ask yourself how it is going. Ask yourself, “Have I fully understood what this customer wants? Do I need another strategy here?”
- Evaluate your progress. Ask what went well. Explore what caused any errors. Plan specifically how you will behave differently in the future, and define new specific goals for what you will learn next.

#### WHY WE LIKE THIS BOOK

- Colvin’s carefully researched book explains the mystery of how people become truly great at what they do (playing golf like Tiger Woods, leading a business like Jack Welch, or playing the violin by Itzhak Perlman).
- Colvin debunks the myths that people are born with natural talent and “get better with experience.”

## Claros Group Book Review by Laura Peck

### **The Power of Collective Wisdom: And the Trap of Collective Folly**

*Alan Briskin, Sheryl Erickson, John Ott, Tom Callanan*

#### **THE BIG IDEA**

To face the complex challenges at work, in our communities, and on our planet, we need to learn to think well together. A leader is one who can convene diverse perspectives, frame important questions, and create and sustain the conditions for productive deliberations. This is a guide to cultivating conversational leadership.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Collective wisdom refers to knowledge and insight gained through groups and community interaction. This book is a must-read for anyone who helps divergent groups of people to collaborate and innovate together. It describes the stances necessary to prepare for and facilitate productive conversations about the complex challenges we face at this time.
- A stance is an attitude or bearing that informs our choices. Among them are: the conscious commitment to deep listening; the willingness to suspend certainty; and the inclusion of diverse perspectives – all required for new knowledge to emerge.
- The book explores the concept of collective folly, a continuum of behaviors from mere foolishness to acts of evil. The authors posit that folly is as much a part of human potential as wisdom and name two fundamental patterns that can alert us to folly's emergence: a movement toward separation and fragmentation; and its mirror image, the movement toward false agreement and the appearance of unity.

#### **WHY WE LIKE THIS BOOK**

- Stories of practitioners – constitutional scholars, religious leaders, and public health researchers provide compelling examples of actions and beliefs that invite such emergence.
- For those who appreciate a conceptual framework, the authors also introduce us to Albert Einstein and Carl Jung, Mary Follett, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, five social visionaries who were exploring the roots of our collective humanity and the wisdom of our human species, helping to shape a world view that acknowledges our deep interdependency.
- The book concludes with four mindfulness practices that enable us to pay attention, focus the mind and “re-mind” us of our true intent. The assumption here is that “without a personal practice of continuous and vigilant mindfulness, no set of behaviors, plans, checklists, or models can be reliable.”