There are some books that entertain, some that inform or stir-up our emotions. And then there are some other books which speak directly to our soul - reading them makes us think, question, change our beliefs and perspective, and they even change our life. So here are 22 such life-changing books that stay with us much after we have read them. Read on!
This spiritual and self-help book by Jaggi Vasudev looks at the writer's own spiritual journey and acts as a guide for practicing and personal growth of the readers.
'Developed by him over several years, this powerful practice serves to align the mind and the body with energies around and within, creating a world of limitless power and possibilities. Inner Engineering is your own software for joy and well-being,' reads the book's synopsis.
In this bestselling book, Dr Yuval Noah Harari tells us the history of the human kind and its future. With insights from biology, anthropology, palaeontology and economics, Harari explores how history has shaped the human societies of today and even our personalities. Published in 2015, Sapiens is followed by Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow in 2017 which tells about the future of human race, and 21 Lessons for the 21st Century in 2018 explores the present.
Mitch Albom's book Tuesdays with Morrie follows the life of Mitch Albom, a renowned and busy sports journalist. While he very successful professionally, at a personal level he is in search of inner peace. Being absorbed by material success, Albom forgets about Morrie Schwartz, his sociology professor who is now fighting a motor neuron disease. This novel reveals how Mitch and Morrie meet again and how Mitch spends time nursing his teacher every Tuesday. Their conversations bring in new perspectives in Mitch's life and Morrie brings stability in Mitch's life.
Set in a town in the 1930s, this novel explores racism and depicts the dramatics of the Great Depression. Harper Lee’s *To Kill A Mockingbird* amalgamates humour and sorrow in a touching story which follows the lives of Scout and Jem Finch. They experience racial discrimination in their society and coming of age, they see how their father, a lawyer, struggles to give justice to a black man charged for raping a white girl.
The Stranger by Albert Camus is a classic literary masterpiece. The novel follows the story of Meursault, an Algerian, who murders someone after attending his mother’s funeral. This compelling read is written through Meursault's perspective in the first half before the murder, while the second half of the book tells us his state of mind after committing the murder. The novel tells Meursault's mindset--while grieving for his mother’s death and also during murdering someone.
Khaled Hosseini's debut novel, The Kite Runner is a heartbreaking story that depicts true friendship between Amir, the son of a wealthy Kabul merchant, and the son of his father's servant. Set in Afghanistan undergoing destruction by Taliban over the last 30 years, the novel tells the story of a family, love, and friendship. This international bestseller is now made into a feature film of the same name too.
Published in 1996, The Fountainhead depicts one person's journey against a traditional system and his efforts to break free. The story is about Howard Roark, the protagonist, who is an architect and an opposer of collectivism. He believes that an individual’s vision is effective enough in creating art and if committees are allowed to interfere it would lead to mediocre art. But his opposer Peter Keating has different views, along with others from the traditional system who stand in Howard's way making it difficult for Howard to survive.
This insightful, raw and heartbreaking novel by John Green explores the funny and tragic experiences of being alive and in love. The story is about Hazel, who is battling cancer, and how her life changes after she meets and falls in love with Augustus Waters, who suddenly appears at a Cancer Support Group.
Markus Zusak's heart-warming novel The Book Thief is set during World War II Germany and it highlights the power of books to feed the soul. The novel tells the story of a foster girl, Liesel Meminger, living outside of Munich. She survives through stealing books, which she finds irresistible. She learns to read from her foster father and then shares her stolen books with others during bombing raids. Liesel also befriends a Jewish man who is hiding in her basement, until he is caught and sent to Dachau.
Originally written in Portuguese, this is an inspiring book that teaches us to follow our dream and work towards it. The story follows Santiago, an Andalusian shepherd boy who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a worldly treasure. On his journey, he meets a Gypsy woman, a man who calls himself king, and an alchemist, and all of them help Santiago. But his quest takes him on a different journey, the journey of self-discovery. This best-selling book will inspire you to follow your heart and pursue your dreams, like Santiago.
Siddhartha by Nobel Laureate Hermann Hesse is a spiritual-fiction novel, which was originally written in German in 1922 and later published in 1951 in the US. Set in the Gautam Buddha era in India, the book tells the story of man's spiritual and mental enlightenment journey and teaches people to accept and love wholly. The protagonist Siddhartha and his friend Govinda renounce the world and embark on a spiritual journey, and live the life of an ascetic beggar. But then Govinda joins the Buddhist order, leaving Siddhartha alone who is then trapped in a range of human emotions of greed, passion, pleasure, love and hope. In the end, Siddhartha's life comes a full circle when he reaches a river he had crossed earlier, and that's where he attains enlightenment eventually.
Gabriel García Márquez's masterpiece which has won him a Nobel Prize, One Hundred Years of Solitude is considered as one of the 20th century's most enduring works. This engaging novel is based on a mythical town Macondo and the story follows the rise and fall of Mocado through the history of a family. A brilliant chronicle of life and death, the novel covers the universal theme of love and lust, war, revolution, riches and poverty, and the search of peace and truth at the end. This book is a symbol for colonialism, human race, and the political scenario in Latin America.
This dystopian novel by Kazuo Ishiguro tells the story of a group of students, set in a darkly skewered contemporary England. The story is narrated by 31-year-old Kathy. It dramatizes about how she tries to accept her childhood at the seemingly school, with eventful things happening to her and her friends. Never Let Me Go is a story of memories, friendship and love and it also deals with the uncertainty of life.
Life of Pi is a fantasy adventure novel written by Yann Martel which will delight and astonish the readers. The book was first published in 2001 and since then has been an international bestseller, won the Man Booker Prize and has been made into a feature film too. The book follows the story of Piscine Molitor "Pi" Patel, a Tamil boy from Pondicherry, India. After the tragic sinking of a cargo ship in which he was travelling, Pi was left to survive in the wild Pacific Ocean, along with some wild animals including a hyena, one zebra, an orangutan, and Richard Parker, a 450-pound Royal Bengal Tiger. The animals soon begin to show their natural tendencies to kill each other for their survival. And now, Pi must use all his wit and courage to develop an understanding with Richard the Bengal tiger. The underlying moral: the importance of believing in something—God, nature, or yourself. Life of Pi will broaden your world view and change it too.
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is Maya Angelou's first volume of her six books of autobiography. Set in the American south of 1930s, in this book Angelou evokes her childhood with her grandmother. She also talks about how being a black child she learns the power of the white people, and also survives the trauma of being raped by her mother's lover.
First published in 1916, this classic by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore is set during the Bengal Partition by the British in 1905. Home and the World (Ghare Baire) revolves around the story of Nikhilesh, a young liberal-minded zamindar, his wife Bimala, an is educated and sensitive woman, and Nikhilesh’s friend Sandip, a nationalist leader. Meanwhile, Bimala finds herself attracted to the charismatic Sandip. The book highlights the issues of women’s emancipation in pre-modern India, and portrays the differences inherent in the nationalist movement.
First published in 1961, Catch-22 is a remarkable book written by Joseph Heller. Set in World War II, this book follows the story of Yossarian, who is afraid of his own commanding officers as he thinks that they want to kill him. So, he wants to quit but he can't. The narration is quite unique as Heller uses a third person non-chronological omniscient narration binding the threads together in the story. Many a time, a joke is completed through different point of views. This is a complex, humorous, and satirical novel.
Set in the mid-1800s, Beloved by Toni Morrison follows the story of Sethe, who is freed from slavery but she never really escapes her memories. While the suspenseful novel describes the horrors of slavery, it also gives the readers hope for a better future to hold onto.
Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged has two mysteries, with closely related stories. The novel is set in the United States, in the future. The stories follow the journey of a steel magnate and a railroad executive, while they try to solve mysteries in an increasingly collectivist and irrational world. The book is an amalgamation of a mystery story, science fiction, and romance with Rand's trademark philosophical beliefs.
Through A Thousand Splendid Suns, Khaled Hosseini takes the readers on a journey of war, misery, loss and fate. This is a contemporary novel that reflects Afghani women and their womanhood and according to Hosseini, it is a "mother-daughter story". Set in early 1960s to the early 2000s Afghanistan, which saw many wars and invasions in the country, the story revolves around two women: Mariam and Laila. They have contradictory lives which get intertwined due to a series dramatic events and the story depicts how they become friends and support for each other.
This book takes the readers on a journey into the depth of the universe- from the Big Bang to black holes, to string theory in physics, to the forces present in the universe. As the name suggests, in this book, scientist and theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking tries to explain some unanswered questions of time and space. While it is a huge subject, the book would tickle the minds of the inquisitive readers and make you smarter in knowing the universe!
Written in 1949, this haunting dystopian novel is set in an imaginary world in the year 1984 with a totalitarian government where no one is free or safe to live as per their wish. The world is dominated by a party leader, Big Brother, where everything is under surveillance and he even controls people's feelings of love. While the world is seeing the ruins of World War II, Big Brother is considered god and his power seems to grow with passing time.