

Mental Health
Awareness Week
21-27 September

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10 keys to happier living: A practical handbook for happiness

By King, V. (2016). Hachette

We all want to lead happy lives, and for the people we know to be happy too. I often wonder how people I see on the news, in documentaries and on the internet can have so little but be so happy.

10 Keys to Happier Living: A Practical Handbook for Happiness explains how anyone can unlock the secret to a happier life and take action to make that their own reality. It does this by taking the Five Ways to Wellbeing – give, connect, take notice, be active and keep learning – and growing them to 10! The additional five give balance to the first five and, for me, add credibility to being able to live a happier life.

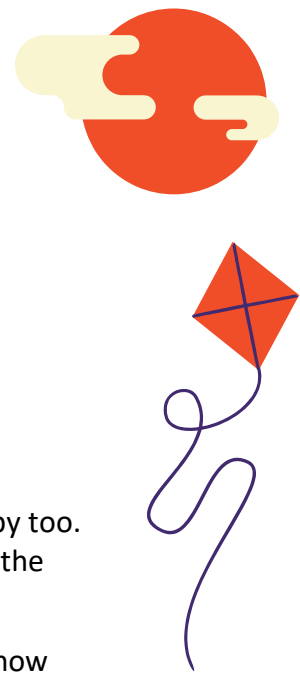
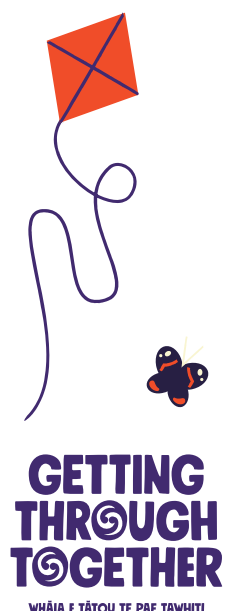
If you enjoy a book that you can dip into and choose the things that will work for you, mix in a few ideas that you may find challenging, and others that I'm sure you have encountered before, then this is the book for you.

The 10 keys to happiness spell out GREAT DREAM – an acronym for: give, relate, exercise, awareness, trying out, direction, resilience, emotions, acceptance (of yourself not life's rubbish!) and meaning. This makes it easier to remember and pay attention to every item.

Each chapter is devoted to a key: its concept, intentions, evidence and references. It's easy to find your way around with lots of examples from the *Action for Happiness* website with lists and pointers.

The chapters also include some pause points for readers to think about. These pause points may be for you to remember things you have already done in the past or things you have achieved or enjoyed, and how doing certain things makes you feel you are the instigator and the receiver.

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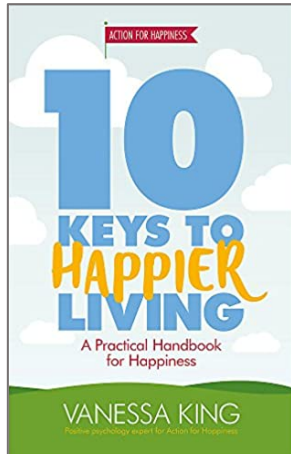


The pause points might ask you to commit to doing one or two things in the following week so that you can see how they fit with you and how taking certain actions can make you feel. Not everything suits everyone and the book offers plenty of ideas to find the things that you feel comfortable with or, if you are brave enough, challenged by.

One aspect I really enjoyed was the index, cross-referencing and linkages between the 10 key areas. The most important thing about this practical handbook for happiness is that it focuses on action. Read a section in the morning with your coffee, reflect on your day and decide what you might try out.

I want to get my own copy, so that I can bend it, write on it, make notes, doodle and make it my own. It's a starting point and an opportunity to change small things that could make a big difference in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Reviewed by Vicki Burnett, previously Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive of the Mental Health Foundation.



The Mental Health Foundation's Information Service brings you reviews as part of the Good Reads feature for Mental Health Awareness Week. To view more go to <https://mhaw.nz/>

