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Opening Little Boxes

Kees Lodder, Cathy Casey, Manuela Bertao, Alex Casey. (2020).
Eunoia Publishing, NZ

Opening Little Boxes is a collection of reflections about finding yourself in lockdown as a family – a situation many of us can relate to this year! While lockdown is full of stress and anxiety for many, it is also a unique opportunity to reflect. When the normal pace of life slows down and the usual routines are turned on their heads, little gaps open up that allow us to start asking new questions – about what is really important, what matters, questions of life, death, art, of the soul, of knowing and of love.

In *Opening Little Boxes*, Auckland City Councillor Alex Casey and her family of three generations (and two pets) let us in on some of their thinking on these matters. While it may be a little esoteric and – dare I say – frivolous at times, I believe the book achieves what it set out to do: To make you stop, sit up and listen, and shine a light in some of the less visited places in the heart.

The book is most interesting when it lights up some of the differences in perspectives between the two children, the parents and the grandmother. How is wisdom passed on to the next generation, and what do they hear when we talk? What do they take away? *Opening Little Boxes* can be read by parents and children together, which I am sure would bring up some interesting conversations. It leaves us with a lesson to stop and listen more – to our own thoughts and emotions, and to each others’.

Reviewed by Zoey Neumann, Publications Co-ordinator, Mental Health Foundation

