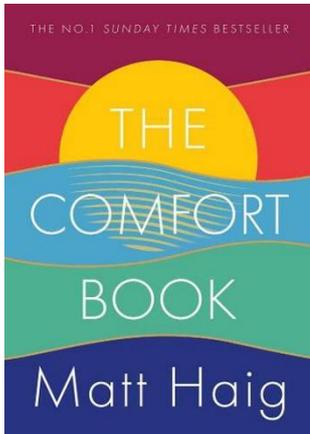


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The comfort book

Haig, M. (2021). Canongate.

One thing can be said for certain about *The Comfort Book* by the wildly popular English author Matt Haig – it lives up to its name. Packed to the brim with bits of wisdom, coziness, and reassurance that joy and hope can be found even in the most unexpected of places, *The Comfort Book* is the literary equivalent of a warm hug by a dear friend or a breath of fresh spring air. It's a pick-me-up when our anxiety gets the better of us and we need a gentle nudge to get back into a positive space again.

The pleasure the reader gets from this book stems not just from its content, but the way it is structured and broken up into bite-sized pieces that one can dip in and out of, in whichever order they please. It is, as Haig puts it, “as messy as life,” “a collection of little islands of hope.” Each of the four parts is made up of a medley of lists, aphorisms, quotes, short stories, meditations on life, and even the odd recipe. Not every thought or piece of advice will feel groundbreaking, and a few might even border on cliché, but overall Haig strongly delivers on his promise to wrap the reader in bookish comfort.

While the author doesn't delve into any particular topic in great depth (which wasn't his intention anyway), this book often feels intimate, personal, and at times vulnerable. This is because Haig doesn't shy away from openly talking about his mental health struggles; in fact, descriptions of his lived experience of depression, anxiety, panic attacks and OCD come across as the most valuable and original parts of the book.

Much like the human experience, *The Comfort Book* has many (often seemingly opposing) sides to it and is equal parts philosophical, funny, inspirational, raw, and touching. Haig's unpretentious and uplifting writing will imbue the reader with a refreshed outlook on life and help them rediscover the deep truths that they already carry inside them.

Reviewed by Tihana Babic, Senior Communications and Marketing Officer at Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

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/>