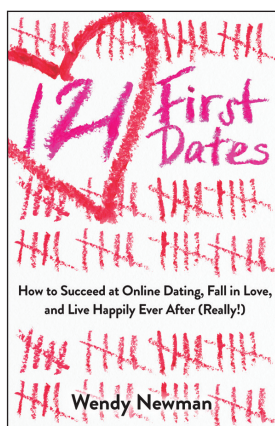
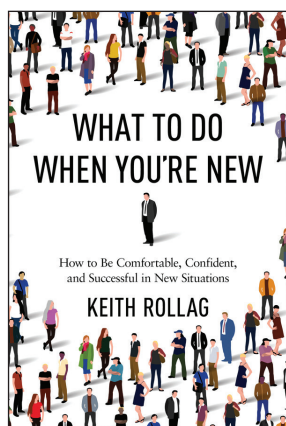


self-help

By Deborah Bigelow

HAPPINESS, that elusive state everyone craves, is the theme of this month's column. Selections present a number of respectable ways to achieve contentment and fulfillment. From practicing mindfulness techniques to developing positive habits, these titles encourage giving up limiting beliefs and adopting an optimistic outlook. Dating gurus provide tips on maintaining oneself while searching for a soul mate, while others guide readers on specific problems such as eating disorders, dyslexia, and simply being tired. Giving back is a strong thread throughout the readings. And what is better than just counting one's blessings and feeling that life is good?

ness, or friendliness to all that is happening in the present. Part 1 demonstrates methods that cultivate courtesy and compassion, followed by exercises on "quieting the mind" through breath meditation and body scans. The final chapters offer ways to find joy beyond the present-centered concentration of general mindfulness approaches. **VERDICT** This book is an ideal guide for those who want to study meditation and mindfulness but are put off by the focus on Buddhism or religion in general.



How to overcome newcomer anxiety, embody the spirit of optimism, have a great first date

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Albers, Susan. 50 More Ways To Soothe Yourself Without Food: Mindfulness Strategies To Cope with Stress and End Emotional Eating. New Harbinger. Dec. 2015. 200p. ISBN 9781626252523. pap. \$16.95; ebk. ISBN 9781626252530. SELF-HELP

Licensed clinical psychologist Albers (*Eat Q*) uses her experience treating eating issues and related disorders to offer a wealth of strategies and practices to deal with comfort eating. The author first describes the vicious cycle of stress, eating, comfort and guilt, then illustrates real-life examples of replacing eating with healthier activities. Taken from the field of integrated/complementary medicine, plans include moving and speaking mindfully as well as using biofeedback, grounding, and meditation. Alternative therapies include tapping, aromatherapy, self-massage, and yoga. Albers presents an abundance of calming methods, any of which would certainly relieve stress and the desire to eat. **VERDICT** An excellent choice for just about anyone who reaches for a bowl of chips instead of taking a few deep breaths.

★ **Blumenthal, Brett. 52 Small Changes for the Mind.** Chronicle. Dec. 2015. 320p. bibliog. ISBN 9781452131672. pap. \$16.95; ebk. ISBN 9781452141480. SELF-HELP

The goal of Blumenthal's new book (after *52 Small Changes*) is for people to make one small change suggested by the author's 52-week program and experience less anxiety, be more productive, have better memories, and feel all-around happier than they did a year before. The author takes a holistic approach to wellness and asks readers to do easy things, such as smiling more, as well as undertaking more difficult tasks such as facing personal demons. Each weekly challenge comes with a pertinent quote, rationale, and step toward change. **VERDICT** Perfect in its simplicity and comprehensiveness.

★ **Heller, Rick. Secular Meditation: 32 Practices for Cultivating Inner Peace, Compassion, and Joy.** New World Lib. Nov. 2015. 296p. index. ISBN 9781608683697. pap. \$15.95. SELF-HELP

Although mindfulness originated in Buddhism, Heller, a facilitator at the Harvard Humanist Community, believes that one can strip the practice of supernatural beliefs and zero in on applying universal love, kind-

Herrman, Nathalie W. The Art of Good Habits: Health, Love, Presence, & Prosperity. Llewellyn. Dec. 2015. 288p. ISBN 9780738746005. pap. \$16.99. SELF-HELP

According to Reiki master and massage therapist Herrman, most feelings of unhappiness exist inside individuals—their perspective, attitudes, and system of beliefs. The good news, says the author, is that people have the power to change these things through making adjustments in habits and points of view. Herrman offers mini lessons in four arenas in which change is possible: health, love, presence, and prosperity. A discussion on health emphasizes the importance of nutrition and staying active, while the section on love provides exercises on honesty and empathy. Meditations for doing and being are included in "Presence," while thought-provoking questions on values and gratitude are found in "Prosperity." **VERDICT** Herrman challenges readers to examine their motives and strive for well-being, delivering helpful suggestions in an easily absorbed package.

★ **Jacobs, Bert & John Jacobs. Life Is Good: The Book; How To Live with Purpose and Enjoy the Ride.** National Geographic. 2015. 272p. photos. ISBN 9781426215636. \$25; ebk. ISBN 9781426215704. SELF-HELP

This book, written by two ordinary brothers who started a \$100 million clothing company called Life Is Good, is the embodiment of the spirit of optimism. Bert and John Jacobs present their message in the form of the development of ten "Superpowers" including openness, humor, compassion, and authenticity. Besides the stunning photographs and graphics, the brothers share uplifting stories of those who have made it through difficult times and are grateful for what they have and who they are. Steps toward achieving the "good life" can be as

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simple as rephrasing “I have to” into “I get to” or listening to motivating songs such as “Respect” by Aretha Franklin. **VERDICT** An outstanding book for all ages. One cannot browse through it without smiling and feeling that, despite everything, life is good.

Roked, Sohère. *The Tiredness Cure: How To Beat Fatigue and Feel Great for Good.* Vermilion: Random. Dec. 2015. 256p. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780091955076. pap. \$19.95; ebk. ISBN 9781473501621. SELF-HELP

Roked, one of the few general practitioners in the UK trained in both conventional and holistic medicine, believes that only a small number of patients (or doctors) understand the link between nutrition, exercise, environment, and health. By recognizing this connection, people will be able to take responsibility for their “lifestyle problem”—that of feeling tired all the time. She shows how a poor diet and lack of exercise can negatively affect the adrenal glands, liver, and chemical balance and advocates breaking sugar addiction, exercising each day, refusing to overcommit, and other lifestyle changes. **VERDICT** A timely, terrific book for everyone who’s “running on empty.”

Rollag, Keith. *What To Do When You're New: How To Be Comfortable, Confident, and Successful in New Situations.* AMACOM. 2015. 240p. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780814434895. pap. \$17.95; ebk. ISBN 9780814434901. SELF-HELP

Educator Rollag (chair, management division, Babson Coll., MA) asserts that success starts with doing something new. Of course, to do that well, one needs to make a great first impression, remember names, boldly ask questions, and fearlessly perform new roles and tasks. This book shows readers how. Using his own findings and the research of leading scientists, Rollag addresses typical newcomer anxiety and encourages people to concentrate on “getting better” rather than “being good” as well as see the benefits of approaching unfamiliar situations with a beginner’s mind. Key points are highlighted in this well-organized, comprehensive book. **VERDICT** A must-read for newcomers in all areas.

Rooke, Margaret. *Creative, Successful, Dyslexic: 23 High Achievers Share Their Stories.* Jessica Kingsley. 2015. 224p. ISBN 9781849056533. \$25; ebk. ISBN 9781784501631. SELF-HELP

Rooke, a writer and columnist in the UK, began to research dyslexia when her daughter was diagnosed at age 13. She found, through talking to physicians and other families, that dyslexia is more of a learning process style than a disorder and that there

have been many high achievers (e.g., Albert Einstein, Agatha Christie, Steve Jobs, Steven Spielberg) who were able to learn around their diagnosis. To encourage dyslexic students, their parents, and their teachers, Rooke presents the stories of well-known peoples from the arts, sports, and business world who talk about how dyslexia affected their childhood, how they overcame their problems, and what special strengths they used to succeed in life. **VERDICT** This book will be an inspiration to all who work with children, especially those with special needs.

Saviuc, Luminita D. *15 Things You Should Give Up To Be Happy: An Inspiring Guide to Discovering Effortless Joy.* Perigee. Mar. 2016. 208p. ISBN 9780399172823. pap. \$15.95; ebk. ISBN 9780698182738. SELF-HELP Saviuc, founder of the personal growth blog Purpose Fairy, asks readers to look inside themselves and to let go of bad habits. The behaviors to give up include blaming, the need to always be right, limiting beliefs, and so forth. She draws from Eastern wisdom, contemporary spirituality, and positive psychology as well as her own painful past and path to renewal. Saviuc’s message boils down to the need to alter oneself to effect any kind of change, and she provides encouragement and the tools for doing that. **VERDICT** Therapeutic, compassionate prodding for those who feel like they’re unable to move forward.

RELATIONSHIPS & DATING

Brody, Michelle. *Stop the Fight! How To Break Free from the 12 Most Common Arguments and Build a Relationship That Lasts.* Experiment. 2015. 304p. illus. index. ISBN 9781615192809. pap. \$15.95; ebk. ISBN 9781615192816. SELF-HELP

Through her work with couples and corporations, clinical psychologist Brody has found that lasting change in negative interactions derives from each party seeing the big picture. To help readers “see” the whole, the author presents over 300 cartoons and thought bubbles showing what both sides of a couple are thinking in the midst of common arguments. Some of these include the “partner improvement fight,” the “‘you don’t care about me’ fight,” and the “household responsibilities fight.” Using the comical cartoon figures, Brody helps couples understand each other’s intentions, needs, and dreams. **VERDICT** A clever and nonthreatening resource for couples wishing to get along better.

Lane, Laura & Angela Spera. *This Is Why You're Single.* Adams Media. Dec. 2015. 272p. ISBN 9781440588846. pap. \$15.99; ebk. ISBN 9781440588853. SELF-HELP

Comedy writers and coauthors Lane and Spera based this entertaining book on their sketch show with the same title. They provide a series of likely dating scenarios that features actual physical meetings in the subway, texting protocol, traveling in packs, and go-to excuses for leaving a date early. An extensive section supplies charts and quizzes on “your type” and includes a prototype “Application for a New Boyfriend.” Entries such as “rules for dating drink games” and charts on compromise make prospective dating less formidable and even fun. **VERDICT** Terrific guidance for those who know FOMO, Tumblr, and Anthropologie.

Newman, Wendy. *121 First Dates: How To Succeed at Online Dating, Fall in Love, and Live Happily Ever After (Really!)* Beyond Words: Atria. Jan. 2016. 320p. ISBN 9781582705729. pap. \$16; ebk. ISBN 9781501111471. SELF-HELP

It took professional dating, relationship, and sex educator Newman 121 first dates to find the love of her life. Sharing her research and experiences, she shows readers how to know what to expect from dating, date effectively online, have a great first date, and end uncomfortable situations with grace. Newman offers secret tips for online photos, the advice to meet sooner than later, and safe possibilities for meeting in person. Her comprehensive guide is for women of all ages who range from tired of dating to eager to get back out there again. **VERDICT** Sound advice in the form of what to do and what not to do.

Urasek, Lauren with Laura Barcella. *Popular: The Ups and Downs of Online Dating from the Most Popular Girl in New York City.* Sterling. 2015. 224p. ISBN 9781454917229. pap. \$16.95; ebk. ISBN 9781454917236. SELF-HELP

In the months following *New York* magazine’s designation of Urasek as the most sought-after woman in New York City (January 2014), the author received over 15,000 four- or five-star ratings on the dating website OkCupid. This scientist-turned-makeup artist puts funny stories and anecdotes from her message of the ups and downs of dating into the blog *They Really Said This*, from which she draws her best material. Besides relating some of her more outrageous dating experiences, the author gives advice on date makeup, trusting one’s gut, and city vs. suburban dating. While many of Urasek’s adventures would make a good reality show, she presents a thoughtful and honest look at dating. **VERDICT** Recommended for those who are into popular culture.

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