



*Doses.*

**D**oses.

Small helpings of good stuff

words *Elizabeth Bennett*  
illustrations *Amber Griffin*

### PRACTICE MINDFUL READING

Bijal Shah, a book curator and bibliotherapist, shares her tips for boosting your wellbeing with books



Reading is a form of meditation, an invitation to completely lose yourself in a story as you connect with the text and its author. Allow yourself to relax and indulge in the words on the page. Let your breath find its natural rhythm as you give your attention wholeheartedly. Routinely practising this intentional reading habit will leave you feeling refreshed and reinvigorated.

#### KEEP A BOOK JOURNAL

A book journal is a wonderful way to get the most out of your reading life. As you read, you may find that the literature triggers unexpected feelings or thoughts. Use these literary prompts to reflect and process and perhaps even explore them with a therapist or coach.

#### FIND A READING PARTNER

One of the things that we're often missing in our daily lives is connection. Reading together or discussing literature with a partner, friend or book-club buddy reinstates this connection while requiring us to commit to reading, both of which nourish our mental wellbeing.

*As a book curator and bibliotherapist, Bijal Shah prescribes books based on personal interest and mental wellbeing.*  
[booktherapy.io](http://booktherapy.io)



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## BE MORE HUMAN Forging new friendships as an adult



It's often assumed you make your most solid group of friends in the first season of your life. However, building friendships beyond school, university and first jobs is important and rewarding. Finding these new friends without traditional structures in place is easier said than done so try joining a group or class where you are likely to have something in common, for example, a creative pursuit, outdoor activity or learning a language.

Facebook groups in your local area are another way to create new connections. In all probability there'll be a local community group where you live. Reaching out to friends of friends, neighbours or work colleagues whom you know share your interests (e.g. an avid film buff) is a great option, too. Putting yourself out there can be scary and daunting - it's inevitable to worry about rejection - but the reward of a new friend is well worth the effort.

## FAIR FARE

Better food shopping

### ODDBOX

On a mission to tackle the huge amount of food waste (40 per cent of all produce in the UK is wasted before it leaves farms), Oddbox rescues fruit and veg from farmers that is deemed unsuitable or surplus for supermarkets and boxes it up to send to you.  
[oddbox.co.uk](http://oddbox.co.uk)

### GOOD SIXTY

This online marketplace makes it easy to support local businesses and shop small from the comfort of your own home. Discover and shop from hidden gems, micro producers, world-renowned specialists and the best high-street independent retailers near where you live.  
[goodsixty.co.uk](http://goodsixty.co.uk)

### ZESTED

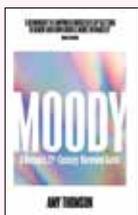
Recipe boxes are a great way to eat healthily and avoid food waste when short on time but they often come with huge amounts of excess packaging. Zested aims to change this with its sustainably packaged boxes that also feature only seasonal and ethically sourced ingredients.  
[zested.com](http://zested.com)



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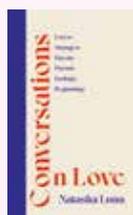
## SHELF HELP

Books to illuminate the mind



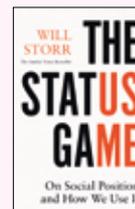
*Moody: A Woman's 21st-Century Hormone Guide* by Amy Thomson  
(Square Peg)

How much do you really know about your hormones? Chances are, probably not enough. This fascinating book dives deep into hormones and how they impact your health and happiness, providing a blueprint for optimising, balancing and truly embracing your hormonal needs.



*Conversations on Love* by Natasha Lunn  
(Viking)

Based on the journalist's popular newsletter of the same name, this book explores the topic of love in all its guises. Weaving together the author's personal experience with wisdom from her interviewees, Lunn doesn't shy away from tricky topics such as how love intersects with longing, heartbreak and grief.



*The Status Game: How Social Position Governs Everything* by Will Storr  
(William Collins)

An examination of one element of human behaviour that's often overlooked: our desire for status. This illuminating book investigates how our thirst for status drives innovation, art, civilisation and war and explains cults, moral panics, conspiracy theories and the rise of social media.

## WONDER WORDS

Little-known expressions that cast light on the human experience



### GIGIL

The irresistible urge to hug something cute  
[Tagalog, a language spoken in the Philippines]

### PENA AJENA

To be embarrassed for someone else  
[Spanish]

### KOI NO YOKAN

The feeling when you meet someone and know you will fall in love  
[Japanese]



## Dosies.



### ADD SOME ART

Anything can be art if you like it and frame it. Consider framing magazine covers, wrapping paper, menus, postcards or old maps. Use Command strips to temporarily attach your artworks to the wall so you can easily move them around if you feel you need to switch things up.

### BRING THE OUTDOORS IN

Ethically grown and sourced living plants or dried flower arrangements are one of the easiest ways to bring nature and colour to a space. Try an affordable DIY overhaul by ordering some paint tester pots in your favourite colours and giving your plant pots a spruce up.



### SORT YOUR STORAGE

Struggling with clutter? Invest in some new storage solutions. Repurpose packaging (for example, shoe boxes) with pretty wrapping paper to house odd bits and pieces or convert old wooden pallets (often available for free via Preloved and Gumtree) into under-bed storage.



### GIVE YOUR HOME A REFRESH

Simple ways to enhance your living space



### UPCYCLE FURNITURE

Go on a second-hand scavenger hunt for the furniture items you really need. Then give the wood a good sanding and paint with VOC-free chalk or clay paint; swap old handles and hardware for flea-market finds for one-of-a-kind appeal, too. Don't forget to think outside the flatpack box: a piece of sturdy second-hand wood from a builder's or reclamation yard, or a sheet of beautiful sustainable wood direct from a timber yard, can be turned into a new desk, table or bench with just a bit of imagination and elbow grease.

### TRANSFORM YOUR BATHROOM

High-quality contact paper (which has a pattern on one side and strong adhesive on the other) is a great, affordable way for changing up the appearance of dull cabinets. Remove the doors, give them a good clean and then cut the contact paper to size before applying to the surface. Elegant window film stickers provide both privacy and a pleasing pattern (and can be used on shower screens, too) while second-hand wooden ladders can double up as pretty rails for hanging plants and drying towels.





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## ART THERAPY

Have fun decorating this room - go as loud or chilled as you please





*Doses.*

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## GET LUCKY

By Justin McCarron

Ever had a bird do a poo on your head? I have, more than once, in fact. That's because I am one lucky guy. I love this avian superstition because it perfectly demonstrates one of the four psychological principles of how to be lucky. According to Professor Richard Wiseman, author of *The Luck Factor* (Arrow), this is one way to increase your luck: turn bad experiences into good. Life will inevitably give you the occasional lemon, so you may as well learn to make lemonade.

In essence, the trick to being lucky is to believe that you are lucky. Luckiness is a state of mind, which you can develop if you're willing to do some light lifting in your thinking. Our beliefs shape our experience, so try expecting to receive good fortune, rather than assuming that fate is waiting in the wings

to lay mishaps along your path. Lucky people also tend to create, notice and make the most of chance opportunities. Being open to new experiences and looking for ways to invite Lady Luck into their lives means they spot possibilities more readily than those folks who stick to their familiar routines.

Intuition plays a part, too: we all have it but lucky people listen to it, following a hunch with the hope that it might lead them to find the proverbial pot of gold. Of course, people who're blessed with a sunny disposition will naturally find some of these principles easier to put into practice. Optimists are much more likely to feel lucky than their pessimistic cousins. But luck can be learnt so why not give it a try? Who knows, you might get lucky.



## TRAVEL COMPANIES WITH A CONSCIENCE

Heavenly hideaways with heart

Photo Lit Kovac



### Byway

We all know flying is bad for the planet but travelling by train or other less impactful modes of transport isn't just more eco-friendly, it encourages you to slow down, relax and truly soak up the journey. For discovering the best flight-free holidays in the UK and Europe without the hassle, let Byway plan your trip for you. [byway.travel](http://byway.travel)

### Canopy & Stars

Looking to experience wild nature but still want a few home comforts? From tree houses to cabins, Canopy & Stars' collection of unique places to stay is bound to have something for you. Twenty four per cent of the company is owned by a charitable trust that supports environmental causes. [canopyandstars.co.uk](http://canopyandstars.co.uk)

### Kip

On the hunt for an affordable house to rent and don't have the time to trawl the web? Subscription club Kip does the hard work for you. For £14 a year you get access to its curated edit of carefully chosen self-catering hideaways for two to six people that won't break the bank (plus they plant a tree in your honour). [kiphideaways.com](http://kiphideaways.com)

## ONE MORE THING

Conscious dreaming

Have you ever managed to become aware of your dreams while dreaming or perhaps controlled your dream from a more conscious state? This practice, known as conscious or lucid dreaming, comes with a whole host of life-enriching benefits, from coping with nightmares and dealing with anxiety to boosting creativity. While conscious dreaming is getting attention online of late due to a bevy of new books and documentaries on the topic, the concept dates back centuries. Dreams have been a fascination throughout history with Native Americans viewing them as portals to the spirit world while the Aboriginal peoples referred to the stories of the world's very beginning as their dreamings. Aristotle wrote about lucid dreaming (albeit without giving it a name) while Tibetan Buddhists have long been practising something similar to lucid dreaming via 'dream yoga'. To explore further, check out *Conscious Dreamer: Connect with the Power of Your Dreams & Live Your Best Life* by Tree Carr (Leaping Hare Press) or follow lucid dreaming expert Jade Shaw on Instagram ([@jade\\_shaw\\_astral\\_teacher](https://www.instagram.com/jade_shaw_astral_teacher)). Want to try it for yourself? Check out p28.





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## BALM FOR THE MESSY MIND

Expectation, expectation, expectation

As children, we don't understand that the subjective world in our heads is no predictor of what will actually happen in the 'real world', where objectivity rules. We get frustrated when things don't go the way we expect. The psychologist Jean Piaget calls this 'magical thinking'. If only we grew out of this habit when we became adults, life would be so much less upsetting for us all. But we never really shrug off the cloak of magical thinking, do we? We continue to expect the world and its inhabitants to stick to the secret script in our mind. It's like we've created our own set of rules and when people don't behave how we want them to, we unleash a wave of indignation, sometimes suffering in silence but often heaping blame on those innocent actors in our own inner soap opera.

Often the irony is that we've never actually articulated these expectations to the relevant parties in the first place. It seems so obvious to us, why would we need to say it out loud? We also believe that we shouldn't even have to ask. And so our magical thinking continually sets us on the fast track to frustration and failure. The author Neil Strauss puts it perfectly when he says, "Unrealistic expectations are premeditated resentments."

Which brings us to a helpful distinction: realistic and unrealistic expectations. There are many things that it's safe to have expectations about such as that the kettle will boil water when we switch it on each morning and we'll feel more awake and focused after our first

cup of coffee. That's because we're basing our expectations on previous repeated results. In the same way you can expect your nearest and dearest to behave mostly according to their past record. There are no guarantees but these are generally realistic expectations.

The real problem is with our unrealistic expectations. We often create them unconsciously, only discovering their existence when reality painfully slaps us awake from our imagined outcome. Of course the harshest unrealistic expectations that we have are often about ourselves. We create endless 'should and shouldn't' rules for our own behaviour. We get caught in this insidious cycle of expectation and resentment, of anticipation and failure.

Recognising when you've fallen prey to magical thinking is the first step towards freedom from this tyranny of 'shoulds'. Each time you forgive yourself for innocently creating unrealistic expectations you increase your awareness and allow a different way of thinking to emerge. You cultivate compassion. Released from recrimination, you find your focus settling in the present moment again, alert for any new expectations that may appear. You breathe. Ah, what a relief. ♦

*Cathy McKinnon is a coach specialising in freedom from anxiety. She is the co-founder of Wise Bodies and runs online coaching and nutrition programmes for greater peace of mind. [wise-bodies.learnworlds.com](http://wise-bodies.learnworlds.com); Instagram @wise\_bodies*