

## Recommended Reading

MDRC, if you are feeling like your life needs some change but feel lost as to where to begin (as I was), here are some of the key books that I read. I hope they might help develop the treasures for you.

The list could be very long indeed, but below are a wide variety that I do believe can help guide us towards the peaceful living we are designed for.

I have felt held, nurtured, understood, relieved, encouraged and inspired by them all. And they predominantly have simple, practical and fun application to the reasoning behind them.

I am sure you will get a sense of what books feel right for you at specific times, and simply delving in with some of these will begin that process and lead you to others. Most of these people also have fantastic online and free resources to listen to and watch.

**Martha Beck, *Finding Your Own North Star: How to Claim the Life You Were Meant to Live*, London: Piatkus, 2003.**

Martha is a sociologist and bestselling author, and has been through it all herself. These help us to understand how our particular fears hold us back and help to uncover who we really are and how we want to live our lives with unique purpose.

**Byron Katie, *Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life*, London: Rider, 2002.**

Byron Katie went from alcoholism, agoraphobia and rage to pure enlightenment in an instant as she suddenly saw thoughts for what they are. She realized that what she was believing was causing her suffering, nothing more. Her work is particularly good for relationships, but works on all. Visit her website, [www.thework.com](http://www.thework.com), for all things Byron Katie.

**Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2013.**

Anne is a beautiful writer with huge life experience, and this simple book will feel like a hug as you are gently being told, 'It's all going to be okay'.

**Steven Hayes and Spencer Smith, *Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life*, Oakland: New Harbinger Publications, 2005.**

Steven is a psychologist, but this is easy to read and practical, as he formed a therapeutic approach from his own experiences. If you are beginning to acknowledge unhealthy thought patterns, anxiety or phobias, it's a great step to work on those and is wholly curative if applied.

**Mark Williams and Danny Penman, *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World*, London: Piatkus, 2011.**

The definitive mindfulness book. A route to acceptance and surrender. It comes with short guided meditations too.

**Vidyamala Burch and Danny Penman, *Mindfulness for Health: A Practical Guide to Relieving Pain, Reducing Stress and Restoring Wellbeing*, London: Piatkus, 2013.**

This one is specifically focused on acceptance for chronic health issues. Vidyamala Burch has a website that has affordable online courses and meditations for people living with chronic illness, [www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk](http://www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk).

**Simon Sinek, *Find your Why: A Practical Guide for Discovering Purpose for You and Your Team*, London: Penguin, 2017.**

A practical guide for discovering purpose and finding fulfilment at work. He also has a course on his website, [www.simonsinek.com](http://www.simonsinek.com).

**Maria Forleo, *Everything is Figureoutable*, London: Penguin Business, 2019.**

A simple read on discovering purpose, more specifically about how to turn your ideas and passions into a reality, overcoming imposter syndrome, procrastination, etc.

**Pia Mellody, Andrea Wells Miller and J. Keith Miller, *Facing Codependence: What It Is, Where It Comes from, How It Sabotages Our Lives*, San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003.**

If you want to understand people-pleasing tendencies, how to meet your needs, and why it's important for your relationships and general wellbeing, this will uncover that for you. There is also an accompanying workbook, ***Breaking Free: A Recovery Workbook for Facing Codependence***.

**Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, London: Rider, 2004.**

If you want a story as well as an inspiring way to look at your life (and some anxiety cures) from a psychologist who survived the holocaust, then look no further. You could also read *The Choice by Edith Eger*. Incredible.

**Anything by Brené Brown**

*Braving the Wilderness* or *Rising Strong* might be good ones to start with. If you haven't listened to her Ted Talks on vulnerability and shame, please google forthwith. I think of all her books *The Gifts of Imperfection* might relate most to the treasures.

**Parker J. Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*, San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2000.**

An essay more than a book, so a nice easy read. Palmer is a Quaker who inspires what our unique vocation is and talks honestly and beautifully about his periods of depression.

**Dr Caroline Leaf, *The Perfect You Workbook: A Blueprint for Identity*, Michigan: Baker Books, 2018.**

If you need science, Caroline Leaf will have many, many books for you. She is a neuroscientist and it's her mission to spread the truth that we can change how our brain is wired and move away from negativity bias. This one is a little heavy – it matches science with the Bible (she has others just from a secular perspective that are a little simpler) – but I found it mindblowing to see how we are wired uniquely and not meant to operate from any kind of fear, scientifically and spiritually. If you work through her questionnaire, you learn huge amounts about yourself and how you tick.

**Elaine Aron, *The Highly Sensitive Person: How to Thrive When the World Overwhelms You*, London: Thorsons, 2017.**

This, alongside **Susan Cain's** Ted Talk 'The Power of Introverts' and her book *Quiet*, has given me an understanding of how to nurture a more sensitive soul, and more to the point, that it is fine to be one!

**Richard Rohr, *Immortal Diamond: The Search for Our True Self*, London: SPCK Publishing, 2013.**

Richard is an academic and a Catholic Mystic so his books are meaty. Although I don't have an academic brain, I was captivated by this book. It's about what our souls, or True Selves, are, and how we sleepwalk through life operating from our False Selves, or egos. When the True Self drives the ship, then you are in peace and joy.

**Jeffrey E. Young and Janet S. Klosko, *Reinventing Your Life*, London: Scribe, 2019.**

Another one for those who want a therapy approach. Whereas Steven Hayes's book has a more practical application of anxiety and phobias, this book focuses on emotional root causes of suffering. There are quizzes (I love a quiz!) to help you uncover some patterns you may not know you have.

**Susan David, *Emotional Agility: Get Unstuck, Embrace Change, and Thrive in Work and Life*, London: Penguin Life, 2016.**

So good and simple on emotions and some great self-compassion insight.

**Stuart Brown, M.D., with Christopher Vaughan, *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, New York: Avery, 2010.**

Does what it says on the tin – teaches you all about play, and how it is a vital necessity to put back into and keep in our lives.

**Charles Duhigg, *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do, and How to Change*, London: Penguin, 2013.**

Changing your life by looking at your daily habits and how they are formed. *Atomic Habits* by **James Clear** is also great, all about tiny changes making the long-term, massive difference. If you like loud, motivating personal speaker-type stuff then **Tony Robbins** might be for you.

**John E. Sarno M.D., *The Divided Mind: The Epidemic of Mindbody Disorders*, London: Duckworth, 2024.**

If you suffer from confusion or even cynicism, and need some scientific proof of the mind-body connection, then delve into this, or *The Body Keeps the Score* by **Bessel van der Kolk**. Our bodies truly are a mirror of our mind. They are our greatest teacher, yet we ignore them, override and berate them, which is when problems can arise. **Alex Howard's *It's Not Your Fault*** would be a great one, too – especially if you have ME/CFS.

**Dr Will Cole, *The Inflammation Spectrum: Find Your Food Triggers and Reset Your System*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2023.**

This contains some practical lifestyle tips to help the body reduce inflammation including food suggestions. It can lead to changes in things that you may have accepted to be part of your life, from tiredness and brain fog to IBS, rashes and pain.