

Book review



The Reality Slap

Finding peace and fulfillment when life hurts

Category: Book Reviews / Self-help

Author: Russ Harris

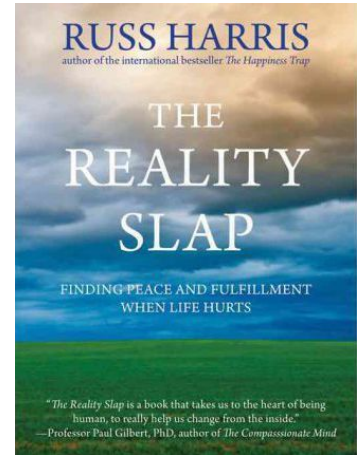
Year: 2012

Publisher: New Harbinger Publications, US

ISBN: 9781608822805

Audience: Supporting Myself

Summary: A guide to being with emotions through acceptance and commitment therapy



I think *The Reality Slap* nicely describes how miffed you can feel when you don't always get what you want – but the slap can also wake you up to the limited ways you are thinking and responding.

Author Dr Russ Harris sums up the whole technique in a sentence: “Instead of running or fighting we can simply drop anchor, unhook from our unhelpful stories and make room for our painful emotions, and engage fully in doing something with purpose”. It sounds simple but Harris notes due to your busy mind it can be difficult to develop good self-awareness skills and moments of presence are difficult to sustain. But there is hope, as the moment you catch yourself, you are free, and every moment of practice makes a difference.

Getting lost in the smog

I like the description of the internal chatter resulting in you being lost in a smog and you lose connection with yourself, your life and world. I really enjoyed the chapter describing the “Not Good Enough goggles”, which made me realise I was often lost in a haze of discontent. Once I started taking more notice of my thoughts, I was amazed at how much energy and time I waste judging and making comment on myself, others and things I have no control over. It felt quite enlightening to identify something as unhelpful, and empowering to decide to let go.

I was inspired to purchase the MP3 downloads available with *The Reality Slap*, and there is also an extended section at the back of the book for those interested in further reading on acceptance and commitment therapy. I may not master all the techniques but I think from reading the book I have a clearer self-awareness of what ingrained patterns of coping are not so helpful, and that awareness is powerful in itself.

Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Officer, Mental Health Foundation

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