

Book review

Just One Thing

Developing a Buddha brain one simple practice at a time

Category: Book Reviews / Self-help

Author: Rick Hanson

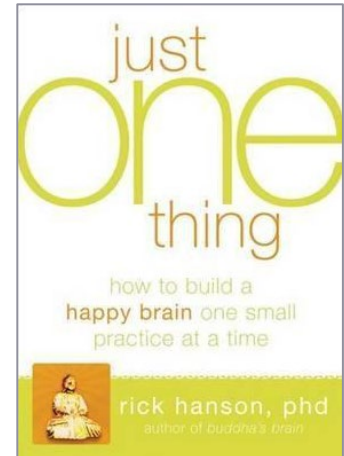
Year: 2011

Publisher: New Harbinger Publications, US

ISBN: 9781608820313

Audience: Supporting Myself

Summary: Guide to using short exercises to change the way your brain works and protect against stress, lift mood and build emotional resilience



Just One Thing is a good book to read upon returning to work as life gets busy again after the holidays. This book was written by Rick Hanson, psychologist and senior fellow of the Greater Good Science Center in the US. It is the second of three: *Buddha's Brain* was published in 2009 and *Hardwiring Happiness* was published in 2013.

As with the other two titles, *Just One Thing's* content is well-referenced and backed by emerging research in the positive psychology field, focusing particularly on neuroplasticity – training your brain to better retain positive emotions and experiences. Research shows that short daily brain training practices can change the way your brain works and protect against stress, lift mood and build emotional resilience.

Just One Thing is simpler than Hanson's aforementioned titles. No prior knowledge of Buddhism, regular meditation or mindfulness practice is needed to grasp the concepts, it is designed for the average reader to pick and use when inspiration or, equally so, desperation strikes.

Befriend your imperfect edges

I like that the book's philosophy doesn't imply that you should take a pollyanna approach to life but instead to acknowledge, validate and befriend your imperfect edges and struggles. It also normalises the many difficulties you encounter, and offers practical advice and steps on how you can work with those difficulties.

The nuggets of wisdom that stood out for me are – be good to yourself, enjoy life as it is, and that it is often the smallest changes that can have the largest impact on your quality of life. All very obvious but sometimes you just need someone to remind and reassure you.

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I think it is a book you would keep for life, perhaps for the coffee table or bed side. Flicking through the pages to see which section jumps out to be read, reminds me a bit of the dilemma when faced with choosing from a bag of mixed lollies. Often it is the lollies that look the least appealing that surprise you the most.

Reviewed by Kim Higginson, Information Resources Specialist at the Mental Health Foundation

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