

Book review

The Art of Rest

How to find respite in the modern age

Category: Book Reviews / Self-help

Author: Claudia Hammond

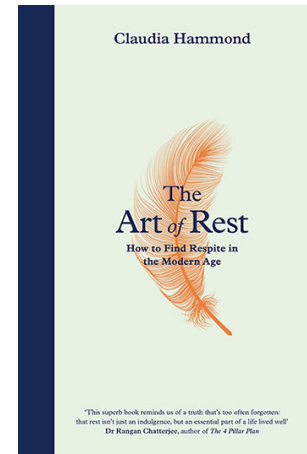
Year: 2019

Publisher: Canongate Books, UK

ISBN: 9781786892836

Audience: Supporting Myself

Summary: Unpacks the psychology of how and why we rest the way we do, and challenges the reader to re-evaluate how they use their time



Claudia delves deep into how modern humans find rest in an increasingly busy world. If you've ever daydreamed about a bubble bath during a work meeting or wished you could escape for a walk around the block, then this might be the book for you.

It's not uncommon, as Claudia notes, to crave more rest and relaxation but feel guilty when the opportunity arises. "Today busyness has become a badge of honour. We want to say we're busy, yet at the same time we feel exhausted." The Art of Rest unpacks the psychology of how and why we rest the way we do from an easy-to-follow scientific standpoint.

A major survey entitled 'The Rest Test' forms the basis of this book. 'The Rest Test' was led by academic researchers from Durham University and included over 18,000 participants from 135 countries. The questionnaire sought to garner attitudes, habits and thoughts on rest and relaxation in the modern age. Spoiler alert: a key finding was that most people don't think they're getting enough rest!

After an interesting and informative introduction, the remainder of the book is organised into 10 chapters – one chapter dedicated to each of the top 10 most restful activities as identified from the survey: Mindfulness, Watching TV, Daydreaming, A Nice Hot Bath, A Good Walk, Doing Nothing in Particular, Listening to Music, I Want to Be Alone, Spending Time in Nature and at number 1 ... Reading!

Claudia Hammond, an author, BBC broadcaster and psychology lecturer, encourages you to seek out rest in meaningful ways and challenges the reader to re-evaluate how they use their time. The experts don't hesitate to highlight the many benefits of rest including better decision-making and more productivity.

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As a Counsellor and Wellbeing Co-ordinator in a busy school, The Art of Rest reinforced for me the importance of being able to step off the busy treadmill of life and smell the roses. Our hunches are correct, rest and relaxation is not wasting time but rather necessary for our health. Now we have the evidence to prove it!

Reviewed by Gina Speedy, School Counsellor and Wellbeing Co-ordinator at Auckland Normal Intermediate School

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