

Book review



How we got happy

Stories of health, hope and happiness from 20 young Kiwis who beat depression

Category: Book Reviews / Personal Stories

Author: Jonathan Nabbs and Eve Macfarlane

Year: 2020

Publisher: Self-published, NZ

Audience: Supporting Myself

Summary: A series of stories from young New Zealanders and a new way to address wellbeing and the battle with depression.



It can be hard to find your path through depression and everyone's battle is different. While we are getting better at talking about depression and how we're feeling we often don't get to hear about how someone got through its challenges. Set out as a series of stories from young New Zealanders from all walks of life accompanied with clean and natural photography, *How We Got Happy* is a new way to address wellbeing and the battle with depression.

Creators Jonathan Nabbs and Eve Macfarlane set out to answer the question: What are the things (habits, tools, beliefs, exercises, strategies) that have helped people move from the bottom of the bell curve into happy, healthy lives once again? Each story provides insights on the tools and skills that each writer found helpful in their struggle with depression. As someone who struggled with depression in the past, I would have found a book like this a helpful tool to learn from others' achievements.

The use of portrait photography mixed with questions that give the reader a bit more insight into how each writer experienced their depression made the whole book feel more personal. It was easy to find in some of the writers a bit of myself - in their experiences and the journeys they took to recovery. Each story is also accompanied by a small handwritten note by each author to their past selves when they needed help the most. The notes are strong and empowering reminders to themselves and the reader of the most important things to remember in our darkest times.

Filled with bright and engaging photography this book is an easy and uplifting read whether you read it cover to cover or to just pick up and flick through. No matter if you are currently struggling with depression or have found your path through depression, you will enjoy this wonderful collection of heart-warming stories from young Kiwis. A great coffee table book to have around the house.

Reviewed by Helena Loy

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