

# Self Help Books

A guide for the best in self-help, personal growth and self-improvement books

## The 100 Most Inspiring Self-Help Books

Barbara E. Miller, MAPS

**T**his is my list of favourite self-help books! It is drawn from the thousands of self-help books I have read or reviewed over the last fifteen years as a practicing psychologist, life coach and trainer.

This list comprises a wide variety of topics on success, happiness and positive psychology with many different approaches and a wealth of healthful and transformational ideas. And best of all – these are GREAT books, the cream of the crop of self-help that can change your life!

This is not an all-time “best hits list.” Success Classics like *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* don’t appear here. These are great books—but in this list I’m looking at those books that are more targeted to our 21<sup>st</sup> century experience. Times have changed and so have our reading habits.

For readers in the fast lane this list offers an opportunity to become acquainted with a dazzling array of the key works in psychological literature to inspire and fulfill your own potential and achieve a deeper sense of purpose and peace of mind with landmark books—many of which can be downloaded on Kindle.

The **100 self-help books** from timeless sages to contemporary gurus are in no particular order. The first 40 books provide a critique of the content and there are an additional 60 titles I have downloaded and read on Kindle.

Many of the books on the list have made a tremendous difference to my life and inspired hundreds of people I have had the privilege of working with helping them to explore life changing ideas, overcome adversity and harness their potential for enduring fulfillment.

The list is a work in progress. Feel free to comment on the titles and let me know your favourites! Contact me at: [bmiller@potentialunlimited.com.au](mailto:bmiller@potentialunlimited.com.au)

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# Self-Help Book List

## **1. Full Catastrophe Living, Jon-Kabat-Zinn, PhD**

This book is a landmark work on mindfulness meditation and healing and features the program of the stress reduction clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre. It is a book for the well, the ill, and anyone trying to live a healthier and saner life in today's world.

## **2. The Mind Gym [www.themindgym.com](http://www.themindgym.com)**

This book offers practical solutions that will make you feel great about how your time is spent. And there's no need to read this book from cover to cover. The questionnaire at the start guides you directly to the chapters that will help you most.

## **3. The Power of Focus, Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen and Les Hewitt**

From the best-selling authors of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul Series* this book shows you how to hit your business, personal and financial targets with absolute certainty.

## **4. Control Stress, Paul McKenna**

This book contains cutting edge psychological techniques that will automatically create feelings of calm alertness for you to access whatever you choose. It comes with a hypnosis CD that will help you re-program your mind to control stress, build inner strength and bring more joy, power and happiness to everything you do.

## **5. The Emotional Life of Your Brain, Richard J. Davidson, Ph.D. with Sharon Begley**

This book is an eye-opener replete with breakthrough research that will change the way you see yourself and everyone you know. Davidson provides a crystal clear tour of the neuroscience of emotion; a primer about how the scientific process works and what make life worth living. A must read for everyone interested in positive psychology.

## **6. The Power of Resilience, Robert Brooks, Ph.D. and Sam Goldstein, Ph.D.**

This book provides a guide to leading a resilient life that shows how and why it is never too late for adults to find strength and safety in life. This superb book empowers you with realistic, stress-hardy strategies to overcome challenges in your personal and professional life. A must read to achieve balance, confidence and personal strength in your life.

## **7. Your Brain at Work, David Rock**

If you have no interest in being creative, effective, and happy, then this book may not be for you...but for everyone else, it's a must read. Rock shows how it's possible not only to survive in today's overwhelming work environment but to succeed in it—and still energized at the end of the day with a sense of accomplishment.

#### **8. Mindset: The New Psychology of Success, Carol Dweck, Ph.D.**

Mindset is one of those rare books that can help you make positive change in your life and at the same time see the world in a new way. This book breaks new ground and it leads you to change how you feel about yourself and your future.

#### **9. Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman**

Forget IQ. Brains may come in useful, as might social class and luck, but as predictor of who will succeed in any area of life, EQ is the thing to worry about. This groundbreaking book that redefines intelligence and success shows precisely how emotional intelligence can be nurtured and strengthened in all of us.

#### **10. Flow: The Psychology of Happiness, Michely Csikszentmihalyi**

This book is the ideal introduction to a subject expected to become one of the most productive areas of psychological research and shows you how to bring more flow into your life. Flow shows how this pleasurable state can be brought about by all of us and not just left to chance.

#### **11. Frames of Mind, Howard Gardner**

For those of us who suspect that intelligence is too complex a phenomenon to be measured by a single number derived from an "intelligence test" this book opens a door into a whole new way of looking at multiple intelligences common to all cultures. The book has resounding implications for the ways in which we think about intelligence, education and human potential.

#### **12. Authentic Happiness, Martin Seligman, Ph.D.**

Martin Seligman is the leading light for the new movement in Positive Psychology, which focuses on mental health rather than mental illness. In this self-help book he identifies characteristics and strategies of people with positive outlooks and explains how you can cultivate and experience authentic happiness and other desirable emotional states more often.

Assess your character strengths at [www.authentichappiness.org](http://www.authentichappiness.org)

### **13. Flourish, Martin Seligman, Ph.D.**

This book provides a visionary new understanding of happiness and wellbeing that will help you flourish. Flourish builds on Seligman's game-changing work on optimism, motivation and character to show how to get the most out of life, unveiling an electrifying new theory of what makes a good life and includes tools for getting the most out of life.

### **14. Positivity , Barbara Frederickson**

This book features top-notch research that reveals the 3-to-1 ratio that will change your life and offers surefire methods for transforming our lives from so-so to joyous. With *Positivity* you'll learn to see new possibilities, bounce back from setbacks, connect with others and become the best version of yourself.

Take the positivity test as [www.PositivityRatio.com](http://www.PositivityRatio.com)

### **15. The Mindful Way through Depression , Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat Zinn**

If you're ever struggled with depression, take heart. Mindfulness, a simple yet powerful way of paying attention to your most difficult emotions and life experiences, can help you break the cycle of chronic unhappiness once and for all. This book features a proven program from leading scientists that includes a CD of guided meditations by Jon Kabat Zinn.

### **16 Be Creative , Guy Claxton and Bill Lucas**

This book features essential steps to revitalise your work and life. With practical exercises and inspiring examples the authors demonstrate how to break away from old habits and free up your mind. They show you how to appreciate uncertainty, entertain outrageous opposites and stay open to the forces of ambiguity and possibility. Inklings, hunches, imagination, humour and even dreams can all play their part in liberating your creativity. You too can be creative. Try it!

### **17. The Artists Way , Julia Cameron**

Have you ever longed to be able to draw or paint, write or compose music? With this book you can discover how to unlock your latent creativity and make your dreams a reality. The book provides a twelve-week course that guides you through the process of recovering your creative self. It dispels the "I'm not talented enough" conditioning that holds many people back and helps you to unleash your own inner artist. A creative classic!

### **18. Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain, Betty Edwards**

Everybody has artistic talent and can be good at drawing. That is the amazing message of this book. You only have to tune into the creative side of your brain - the right side- and you will be able to draw accurate and imaginative portraits, landscapes, still life etc. A must read for budding artists who aspire for more.

### **19. The Road Less Travelled, M Scott Peck**

Drawing heavily on his personal experience, the author, a practicing psychiatrist, suggest ways in which facing our difficulties and suffering through the change can enable us to reach a higher level of self-understanding. He discusses the nature of loving relationships: how to recognise true compatibility; how to distinguish dependence from love; how to become one's own person and how to be a more sensitive parent.

### **20. Care of the Soul ,Thomas Moore**

When it was first published in 1992 *Care of the Soul* struck a national nerve and was on the New York Times best seller list for over forty six weeks. My supervisor gave me this book to mark my first year in Supervision and in Logos Psyche- the study of the soul. The book forced me to look at reality in a different way- a more expansive and meaningful way.

### **21. Goddesses in Everywoman, Jean Shinoda-Bolen**

The highest value of this book lies in the moments of recognition it provides. The author labels them as "Aha, Ha!" moments: that insightful second when we understand and internalise what we have experienced. *Goddesses in Everywoman* shows readers how to identify their ruling goddesses (from the autonomous Artemis and the cool Athens to the nurturing Demeter and the creative Aphrodite), and how to decide which to cultivate and which to overcome. I could not put this book down.

### **22. Gods in Everyman, Jean Shinoda-Bolen**

In this book the author turns her attention to the powerful inner patterns- or archetypes – that shape men's personalities, careers and personal relationships. Bolen shows men how to identify their ruling gods, how to decide which to cultivate and which to overcome. The book presents a compassionate and lucid male psychology that will help all men and women to better understand themselves and their relationships with their fathers, their sons, their brothers and their lovers.

### **23. A New Earth, Eckhart Tolle**

Taking off from the introspective work he began with *The Power of Now*, the author provides the spiritual framework for people to move beyond themselves in order to make this world a better, more spiritually evolved place to live. Shattering modern ideas of the ego and entitlement, self and society, Tolle lifts the veil of fear that has hung over humanity during this

new millennium, and shines an illuminating light that leads to happiness and health that every reader can follow. This book is a masterpiece!

#### **24. Eight Steps to Happiness, Tony Grant and Alison Leigh**

Scientists have discovered that happiness isn't just a fleeting emotion or a quality that some fortunate people are born with. Happiness is a skill that can be cultivated, and the positive effects can be seen in our brains, bloodstream and behavior. This book, based on the groundbreaking ABC television documentary *Making Australia Happy*, is about the science of happiness and offers a practical scientific guide to becoming a happier person in eight weeks.

#### **25. Happier, Tal Ben-Shahar Ph.D.**

Grounded in the new revolutionary "positive psychology" movement, the author ingeniously combines scientific studies, scholarly research, self-help advice and spiritual enlightenment. He weaves them together into a set of principles that you can apply to your daily life. Once you open your heart and mind to Happier ideas you will feel more fulfilled, more contented... and yes happier. This book stems from the most popular course at Harvard today.

#### **26. Outliers: the Story of Success, Malcolm Gladwell**

In this provocative and inspiring book, the author examines everyone from business giants to scientific geniuses, sports stars to musicians, and reveals what they have in common. He looks behind the spectacular results, the myths and the legends to show what really explains exceptionally successful people. This book really will change the way you think about life. And it will challenge you to make the most of your own potential.

#### **27. Talent is Overrated, Geoff Colvin**

What if everything you know about raw talent, hard work and great performance is wrong? This book offers new evidence that shows that top performers in any field – from Winston Churchill to Warren Buffet and Jack Welsh- are not determined by their inborn talents.

Greatness doesn't come from DNA but from practice and perseverance honed over decades. This "deliberate practice" isn't the kind of hard work that your parents told you about. It's difficult. It hurts. But more of it equals better performance. Tons of it equals great performance. This is a profoundly important book that will prompt you to think and inspire you to act.

#### **28. The Brain that Changes Itself, Norman Doige, M.D.**

Using personal stories from the heart of the neuroplasticity revolution, Norman Doige has written an immensely moving, inspiring book that will permanently alter the way we look at our brains, human nature and human potential. Read this book and your brain will thank you.

### **29. Mindfulness. Mark Williams and Danny Penman**

If you want a happier, more content life I highly recommend this down to earth guide that includes simple exercises you can apply in the midst of everyday challenges and catastrophes. Peace cannot be achieved in the outside world unless you have peace on the inside. This book features an eight –week plan for finding peace in a frantic world.

Based on the techniques of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) the unique program offers simple and straightforward forms of mindfulness meditation that can be done by anyone. I personally trialed the program during an eight week trip to the outback and was surprised by how quickly these techniques had me savoring life in a new way.

At <http://bit.ly/roadalemindfulness> you will find eight tracks containing the meditations you will need to guide you through the program, narrated by Mark Williams.

### **30. How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Gelb**

This book provides an inspirational, practical guide to developing your Da Vincian powers and features seven steps to developing genius in everyday life. Each one of us uses only a fraction of our brain power and Michael Gelb - who has helped thousands of men and women learn to put more of their minds to work and play- reveals how any of us can fulfill our own untapped potential by following the example of the greatest genius of all time, Leonardo da Vinci.

This is a brilliant book another must read for anyone who wants to experience a personal and professional renaissance.

### **31. Love, Barbara Frederickson**

In this book Barbara Frederickson conveys a powerful new view of what we all want most deeply-love. Based on solid research yet written in an easy-to-read manner, this book is full of practical exercises that can help the reader learn how to love more fully.

### **32. The Emotional Life of Your Brain, Richard Davidson with Sharon Begley**

This superb book is many things- a crystal clear tour of the neuroscience of emotion; a primer about how the scientific process works; a personal story by a really likeable guy and the promise of a better world. I loved this book.

### **33. Focus, Daniel Goleman**

Written by the bestselling author of *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman this book provides compelling evidence as to why the hidden driver of success in all areas of your life is your ability to FOCUS.



**34. The Mind's Own Physician, (Eds.) Jon Kabat Zinn and Richard Davidson with Zara Houshmand**

A scientific dialogue with the Dalia Lama on the healing power of meditation. The book presents this remarkably dynamic interchange along with intriguing research findings that shed light on the nature of the mind, its capacity to refine itself through training, and its role in physical and emotional health.

**35. Bringing Home the Dharma, Jack Kornfield**

In this book Jack Kornfield, one of the great spiritual teachers of our time, brings to life a way to understand and cultivate mindfulness, compassion, loving-kindness, and true wisdom that penetrates to the core of what liberation is about.

**36. Art as Therapy, Alain de Botton and John Armstrong**

This book from the *School of Life* series boldly proposes that art has a clear function: it is a therapeutic tool to help us lead more fulfilled lives.

**37. The Soul's Palette, Cathy A. Malchiodi**

This book reveals art's transformative powers. Exercises include working with materials for drawing, painting, sculpting, and collage; simple drawing and journaling projects; self-guided meditations and affirmations; ideas for cultivating intuition, inspiration, and spontaneity; and making art a spiritual practice. Cathy is masterful in gathering and arranging the best of art's healing qualities.

**38. Trust the Process, Shaun Mc Niff**

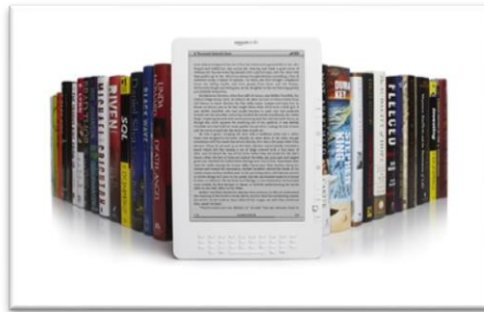
In this book Shaun Mc Niff takes the reader on a journey of self-discovery using art therapy processes such as music, dance and poetry that demonstrates an intelligence working in every situation. If we trust the process and follow its natural movement, it will astound us with its ability to find a way through problems and even make creative use of our mistakes.

**39. The Art Therapy Sourcebook, Cathy A. Malchiodi**

This book has been described as the most accessible and complete art therapy book ever published. It includes the most up to date guidelines for art therapists, innovative ways to interpret spontaneous imagery and updated cases with examples of art therapy in practice.

#### 40. Creativity for Life, Eric Maisel, PhD

As a therapist and creativity coach, Eric Maisel has worked with thousands of creative people. This book offers practical ideas as well as exercises to nurture growth as an artist and as a person, exploring such subjects as: establishing your creativity practice, blocks, moods and madness, craft the rewards and perils of isolation.



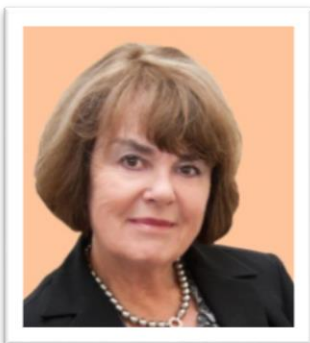
## Kindle Books

41. The Magic of Thinking Big, David J Schwartz
42. I Thought it was Just Me (but it isn't), Brene Brown
43. Rewire your Brain, John B. Arden
44. Find Your Power: A Toolkit for Resilience and Positive Change, Chris Johnstone
45. The Happiness Project, Gretchen Rubin
46. The Beethoven Factor, Paul Pearsall
47. You Can Create an Exceptional Life, Cheryl Richards
48. This is How, Augustin Burroughs
49. The Shadow Effect, Deepak Chopra
50. Stumbling on Happiness, Daniel Gilbert
51. Find your Strongest Life, Marcus Buckingham
52. Stillness Speaks, Eckhart Tolle
53. The Shift, Wayne Dwyer
54. The Age of Miracles, Marianne Williamson
55. A Guide to Shameless Happiness, Will Ross
56. Succeed, Heidi Grant-Halvorson Ph.D.
57. Introducing Positive Psychology, Bridgett Grenville- Cleave
58. The Language of Emotional Intelligence, Jeanne Segal
59. Toxic Criticism, Eric Maisel
60. Flourishing, Maureen Gaffney,
61. Good Loving, Great Sex, Rosie King
62. The Addicted Brain, Michael Kuhar

63. The Five Love Languages, Gary D. Chapman
64. Personality, Daniel Nettle
65. The Brain and Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman
66. The Places that Scare You, Pema Chodron
67. Sleep on It, Jane Therese Anderson
68. Jung, Ruth Snowden
69. Positive Psychologists on Positive Psychology, Aaron Jarden
70. Goal Setting, Vic Johnson
71. Optimal Functioning, Jessica Colman
72. The Interpretation of Dreams, Sigmund Freud
73. Meaning of Truth, William James
74. Find Your Strongest Life, Marcus Buckingham
75. The Expressions of Emotions in Man, Charles Darwin
76. The Resiliency Advantage, Al Siebert PhD
77. The Shift, Wayne Dwyer
78. Ten Interesting Things About Human Behaviour, Suzanne Davis
79. Mindfulness and Hypnosis, Michael D. Yapko
80. Spark! Eric Hagerman
81. Quiet, Susan Cain
82. Lying, Sam Harris
83. Natural Psychology, Eric Maisel
84. Coaching the Artist Within, Eric Maisel
85. Letters to a Young Artist, Julia Cameron
86. Cracking Creativity, Michael Michalko
87. What Color is Your Parachute, Richard Bolles
88. What Color is Your Parachute? For Retirement, Richard Bolles
89. Working with Mindfulness, Mirabai Bush, Peter F. Drucker and Jeremy Hunter.
90. The Wizard of Us, Jean Houston
91. Get off Your Duff and Make Your Own Cheese, Sean Roach
92. Fearless Retirement, Conrad Toner
93. Happiness, Thich Nhat Hanh
94. Feeling Stronger, Fred Sterk and Sjoerd Swane
95. Living Your Strengths, David Mullen Ph.D.
96. The Talent Code, Daniel Coyle
97. Acceptance, Lisa Kyle, PhD.
98. Resilience, Mark McGuinness
99. The Gifts of Imperfection, Brene Brown.
100. Thrive, Arainna Huffington

*You cannot open a book without learning something.*  
- Confucius

# Psychologist... and Prolific Reader



**Barbara E. Miller** is a registered psychologist, life coach and trainer with degrees in social sciences, adult education and applied psychology.

She has a diverse working background in management and marketing, is a member of the Australian Psychological Society, college of Organisational Psychologists and is the principal of Potential Unlimited a training

and development consultancy in Canberra, ACT.



Member  
Australian  
Psychological  
Society MAPS

In positive psychology, *flourishing* is “to live within an optimal range of human functioning, one that connotes goodness, generativity, growth, and resilience.”

As a positive psychologist Barbara’s mission is to help people bring *flow* into their life by using strengths to dramatically improve their work performance incorporate a healthy lifestyle, and strengthen their relationships and resources.

Barbara’s top strengths are love of learning, creativity, appreciation of beauty and excellence, perspective and wisdom and the capacity to love and be loved. Through her coaching practice she uses these strengths to *flourish* empowering clients to overcome adversity and achieve goals in all areas of life – work and personal.

For obligation free coaching consultation:

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