



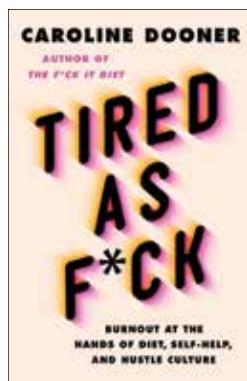
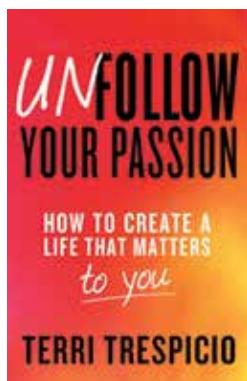
COME AS YOU ARE

BY LIZA MONROY

Making resolutions is so 2021. For 2022, new titles suggest, 'anti-resolution' is the watchword.

Speaker and brand adviser Terri Trespicio doesn't mince words when it comes to New Year's resolutions. "I hate them," she says. "They're a champagne-soaked promise you feel you should make because it sounds like something you wish you would do."

In *Unfollow Your Passion* (Atria, Dec.), Trespicio aims to "flip the bird at all the advice that we've heard," such as the idea that evolving means getting out of one's comfort zone. "That makes discomfort the goal," she says. "Life is uncomfortable enough." Rather, she encourages readers to "get into a place where you're not complacent, not lazy, but comfortable. That's where you're most productive, when you're at ease."



Trespicio's book is among several forthcoming titles that see self-improvement as secondary to, and stemming from, self-care.

The great reframing

Comedian Caroline Dooner embraced a forgiving approach in her 2019 debut, *The F*ck It Diet*, which *PW* called "unorthodox and sincerely delivered." In her follow-up, *Tired as F*ck* (Harper Wave, Feb. 2022), she

chronicles her experience with what she calls "self-help gone wrong." Attempts at dieting—"chasing beauty, thinness, and perfect health"—left her exhausted, she says. "We're told to work harder, upgrade ourselves like we're some kind of machine, but none of that will help us if we're exhausted and feel guilty

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The Barre Truth

PW talks with Danielle Friedman

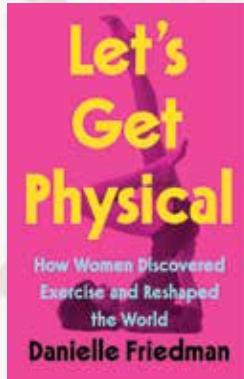
Journalist Danielle Friedman first delved into “The Secret Sexual History of the Barre Workout” in a 2018 article for *New York* magazine’s *The Cut*. She expands on that piece and tracks the evolution of the women’s fitness industry in *Let’s Get Physical* (Putnam, Jan. 2022), which *PW* called a “zippy history.” Here, Friedman discusses writing the book she most wanted to read.

What got you interested in women’s fitness history?

In the months before my wedding, I became motivated to try my first barre class. I loved the way barre classes made me feel, but as a feminist and women’s health journalist, I was intrigued by barre subculture and its origins. I was struck by how sexual some of the moves felt and wondered if anyone had ever looked into the impact of barre on sexual health. There was a much larger cultural history of women’s fitness that had never been told. At one point I thought, “It would be great to talk to whoever wrote the book on women’s fitness,” and I was surprised to find that book didn’t exist.

How did women’s fitness culture go from verboten—“women don’t sweat”—to mainstream?

When the book begins in the 1950s, there was this prevailing cultural belief that women shouldn’t sweat, have visible muscles—even that vigorous exercise could be dangerous for a woman, would cause her uterus to fall out. Women were up against cultural and medical barriers to exercise. Beliefs started to change around the rise of the women’s movement. Second-wave feminists encouraged women to become strong, to participate in sports. By the end of the ’70s, looking sporty, for better or worse, was sexy. I try to convey the tensions that have existed from the beginning in women’s fitness: exercise as a tool for women to become strong, or a tool of the patriarchy to control how women feel about their bodies.



© LINDSAY MAY FOR CLASSIC KIDS PHOTOGRAPHY

What most surprised you during your research?

One theme I found so interesting was the late ’70s explosion of women’s fitness launched a new class of women innovators and inventors—women pioneering the workouts but also pioneering the gear. Necessity was the mother of invention in the women’s fitness space, particularly the sports bra. I was struck by the fact it wasn’t invented until 1977. The prototype was sewing together two jockstraps. It changed the landscape of women’s movement.

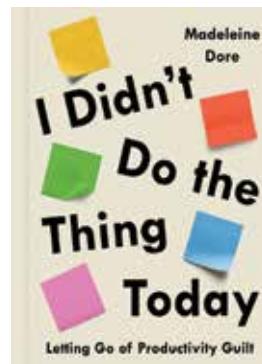
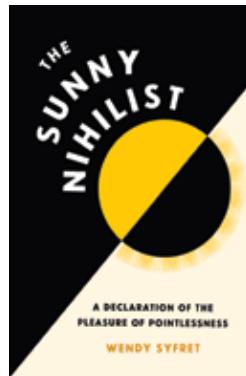
How can readers turn exercise from a chore into a joy?

It sounds simple, but start by asking yourself what kind of movement makes you feel good. Forget about what you should be doing and do what you enjoy. The best workout is the one that you’ll do. In our culture, there’s an idea that to be involved in fitness you have to take on a new lifestyle. We’re burnt out enough and that can feel really overwhelming, and we end up doing nothing because it’s like, “I don’t have time for that.” You don’t need fancy gear, an expensive membership, or hours a day to benefit from movement; you just have to move in any way that feels good. There’s something to be said for using movement and exercise as a way to appreciate what our bodies can do and not always expect more from them.

—L.M.

for resting.” *PW* said it’s “a brave and bracing manifesto that will be welcomed by any reader living in the aftermath of burnout—or trying to avoid it.”

Rehabilitating overachievers can find further justification in Wendy Syfret’s *The Sunny Nihilist* (Chronicle Prism, Jan. 2022). Expanding on a 2019 piece she wrote for the *Guardian*, “Since Discovering I’m Worthless, My Life Has Felt



Precious,” Syfret proposes that happiness stems from seemingly trivial pursuits. “Meaning has become this cheap and easy currency that everyone from marketing managers to our bosses can graft onto every part of our lives,” she says. Nihilism—which posits that meaning and purpose are social constructs—“has the ability to make things feel really big and really small. When I find myself

overwhelmed, I ask, Does this actually matter? In a year, a century, a millennium, will anyone remember or care about this moment?"

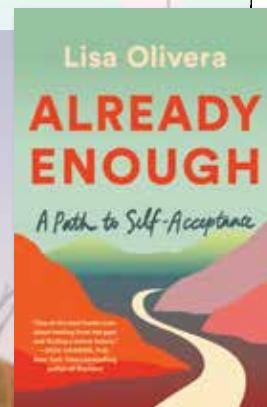
Probably not, according to blogger and podcaster Madeleine Dore, who in *I Didn't Do the Thing Today* (Avery, Jan. 2022)

details strategies for separating self-worth from productivity. Dore encourages readers to be flexible with their routines, allowing more space for what she calls "formative surprises." Choosing what feels best for the present rather than trying to anticipate the unknowable future, she says, will help reduce

The Neverending Story

PW talks with Lisa Olivera

In *Already Enough* (Simon & Schuster, Feb. 2022), Lisa Olivera, a marriage and family therapist with 471,000 Instagram followers, explains how reframing the stories we tell—or have been told—about ourselves facilitates self-compassion. For instance, rejecting the narrative that “everyone ends up leaving” can open one up to relationships; quieting the refrain “I’m just going to mess up” allows for risk-taking. Olivera spoke with *PW* about moving from self-judgment toward self-curiosity.



© WENDY GARRETT

How does what we're told about ourselves early in life continue to affect us through years?

Wherever we go our stories come along with us, showing up in the way we relate to ourselves and others: whether we take risks, engage in vulnerability, or receive love. Our stories impact who we believe ourselves to be and what we believe ourselves to be capable of, and who we are in work and relationships. Exploring and understanding our stories gives us the opportunity to step out of them and see what's working and not working.

Can you share an example of a strategy from the book that helps enhance self-acceptance?

One is using curiosity instead of judgment. We may find ourselves leaning into self-criticism, but if we can shift into curiosity and openness, we create space for something new to emerge. When we practice curiosity, we step out of what we're used to and find more supportive ways of approaching ourselves. Curiosity invites us to imagine what else is possible, creating space between those stories and ourselves. We see them not as our identities and who we are, but as stories we picked up along the way. It's a huge path toward self-acceptance, practicing being with ourselves from a curious place.

How does intergenerational trauma factor into this?

When we understand where the stories come from and how they've been passed down generation to generation, we have the opportunity to do things differently. These patterns, ways of being, and beliefs get passed down to us as early as in the womb. Understanding this allows us to step out of shaming ourselves and assuming it's our fault, and into “where did these stories come from, why might those things have been handed down to me, and how did I interpret them?” More understanding leads to more compassion and room for something else to evolve.

What are some of the stories you'd like the world, collectively, to reframe for 2022 and beyond?

I hope we can begin to trust that we deserve to care for ourselves and each other and change things that aren't working in ways that honor our humanity, instead of judging and shaming. There are so many more supportive, compassionate ways of figuring out who we are and what we want, and ways to show up for ourselves and each other. People think that if we approach ourselves with compassion, we won't be able to become the people we're meant to be, when really it's the complete opposite.

—L.M.

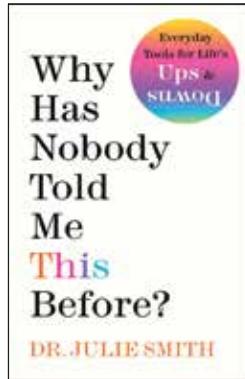
Self-Help Books

decision fatigue. To combat the “destructive indulgence” of comparing one’s accomplishments (or lack thereof) to others, she suggests approaching feelings of competitiveness or inadequacy with curiosity.

In teaching these tactics, Dore aims to provide “a balm to help us find the unexpected joy in aiming low, accepting the limitations of what can be done in a day, and becoming more patient with the timing of our lives.”

Change your mind

As the evidence in favor of dismantling previously high-stakes priorities mounts, readers may ask themselves a question articulated by the title of clinical psychologist Julie Smith’s January debut from HarperOne, *Why Has Nobody Told Me This Before?* She encourages readers to learn to tolerate what she describes in the book as “the discomfort of being vulnerable,” and to be willing to make mistakes and take leaps of faith. “The only way confidence can grow is when we are



willing to be without it,” she writes.

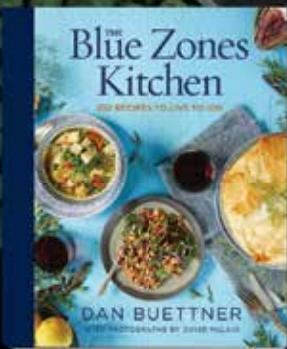
Smith also counsels patience in working toward a goal. Rather than plunge into a new exercise regimen, for instance, she encourages baby steps: abandon thoughts of aesthetic results or marathon training and instead take a walk, stay in the moment, and appreciate being outdoors.

Anna Paustenbach, senior editor at HarperOne, explains, “This book is a toolkit for readers as they navigate life. If we’ve learned anything in the last couple of years, even before the pandemic, it’s that the conversation about mental health is not a January fad. It’s important to overall well-being year-round.”

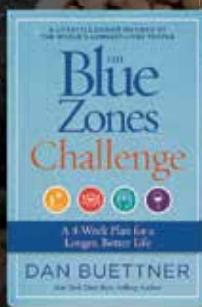
Smith’s book, Paustenbach says, “meets readers where they are,” and Smith does, too: she’s active on TikTok, where she has 2.9 million followers and is one of many professionals who use the platform to dole out bite-size advice. Another is therapist TJ Hoegh (1.9 million followers), who says his forthcoming debut, *Chaotic Happiness* (Alpha, Apr. 2022), aims to debunk the notion that contentment comes only once life is in order. He suggests a strategy of “being more present while dealing with change rather than trying to create it,” explaining that “letting go of expectations as things change” ultimately leads

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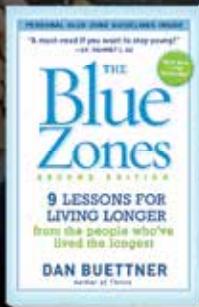
LIVE LONGER, BETTER—
THE BLUE ZONES WAY!



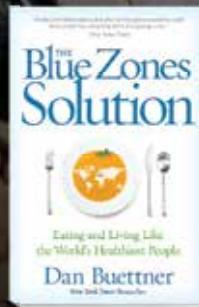
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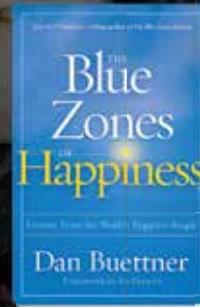
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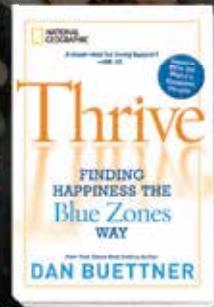
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12 WAYS TO HAVE A BETTER 2022

The pandemic prompted many people to reassess what they prioritized in the “before times.” Among them is Caldecott-winning author and illustrator Sophie Blackall. Her *Things to Look Forward To* (Chronicle, Mar. 2022) details 52 simple, and sometimes idiosyncratic, moments of joy: learning a new word, not opening a present—even making a list.

“Many of us have been working ourselves too hard for too long, and the pandemic only made things worse,” Blackall says. “After stress and exhaustion got the better of me in 2021, I have a newfound respect for maintaining a healthy balance between work and taking the afternoon off to wander a museum or have lunch with a friend. If we view time as a gift, we’ll be less likely to squander it.”

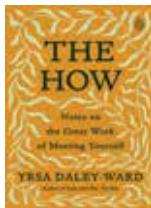
In that spirit, here are a dozen books and their life-enhancing suggestions.

Meet yourself where you are

The How

Yrsa Daley-Ward. Penguin Books, Nov.

PEN/Ackerley-winning memoirist and poet Daley-Ward (*The Terrible*) encourages readers to ditch what she calls the “hows and how-tos” delivered by “every place of retail, fitness, worship, and entertainment.” Instead, she advises, “When you lie in bed tonight, or next go for a long walk, consider a new story.” *PW* called the book “a tender, hopeful meditation” and a “gratifying exploration of the self.”



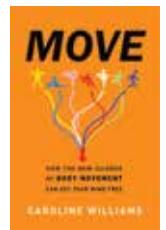
botanical adventures, [and] has learned a ton about houseplant care and self-care.”

Dance like no one's watching

Move

Caroline Williams. Hanover Square, Jan. 2022

Williams, a science journalist in the U.K., observes that as a species we’ve become more sedentary than ever, thus missing out on the mental health benefits of movement. Her reporting illuminates research in support of leaving behind our “way of the sloth,” culminating in what she calls a “movement manifesto.”

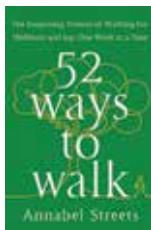


Take things one step at a time

52 Ways to Walk

Annabel Streets. Putnam, Mar. 2022

Streets conceives of walking as a creative endeavor. Each week of the year has a theme, e.g., “Take a Foraging Walk,” “Walk Backwards,” and “Walk Deep and Seek Out Fractals.” Streets also, as Annabel Abbs, is a novelist and the author of the recently released memoir *Windswept: Walking the Paths of Trailblazing Women*, which *PW* called a “lush narrative.”



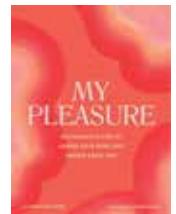
Have more fun in bed

My Pleasure

Laura Delarato, illus. by Amber Vittoria.

Chronicle, Jan. 2022

“Not only do we need to hear that we are good from others, but we also need to hear it from ourselves,” Delarato, a sexual wellness educator and a creative director at Vox Media, writes in her sensuality and body-positivity guide. With tips such as “be as naked for as long as you can” and “get to know your body better through masturbation,” Delarato emphasizes loving yourself first.



Make room for creativity

Find Your Unicorn Space

Eve Rodsky. Putnam, Jan. 2022

In what *PW* called an “energizing invitation,” Rodsky, author of the 2019 Reese’s Book Club Pick *Fair Play*, gives women a “permission slip” to pursue passion projects. “Much of the guide deals with how to carve out time for such endeavors, which she terms ‘the unicorn space,’” the review continues. “She takes aim at the guilt-driven sense of constant obligation people often feel and offers concrete tips for enlisting the help of partners in assigning equal time for individual pursuits.”

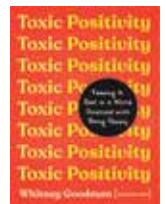


Get real

Toxic Positivity

Whitney Goodman. Tarcher Perigee, Feb. 2022

Goodman, a self-styled “radically honest psychotherapist” known on Instagram as Sit with Whit (439,000 followers), defines toxic positivity as “the advice we might technically want to integrate but are incapable of synthesizing at the moment.” For instance: you call a friend in a panic to say you’ve just lost your job, and they reply, “At least you have all this time off now!” The response, Goodman says, “typically leaves us feeling silenced, judged, and misunderstood.” *PW* said the author “doesn’t mince words as she runs through the basics—what toxic positivity is, why it’s harmful, how to combat it,” adding, “In a genre dominated by the upbeat, Goodman’s realism both stands out and takes the edge off.”



Cultivate your own garden

You Grow, Gurl!

Christopher Griffin. Harper Design, Mar. 2022

Griffin (349,000 Instagram followers) debuts with a playful home-gardening guide that doubles as a self-help manual. “Through caring for plants, I have learned how to better care for myself,” Griffin writes. “This plant kween has over 200 green gurls in her lil Brooklyn apartment, has gone on numerous



© PHOEBE CHEONG

Feel your way

Authentic Power

Ashley Bernardi. The Collective Book Studio, Dec.

Through daily affirmations, exercises, and journaling prompts, *2 Girls*

Self-Help Books

Talking podcaster Bernardi walks readers through her FEEL framework—focus, enter, experience, and learn—to help them find a way forward after experiencing trauma.

Self-soothe

The Anxiety Healer's Guide

Alison Seponara. Simon Element, Mar. 2022

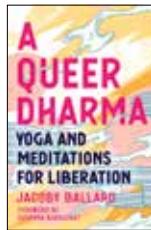
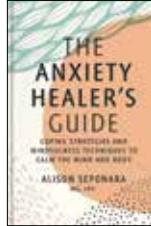
This handbook leads readers through what therapist Seponara calls “body breakthroughs” (e.g. breathing techniques) and “mind tricks” (e.g. visualization exercises), in order to create “your own healing tool kit.” The goal, she writes, is to “help train your brain on how to focus more on the present moment and less on intrusive, anxious thoughts about the future.”

Stay grounded

A Queer Dharma

Jacoby Ballard, North Atlantic, Nov.

Ballard, a yoga teacher, grew up bullied for being queer. Crediting meditation with saving them, they explain how to “turn toward pain with compassion practices,” merging healing-for-justice and mindfulness. Ballard guides readers in yoga and medita-



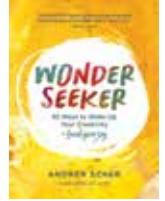
tion techniques grounded in their experience of building resilience as a trans person.

Recover a sense of awe

Wonder Seeker

Andrea Scher. Harper Design, Nov.

People tend to lose their sense of wonder as they get older, artist Scher posits in her guide to seeing the world anew. Featuring colorful photographs, plus rituals, activities, and journaling prompts, the book encourages readers to train their eyes on “magical moments in your everyday life you might be missing.”

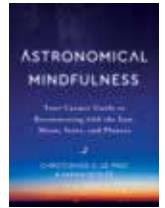


Reach for the stars

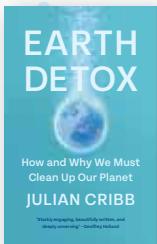
Astronomical Mindfulness

Christopher G. De Pree and Sarah Scoles. HarperOne, Jan. 2022

Coauthored by *Popular Science* and *Wired* contributor Scoles and De Pree, director of the Bradley Observatory and author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Astronomy*, this examines personal growth through a cosmic lens. By orienting to the sun, moon, stars, and planets more mindfully, the authors propose, we can better understand our place in the solar system, and ourselves. Some of the activities involve drawing or sketching; for others, all that's needed is a view of the sky. —L.M.



Books to Make You Think



Earth Detox
Julian Cribb
9781108931083



There is No Planet B
(updated)
Mike Berners-Lee
9781108821575

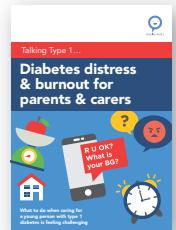


Picky Eater's Recovery Workbook
Jennifer J. Thomas,
Kendra R. Becker and
Kamryn T. Eddy
9781108796170

The Talking Type 1 Series



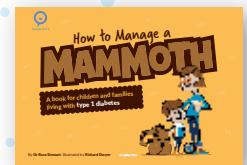
Diabetes Burnout
9781100906510



Diabetes Distress and Burnout for Parents and Carers
9781100906534



Not OK With Needles?
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How to Manage a Mammoth
9781100906541

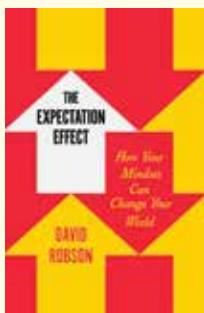
BODY AND SOUL CYCLE

New narrative nonfiction delves into the history and science of health and well-being

The Expectation Effect

David Robson. Holt, Feb. 2022

Science journalist Robson (*The Intelligence Trap*), who has been an editor at BBC Future, draws on neuroscience to explore how what we think influences our experience of the world. “Your mind alone cannot perform miracles,” he writes. “You cannot simply imagine piles of money and think yourself rich, or cure yourself of a terminal illness through positive visualizations. But your expectations and beliefs can influence—indeed are already influencing—your life in many other surprising and powerful ways.”



Let's Get Physical

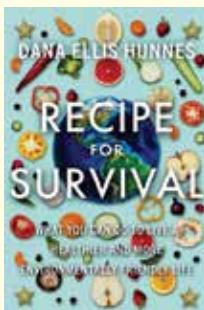
Danielle Friedman. Putnam, Jan. 2022

Friedman's feminist history of exercise (an “astute and entertaining debut,” per *PW*'s review) surveys various figures who directly or indirectly influenced the women's fitness industry. They include Mary Quant, whose miniskirt design motivated women to tone their thighs; Bonnie Prudden, an early fitness guru who later created a system to treat muscle aches; and Lotte Berk, the originator of the barre-style workout. (See our q&a with Friedman, “The Barre Truth,” p. 47.)

Recipe for Survival

Dana Ellis Hunnes. Cambridge Univ., Jan. 2022

Proposing small-scale solutions to mitigate the interconnected climate and health crises, Hunnes, a clinical inpatient dietitian at RR-UCLA Medical Center and part-time faculty at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, makes the case

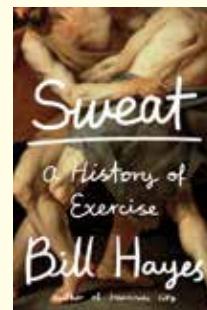


for replacing animal products with plant-based alternatives. This will “eliminate up to 70 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions from foods and reduce water use by up to 75 percent,” she writes, and is one of the most “meaningful, effective, and proactive things we can do to benefit our health and the environment simultaneously.”

Sweat

Bill Hayes. Bloomsbury, Jan. 2022

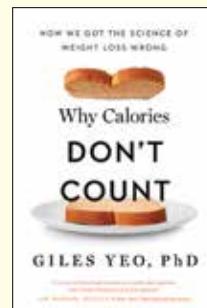
Photographer Hayes (*How We Live Now: Scenes from the Pandemic*), who was the partner of the late Oliver Sacks, traces the history of exercise from descriptions written in the fifth century BCE through modern yoga, bodybuilding, and his own cold plunges. In this “candid study,” according to *PW*'s review, “he finds a kindred spirit in Renaissance physician Girolamo Mercuriale, who, in a time when ‘cathedrals replaced gymnasiums as sacred sites’ was fascinated by the reverence the ancient Greeks and Romans held for the human body, viewing it not just as a means for movement but as its own form of art.”



Why Calories Don't Count

Giles Yeo. Pegasus, Dec.

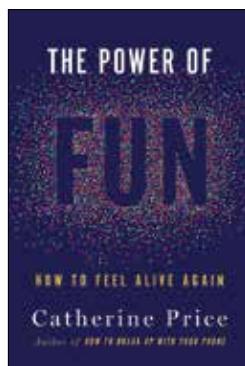
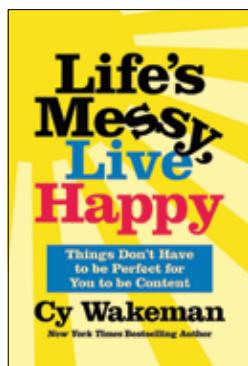
In what *PW*'s review called an “informative and entertaining guide,” geneticist and *Gene Eating* author Yeo turns his focus to society's collective worship at the altar of calorie counting. Tracing the rise of the calorie as the ultimate food-measuring unit from the early 20th century to today, Yeo offers an alternative metric for making healthy choices—“focusing on the nutritional content in food, getting enough protein and fiber, and avoiding sugar and meat,” the review explained—making for a plan that's “straightforward, encouraging, and easy to implement.” —L.M.



continued from p. 49

to happiness.

Leadership speaker Cy Wakeman takes a similar tack in *Life's Messy, Live Happy* (St. Martin's, Apr. 2022) and cites New Year's resolutions as an example of the unrealistic expectations people set. “At the beginning of each year we find what's not yet perfect in our lives and what seems to be keeping us from being



happy,” but that's a backward way of looking at things, she says. Rather than trying to change our circumstances, it's more helpful to learn how our minds work, “so we quit getting played by our ego. You're not a self-help project. You have something called the human condition.”

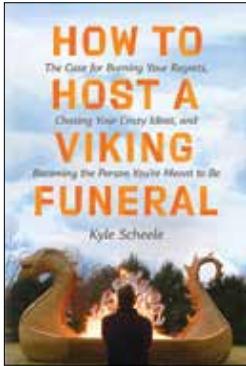
Easing up on expectations may leave more room for—dare we say it?—pleasure. That's exactly what

Self-Help Books

science journalist Catherine Price makes the case for in *The Power of Fun* (Dial, Dec.). She distinguishes “fake fun” (think social media) from “true fun,” which “doesn’t rely on the doing of any particular activity,” she says. “We often think of fun as frivolous and it ends up at the bottom of a priority list, but it unlocks our ability to be productive, creative, and happier. It’s like going on a diet where the point is to eat more of the foods you enjoy.”

Burn after reading

As artist Kyle Scheele closed in on age 30, he decided that rather than host a traditional party, he’d build and burn a 16-foot cardboard Viking ship full of his regrets, in effect throwing a fiery funeral for his 20s. A video of the rite garnered enough positive responses that he planned a second send-off, with a 30-foot vessel carrying the bad choices and disappointments of 20,000 people from around the world. In the February



HarperOne release *How to Host a Viking Funeral*, Scheele, who has amassed 2.1 million TikTok followers, discusses what these and subsequent experiences taught him about regret and letting go.

“Kyle’s book is saying, ‘Try something. Do something,’” notes Mickey Maudlin, senior v-p and executive editor at HarperOne. “It doesn’t have to be a means toward an end but rather to be fun, and interesting, and who knows where this will go? That’s the whole Viking funeral idea—you burn your regrets, move on, and embrace the next thing.”

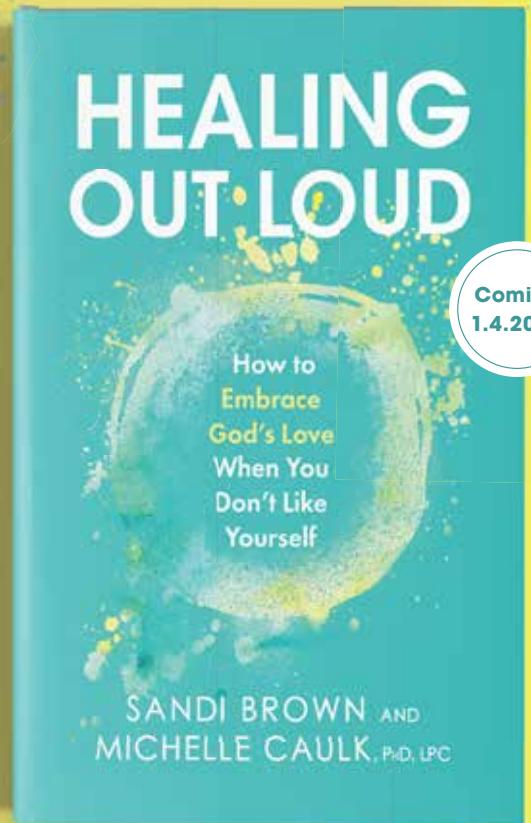
In *Already Enough*, which Simon & Schuster will publish at the end of January, therapist Lisa Olivera offers another way to move forward: reframing the stories we tell, and tell about, ourselves. (See our q&a with Olivera, “The Neverending Story,” p. 48). Similarly, former *TMZ* cohost Van Lathan, in *Fat, Crazy, and Tired* (Legacy Lit, May 2022), writes of how he reassessed his learned stories about food by identifying a moment when he, as a child, began connecting eating with emotions.

“I looked at my history, why I was the way I was, what made me that way, and learned to forgive myself for what I looked in the mirror and saw,” Lathan says. “The first thing is to remove shame from the equation. Abs, pecs, and hips are all the same. You can be at peace at 160 pounds, or 310 pounds.”

In letting go of the idea of perfection, Lathan embraced an ethos of self-acceptance that’s in line with other books discussed here. “Perfect is very small,” he says. “Peace has a ton of variety.” ■

Liza Monroy’s books include the essay collection Seeing as Your Shoes Are Soon to Be on Fire (Soft Skull).

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