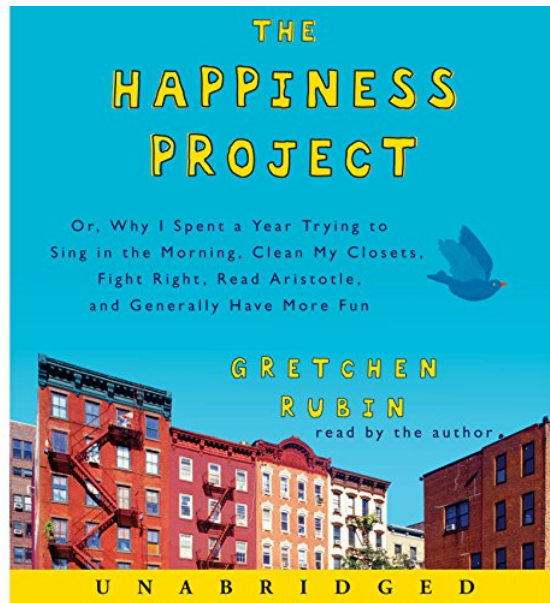


# THE HAPPINESS PROJECT BY GRETCHEN RUBIN



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# THE HAPPINESS PROJECT

Or, Why I Spent a Year Trying to  
Sing in the Morning, Clean My Closets,  
Fight Right, Read Aristotle,  
and Generally Have More Fun



GRETCHEN  
RUBIN

read by the author



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  - Published on: 2009-12-29
  - Format: Unabridged
  - Original language: English
  - Running time: 615 minutes

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717 of 768 people found the following review helpful.

Wish I Could Get My Money Back...

By CAnn

I rarely abandon a book midway through, but after the 6th month of Gretchen "being Gretchen" I couldn't take any more.

I found the author's tone whiny and self-important. Inflated sense of ego, anyone? Good grief.

Gretchen is a 40 something, ultra-privileged mother, "writer", former law clerk to Sandra Day O'Connor and Yale grad (these last two facts are repeated over and over and over just in case the reader didn't catch them the first time). She decides one day that she could be happier, and sets off, in her goal-oriented way, to find more happiness. Also, she likes to give herself gold stars. Lots of them.

The advice she dishes out, however, consists of nuggets of common sense that most of have learned well before age 40. Be nice to everyone! Don't nag the people you love! Spend time with your kids! De-clutter! Get more sleep and exercise more!

Gretchen, as it turns out, lives in a Manhattan triplex, has a nanny, a housekeeper and millions of dollars. Obviously, she has lots of free time and disposable income to fund her 'happiness project'. It's hard to take her seriously when she whines about things like running errands for her daughter's birthday party and how hard it is for her to spend a week being nice to her husband.

I wish she had dug a little deeper into her own psyche - WHY does she need constant approval and attention? That is a question that may have been worth exploring.

In a New York Times article she is quoted as saying about her book, "I don't have anything that's really original".

No kidding.

682 of 738 people found the following review helpful.

Narcissistic drivel

By Mike H.

I have not written a review before but felt compelled to do so after reading 1/3 to 1/2 of Ms. Rubin's work. Rather than feel happy or inspired myself, reading this book became painful. The author's constant reference to her past accomplishments were both self serving and unnecessary. I am still waiting for the "happy" part of the book to materialize. Your money would be better spent making a donation to the local food bank rather than buying this book - and I'll guarantee you'll feel happier.

2137 of 2359 people found the following review helpful.

Research Author Before Deciding Whether to Read (Especially if You Lost Money in this Recession)

By mstar

Would you read a book called "The Happiness Project" if the cover depicted a bored, skinny, highly connected multimillionaire leisurely staring out of her Manhattan mansion from her bed, rereading her favorite childhood books, fretting over her weight, gazing indifferently at her collection of bird memorabilia, and finding fault with her multimillionaire husband while a nanny watched her children and a housecleaner tidied her home?

No you would not, and Harper Collins knows this, which is why the cover features humble tenements and handwritten script and omits any detail that would make you think she's not just an arty mom from Brooklyn looking to focus on the bright side of life.

Who is she really? The way she tells it, she's a lawyer who boldly gave up a law career to pursue her passion, writing. She neglects to mention that this was not much of a risk given that she is married to the son of Robert Rubin, former Treasury Secretary under Clinton, Goldman Sachs and Citigroup guy who personally helped ensure that derivatives stayed unregulated, netting millions for himself and billions of taxpayer bailout for his companies.

Once you know this, the story is unpalatable. Rubin and Harper Collins know this, and go to great lengths to maintain the ruse that Rubin is an everywoman, writing that she hesitates to purchase a \$2 pen, or a new blender, or new shirts. Yet how can she really write an honest happy project if she is not truthful?

It is deceitful that she would say how tidying her home made her so much happier when you know that she has had a staff all along that can help her with just that. It seems odd that she encourages parents to remember "the days are long but the years are short" (an old saying she curiously takes credit for) when apparently she is spending much of her time reading and working on her pet project while a nanny looks after her baby. It seems unfair that she uses herself as an example of pursuing your dreams when you know she had years and years of leisure time to do anything or nothing she wanted, given her family's economic situation, not to mention extraordinary connections that would have given her tremendous advantages over another aspiring writer.

Maybe Rubin really did want to be a little happier, and that's fair. She's not a bad writer, and some of the ideas are good. (Minus flavoring salads with aspartame to stay slim.) But if she is going to sell her project to people who are probably genuinely suffering, quite likely at least a few of them in some part due to her own family's actions, then she should be honest about who she is and what her circumstances are like.

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