

‘Survive and Thrive’ Wellbeing and Mental Health Titles

Title	Author	Comments
Reasons to Stay Alive	Matt Haig	Helps to know that when you are experiencing depression and suicidal thoughts you are not alone and you can get through it.
		Helped me understand and support a family member.
The Secret	Rhonda Byrne	Always keeps me focussed on my thoughts.
Preferred Lies	Andrew Grieg	It's a book that asks you to think all the way through, and as you do so, you realise Grieg is asking you to think about the sense of place, sense of time and a sense of overcoming your own weaknesses.
Creative, Successful, Dyslexic: 23 High Achievers Share Their Stories	Margaret Rooke	Positivity
Hurray for Gin: A Book for Perfectly Imperfect Parents	Katie Kirby	Trivial nonsense which taught me it's alright not to have everything picture perfect in respect to life, family, money, home etc. I even managed to laugh (very loudly) out loud – something which I haven't done for a very very long time. (I am aware you may be seeking a more highbrow book but this truly helped me when I was in a very vulnerable place). It's taught me to go easier on myself – part of my illness is having things just so and this was becoming more and more difficult causing my condition to worsen as a result.
The Killing Floor	Lee Child	A great story, utterly gripping and therefore sheer escapism. Everything else is forgotten when I read a good

		thriller.
The Reawakening	Primo Levi	Describes Primo Levi's gradual reintegration into human society after being interned in Auschwitz. It is very moving as he appreciates simple acts of kindness – such as a person sharing their meal with him – which mean so much after living in such a brutal environment. For me, it made me very aware of what a lucky life I have led, to live in a free society with my rights respected.
The Uncommon Life of Alfred Warner in Six Days	Juliet Conlin	Fascinating and moving.
Sailing Alone Around The World	Joshua Slocum	This is the true story of the first solo circumnavigation of the Earth. It is pure escapism and takes you far, far away from the present place and moment.
The Count of Monte Cristo	Alexandre Dumas	A story of hope, of rising from the ashes and of that inner strength which we all possess. It's a book that I can go back to again and again whenever I want a reminder that anything's possible. A great adventure.
The Ultra Mindset	Travis Macy	Gives an overall sense of how thinking positively can affect all aspects of your life.
Manage your Mind	Gillian Butler and Tony Hope	
Loving someone with bipolar disorder: understanding and helping your partner	Julie Fast	It allowed me to see and find hope while supporting my daughter who has Bipolar Disorder Type 2 and hope for the life she might yet lead. A mixture of useful practical information given coupled with positive messages and support, often missing from books about this mental health condition. I've often come away [from some books] more terrified and despairing.
Ring of	Jonathon	A very funny and exciting story that was

Soloman	Stroud	great to read out loud to my two younger children. The author is a family favourite! The stories have likeable characters, funny and can be enjoyed on different levels by different members of the family. Sharing the stories are part of the fun and sense of being a family, relaxing and being together.
Running	Ronnie O'Sullivan	Examples of people who have learned to live with complex mental health illnesses.
Mad Girl	Bryony Gordon	
Emotional Agility	Susan David	Helped me challenge unhelpful ways of thinking; helped me become more emotionally resilient.
The Life Changing Magic of Tidying up	Marie Kondo	Gives you the message that it's okay to be you and your choices and priorities are valid.
Walden	Henry Thoreau	They look at what is important in life, the simple things.
The Moomins comic strips	Tove Jansson	
Zen and the art of Motorcycle Maintenance	Robert M. Pirsig	Makes me think [about] different perspectives on life, people and mental health/ill-health.
Buddhist Boot Camp	Timber Hawkeye	I pick it up and read a few pages when I need to refocus and be calm.
The Power of Now Practising the Power of Now A New Earth	Eckhart Tolle	They taught me that the pain I sometimes feel is not 'me' it is the 'pain body', and they also taught me how to deal with this... something I had never heard before. They also taught me more about the ego and it helped me to see my ego when I was upset about things in the past.
The Good Heart	Dalai Lama	
The Living Mountain	Nan Shepherd	
Track Man	Catriona Child	
Big Stone Gap	Adriana	

	Trigiani	
Frazzled	Ruby Wax	
Little Women	L M Alcott	
Anne of Green Gables	L M Montgomery	
Ballet Shoes	Noel Streatfield	
The Language of Letting Go	Melody Beattie	Simple language and concepts.
Selfhood	Dr Terry Lynch	Increased awareness of the importance of spiritual and emotional wellbeing.
Buddhism Plain and Simple	Steve Hagen	Greater understanding of self-empowerment, self-determination, self-management, choice and control.
<i>Buddhist Bootcamp</i>		Can be opened at random and read for a couple minutes without context of the preceding pages, or can be read as a whole when you have more time. This helps boost wellbeing in small bursts throughout the day if need be, without dedicating huge amounts of time, making the book very accessible for readers without having to dedicate a lot of time.
<i>Humans</i>	Matt Haig	escapism literature that also carries a powerful message. It uses humour to portray difficult themes and situations, and highlights some social absurdities that it is easy to take as given.
The Broons	R. D. Low and Dudley D. Watkins	Familiar childhood memories.
The Shepherd's Life: A Tale of the Lake District	James Rebanks	I liked the simplicity and the routine of his life as a shepherd in the hills. I liked the feeling of being outside, and lived with him in the seasons as they came and went. I liked it when the community worked together to help each of the farmers, with collecting the sheep off the hills and shearing.
The <i>Harry Potter and the...</i> series	JK Rowling	

Tapas and Tears	Chris Higgins	
The Egg and I	Betty MacDonald	I think for me each of these books tells a story of people facing many different challenges, all in very different periods of history that I've always been fascinated by. That in itself contributes to my wellbeing as I love any kind of historical novel which pulls me into the world they would have been living in and provides an escape if I feel like I need that. I think these books, fiction and non-fiction, have shown me in different ways that everyone faces trials and tribulations, and that is just what life is, but it's how you react to those situations and face up to them that is most important. Overall they just leave me feeling happy and content that it is what it is – just go with it!
Little Women	Louisa May Alcott	
A Very Long Engagement	Sebastien Japrisot	
Seven Years in Tibet	Heinrich Harrer	
Long Walk to Freedom	Nelson Mandela	Reading about his struggles made me think that my life wasn't that bad after all.
The Bible		They all contain messages of hope, compassion and redemption
The Plague and I	Betty MacDonald	
The Martian	Andy Weir	
To Kill a Mockingbird	Harper Lee	
No 1 Ladies Detective Agency	Alexander McCall Smith	
Beginners Guide to Anxiety	Eleanor Morgan	
Don Quixote	Cervantes	An important reminder of the nonsensical aspect of life.
The Chimp Paradox	Dr Steve Peters	
The Anxiety	Edmund	

and Phobia Workbook	Bourne MD	
Warm Bodies	Isaac Marion	
All The Bright Places	Jenny Niven	
The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry	Rachel Joyce	
Various Pets Alive and Dead	Marnie Lewycka	
A Street Cat Named Bob	James Bowen	
Hector and the Search for Happiness	Francis Lelord	
The Universe vs Alex Woods	Gavin Extence	
The Ocean at the End of the Lane	Neil Gaiman	
Calvin and Hobbs	Bill Waterson	
Man's Search for Meaning	Victor E. Frankl	
Hyperbole and a Half	Allie Brosh	The best description I could have asked for of my depression and how it translates to apathy, anger, hilarity and so many other apparently irrational feelings. It helped so much to have someone else explain my feelings in a way I could present to my family members to help them understand what I was experiencing.
The Catcher in the Rye	JD Salinger	There's something relatable about seeing Holden at the very end of his ability to cope with his life. It really resonates with me.
I Had a Black Dog	Matthew Johnstone	
Daring Greatly	Brene	

	Brown	
13 Reasons Why	Jay Asher	
Am I Normal Yet?	Holly Bourne	
Persepolis	Mariane Satrapi	
Fifteen Dogs	Andre Alexis	
	William Boyd	These authors offer an insight into the human condition and often document and reflect on the whole biography of a character, giving an overview of lives well or fully lived. Gives a perspective on a whole life.
	Hilary Mantel	
	Helen Dunmore	
	Wayne Dyer	Makes you see the bigger picture, puts things in a spiritual perspective.

Other observations that people volunteered about reading for wellbeing were as follows:

- I feel that books help me as when you're reading your imagination never stops; you are always trying to picture what the surroundings and the character looks like. I also feel it's great when you feel like you can connect with a certain character, who may be going through the same problems as you, and it's nice to read what they would do.
- As an avid reader, [the books I have read for wellbeing are] mostly crime and thrillers. I think all reading has the power to contribute to your sense of wellbeing, as books have the power of pure escapism whether fictional or educational. I often find when it feels like things are getting on top of me, a 15-30 minutes reading can clear my head, or at least give me a break from the pressure of a busy lifestyle.
- I get different things from different books. Sometimes I read writing about beautiful places which is an escape. Sometimes I read about people overcoming adversity. Sometimes childhood favourites are safe and comforting, and sometimes I read ideas for living life.

- Any books connected to my research interests: anything which provides escapism – novels thrillers etc. I would say my reading choices are intrinsically linked to relaxation and wellbeing. It's important that what we read reminds us of how we want to be – it's easy to forget to monitor our wellbeing; being more self-aware is necessary. Reading helps.
- Role playing books give me a great amount of escapism. It allows me to generate characters that can complete mystical feats of wonder, cast spells and defeat goblins. Although not actual novels, the reading contained within these books and the good times shared with friends while roleplaying the characters have all contributed to my sense of wellbeing.
- Reading is mentally and emotionally stimulating. It allows you to use your imagination but also reflect on yourself. Reading gives you opportunities to learn, to enjoy, to empathise and sympathise.
- Novels which feature inner warmth and friendship or healthy family ties; lots of children's literature (despite being an adult); and non-fiction books about other cultures, strong women and local history. Some offer direct mental health management techniques that work for me (I have OCD), and others help me connect with the world outside me and get away from my anxiety, by helping me to focus on values that I treasure.