

Happy AF: Simple Strategies to Get Unstuck, Bounce Back, and Live Your Best Life

Beth Romero

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Marked by sass and salty language, Beth Romero's *Happy AF* is an experiential, science-backed guidebook to being happy, no matter what.

For Romero, the events of 2018 to 2020 could have been backed by “the soundtrack from a low-budget slasher movie.” A single mother of two teenage daughters, she went through a horrible break-up; closed on a pricey new house—then lost her job; saw the world brought to a standstill by a pandemic; and was consumed with guilt over living in California while her parents confronted end-of-life issues on the East Coast. Nonetheless, she made her way toward being happy—and asserts that others can, too.

Leading by example, the book points to science-supported strategies and techniques for achieving such happiness. It also models fierce determination and puts forth the belief that happiness is a choice. Just a few essential ingredients are needed to get the desired result: willingness to dig into the hard work of growth and change, and belief that change is possible.

Drawing on discoveries in the fields of behavioral science, positive psychology, and neuroscience, the book cites research showing that only ten percent of people's happiness can be attributed to external circumstances, while fifty percent is a matter of genetics. That the remaining forty percent depends on intentional activities becomes cause for celebration herein. While some of the book's suggestions are common sense—as with its advice to get restful sleep, develop helpful routines and habits, eat healthful foods, exercise, and get rid of negative thinking—they are embellished by the warning that consistent practice is hard. In the end, the book functions as an ally in the difficult work ahead.

Happy AF is an inspiring self-help book that suggests a spirited approach to becoming happy, no matter what.

KRISTINE MORRIS (November / December 2023)

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