

Pottering: A Cure for Modern Life

Anna McGovern

Charlotte Ager, Illustrator

Laurence King (Oct 27, 2020)

Hardcover \$16.99 (128pp)

978-1-78627-727-5

Anna McGovern's body, mind, and spirit book *Pottering* is an antidote to the ills of modern living.

While many books offer trendy cures to the bustle and stress of modern life that involve going to far-off places or making drastic life shifts, this book's approach is, with intention, much closer to home. Pottering—"to occupy oneself in a pleasant way but without a definite plan or purpose"—is akin to fixing a squeaky hinge or making a cup of tea, and McGovern explores the freedom and comfort inherent in such basic human tendencies, though they've been crowded out of contemporary definitions of success and happiness.

The key principles of pottering include making "do with what you've got," not trying too hard, movement, staying local, and keeping it digital-free. Such techniques foster contentment and effortless living, focused on single tasks that embrace experimentation over excellence and are often, but not always, solitary pursuits. One chapter includes seasonal ideas to prime one's mind for living at a slower pace year round, including spring cleaning, making popsicles in the summer, planting bulbs in the fall, and snuggling in the winter.

Though it asserts that reflection is a key to change, the book doesn't make reflection work unto itself. Instead, it includes low-key reflection prompts, making reflection an enriching part of everyday life. These include asking oneself "why are your pottering?", with suggested answers: distraction, procrastinating, or avoiding something else.

The book is filled with gorgeous, evocative illustrations whose lighthearted and inviting scenes show people pottering through work in a garden and eating dinner with friends. Its descriptions of the practices and purposes of pottering are apt and unadorned, and its charming British diction is inviting.

Pottering is an accessible text that suggests slowing down and savoring life.

MELISSA WUSKE (November / December 2020)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.