ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

SELF-HELP

The Boomerang Effect: How You Can Take Charge of Your Life
Nicola Bird
iUniverse
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Five-minute exercises, no equipment or gym memberships to purchase, no therapy or coaching sessions, just relief from the stress and anxiety trap that many people experience—that's the promise (and premise) of Nicola Bird's self-help guide, *The Boomerang Effect: How You Can Take Charge of Your Life*. Bird writes clearly and efficiently about her proprietary Self-Imaging Therapy (SIT).

According to Bird, many people live in a "circle of problems," a situation which she has dubbed The Boomerang Effect. In her book, Bird writes of three archetypes: the Fighter, the Hider, and the Runner. Each descriptor is prefixed by "Mi-mi," an apt reference to oneself. The "antagonist" in the guide is named Mucky. But a character the author calls Glade vacillates between being a Mr./Ms. Wonderful and a Mucky in disguise.

This book is a result of Bird's twenty-plus years as a psychotherapist, during which time she developed SIT, which she describes in an accessible manner: "A transformative inner process—very much like an active, therapeutic meditation, SIT achieves maximum results quickly and deeply, because it changes people from the inside out and gives them the tools to heal."

In defining the Fighter, the Hider, and the Runner, Bird enumerates their characteristics, informs the reader of the results of each behavior, and offers potential "antidotes." Two unique elements will resonate with readers as they try on the different hats of each role: The Reasoning and the Mantra are very specific attributes. For example, Mi-mi the Hider's Reasoning is: "What if …?"; and the Hider's Mantra is: "It is what it is." These are just two examples of how the author presents definitive, rather than generalized, information.

The programmed responses that the author details are based on the fight-or-flight response. Bird takes it one step farther and adds “freeze” as the third typical response in this series. She explains that people don’t always run or hide; stopping dead in their tracks is a typical alternate response to anxiety, fear, depression, and other emotional issues.

The chapters end with a practical “Recap of Key Concepts” that highlight the definitions provided within the chapter and the characteristics of each archetype. The exercises include instructions and, when the reader is asked to provide descriptions of challenges and emotions, Bird offers a list of possible responses to jog the reader’s mind.

Bird cuts to the chase—people have pain and want results—but she cautions that there are no permanent fixes. Problems will rear their ugly heads, but she gives readers tools that are easy and quick to use and provide relief. Gentle and direct reminders pepper each chapter: love yourself, take care of and be good to yourself, and practice the four exercises. Bird delivers her point of view clearly, succinctly, and lovingly.

The book appears to target women and has men in the “Mucky” roles until page 29, when Mark makes an appearance as the author’s patient in a “Mi-mi” role. The author employs feminine pronouns throughout the text, and there’s not much advice for men, other than in Mark’s brief segment.

Nicola Bird received her doctorate from the University of Toronto, and she lives in Toronto today. In addition to maintaining her private psychotherapy practice and writing, she conducts seminars based on SIT.

Dindy Yokel