

The Enchanted Life: Unlocking the Magic of the Everyday

Sharon Blackie

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For a small child, the world is filled with mystery and alive with possibility—in other words, it's enchanted. But it's a rare adult who manages to retain this sense of enchantment. At some point, we fall out of love with the world, lose our sense of wonder, and become dissociated, fragmented, stressed, and even ill.

"We imagine we're thriving, but we're not," writes psychologist Sharon Blackie. Nor is the planet. It's easy to blame Western culture, with its roots in rationalist classical philosophy, for this sad state of affairs, but Blackie declares that it's our own doing; our enrollment in the "Western cult of progress and growth" has cost us dearly. She reports that in the wealthiest countries, life satisfaction scores are shockingly low, and rates of mental illness are soaring.

Blackie holds up the lens of enchantment to show us the world as a rich, multifaceted place that invites wholehearted participation in all it offers. Re-enchanted, we'll find ourselves welcoming adventure and creativity into our lives, seeking and thriving in meaningful work, coming alive through the arts and traditional crafts, and connecting with the wisdom of ancient peoples and the ways of wild creatures. We'll rejoice in our physicality, growing beyond neck-up mindfulness into a way of being that she calls "bodyfulness." And we'll once again become comfortable in the company of mystery.

Filled with "acts, antidotes, and alternatives," Sharon Blackie's book is a guide to re-enchanting ourselves and our world. At its heart are practical things, small and large, that we can do to recapture our sense of enchantment and a firm and convincing belief that it's not only worth deeply wanting, but that it's possible for everyone.

KRISTINE MORRIS (September/October 2018)

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