



The Happiness Project
Gretchen Rubin

Reviewed by: Tina McLeod

Gretchen Rubin had an epiphany one rainy afternoon in the unlikeliest of places: a city bus. "The days are long, but the years are short," she realized. "Time is passing, and I'm not focusing enough on the things that really matter." In that moment, she decided to dedicate a year to her happiness project.

In this lively and compelling account of that year, Rubin carves out her place alongside the authors of bestselling memoirs such as *Julie and Julia*, *The Year of Living Biblically*, and *Eat, Pray, Love*. With humor and insight, she chronicles her adventures during the twelve months she spent test-driving the wisdom of the ages, current scientific research, and lessons from popular culture about how to be happier.

Rubin didn't have the option to uproot herself, nor did she really want to; instead she focused on improving her life as it was. Each month she tackled a new set of resolutions: give proofs of love, ask for help, find more fun, keep a gratitude notebook, and forget about results. She immersed herself in principles set forth by all manner of experts, from Epicurus to Thoreau to Oprah to Martin Seligman to the Dalai Lama to see what worked for her—and what didn't.

Her conclusions are sometimes surprising—she finds that money can buy happiness, when spent wisely; that novelty and challenge are powerful sources of happiness; that "treating" yourself can make you feel worse; that venting bad feelings doesn't relieve them; that the very smallest of changes can make the biggest difference—and they range from the practical to the profound.

Written with charm and wit, *The Happiness Project* is illuminating yet entertaining, thought-provoking yet compulsively readable. Gretchen Rubin's passion for her subject jumps off the page, and reading just a few chapters of this book will inspire you to start your own happiness project.

In fact, Rubin's "happiness project" no longer describes just a book or a blog; it's a movement. *Happiness Project* groups, where people meet to discuss their happiness projects, have sprung up across the country—and across the world. Rights have been sold in more than 35 countries. Hundreds of book groups have discussed the book; professors, teachers, psychiatrists, and clergy assign it. The book has spent more than two years on the bestseller lists, and *The Happiness Project* was even an answer on the game-show Jeopardy!

The book is shock full of action plans and perhaps most importantly gives people structure so that they can accomplish the goals that they set for themselves. *The Happiness Project* has been a blockbuster bestseller. It spent more than two years on the *New York Times* bestseller list, including hitting #1, has sold more than 1.5 million copies, and has been published in more than thirty languages. Find and enjoy your Happy!