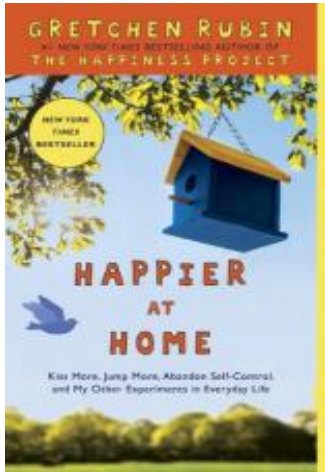


Happier at Home: Kiss More, Jump More, Abandon Self-Control, and My Other Experiments in Everyday Life

by Gretchen Rubin



About the Book

One Sunday afternoon, as she unloaded the dishwasher, Gretchen Rubin felt hit by a wave of homesickness. Homesick --- why? She was standing right in her own kitchen. She felt homesick, she realized, with love for home itself. Of all the elements of a happy life, she thought, my home is the most important. In a flash, she decided to undertake a new happiness project, and this time, to focus on home.

And what did she want from her home? A place that calmed her, and energized her. A place that, by making her feel safe, would free her to take risks. Also, while Rubin wanted to be happier at home, she wanted to appreciate how much happiness was there already.

So, starting in September (the new January), Rubin dedicated a school year --- September through May --- to making her home a place of greater simplicity, comfort, and love.

In THE HAPPINESS PROJECT, she worked out general theories of happiness. Here she goes deeper on factors that matter for home, such as possessions, marriage, time, and parenthood. How can she control the cubicle in her pocket? How might she spotlight her family's treasured possessions? And it really was time to replace that dud toaster.

Each month, Rubin tackles a different theme as she experiments with concrete, manageable resolutions --- and this time, she coaxes her family to try some resolutions, as well.

With her signature blend of memoir, science, philosophy, and experimentation, Rubin's passion for her subject jumps off the page, and reading just a few chapters of this book will inspire readers to find more happiness in their own lives.

Discussion Guide

1. What does the term "home" mean to you? Do you agree with Rubin that it's one of the most important elements to your happiness? Do you have more than one place that you call "home"?
2. Rubin observes that for most people, "outer order contributes to inner calm," and many of her resolutions are aimed at clutter-clearing. Are you affected by clutter --- or not?
3. Rubin describes her struggle to conquer her fear of driving. Have you faced a similar challenge, when you've felt anxious about something that other people seem to take for granted (e.g., speaking in front of a group, flying, riding in a ski-lift)?
4. Rubin writes, "Just because something is fun for someone else doesn't make it fun for me --- and vice versa" and "I can choose what I do, but I can't choose what I like to do." Do you agree? Or do you think you can teach yourself to enjoy something that initially you don't find fun? What do you find fun?
5. Do you have any "shrines" in your home? If you were going to make one, what would you include?
6. Rubin describes the three types of happiness leeches: grouches, jerks, and slackers. Do you have happiness leeches in your life? Have you found ways to insulate yourself from the negative emotions these leeches can spread?
7. If you decided to "suffer for fifteen minutes," what big task might you tackle?
8. HAPPIER AT HOME is packed with quotations. Which quotation resonated most with you?
9. Rubin repeatedly emphasizes that she wants to find more happiness in her everyday life, and much of her happiness project is aimed at very small, ordinary aspects of her daily routine. Do you agree or disagree with this "little things" approach?
10. If a new room magically appeared in your house or apartment, how would you use it? Is there a way you could make your current place reflect that use now?
11. Did reading this book make you want to try any resolutions? Which ones?
12. Rubin's discussion of happiness is rooted in her own experience. She doesn't address the experience of people in different countries, different eras, or different circumstances. Did you find this approach narrow? Or was it helpful to see the theories of happiness tested against the experience of a particular person?

Author Bio

Gretchen Rubin is one of the most thought-provoking and influential writers on the linked subjects of habits, happiness

and human nature. She's the author of many books, including the blockbuster *New York Times* bestsellers BETTER THAN BEFORE and THE HAPPINESS PROJECT. A member of Oprah's SuperSoul 100, Rubin has an enormous following, in print and online; her books have sold more than two million copies worldwide, in more than 35 languages; and on her popular daily blog, she reports on her adventures in pursuit of habits and happiness. She also has a highly ranked, award-winning podcast, "Happier with Gretchen Rubin." Rubin started her career in law, and was clerking for Justice Sandra Day O'Connor when she realized she wanted to be a writer. She lives in New York City with her husband and two daughters.

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