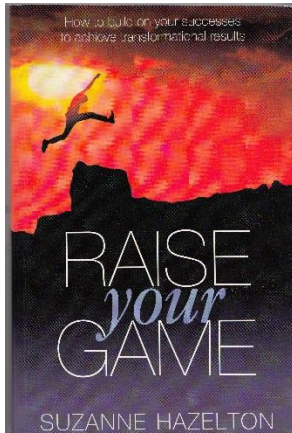


the one page book review



Title: Raise your Game: How to build on your successes to achieve transformational results

Author: Suzanne Hazleton

Price: £14.99

Publisher: Ecademy Press

In my line of work, I tend to come across a lot of self-help books, each with their own advice on how to change your life. What differentiates 'Raise Your Game' is it that it starts from the premise that you are already successful and works to build on the strengths and skills that you already possess. This book isn't designed for people who are 'broken' – it's for people who are good at what they do and want to get better.

The author, Suzanne Hazleton, gets to root causes of behaviour from the get-go. She highlights the tension between choice and commitment; no choice means inflexibility towards change, but too much choice can be an excuse for lack of commitment. From the outset the reader is gently encouraged to examine what might be driving their patterns of behaviour.

What I particularly like about this book is the mix of theory, practical hints and tips and personal examples from the author's own experience. Hazleton has got the balance just right; her advice is grounded in theory but she has also 'been there, done that'. It makes the advice she gives more believable. What is more surprising is the extent and diversity of what she has packed into the 196 pages of this book. Neuro Linguistic Programming and positive psychology are just two of the theoretical underpinnings. These are not always universally accepted concepts (read Barbara Ehrenreich's 'Smile or Die' if you want a critical account of positive psychology), but it is the fact that Hazleton grounds these in practical advice that makes the book work. Some of the hints and tips are very simple (I liked the idea of walking around with £1000 cash in your pocket as a way of changing your mindset about money, or deciding what your dream salary is, then adding a zero to the end of that number as a way of challenging your beliefs!). Other techniques take bit longer and require the reader to heighten his/her own awareness through some fairly probing questions.

The book is very well laid-out. You can dip in and out of it and every chapter is littered with text boxes showing techniques, worked examples or illustrative accounts from the author's own experience.

Hazleton has also managed to avoid the twin traps of other self-help books; that of sounding like her advice will magically transform your life in all its facets and also she manages to avoid making her approach sound like some New Age religion. The reader is always left in charge and rather than pretending that we will be able to do everything she recommends, Hazleton takes a much more pragmatic approach. Her final chapter is about doing what you can (while running the rest of your busy life) and practical advice on how to get the best from the action you take, which also includes some advice on assessing your state of readiness.

If you are not into tree-hugging or knitted yoghurt, but instead want some insights into making changes that work for you, I would thoroughly recommend this book.