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BLISS! Finding Your Joy in Work and Life Again -- GOESTING!

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BOOK REVIEW

BLISS! Finding Your Joy in Work and Life Again -- GOESTING! Opnieuw plezier vinden in je werk én je leven

Els Deboutte

Make Me Fly, 2022, 171 pp, ISBN 9789082513813, €24.95 + tax (Dutch language)

Review by Wendy Van den Bulck

Solution Focused Horse Assisted Coach and Trainer

I looked forward to writing a review about 'GOESTING! Opnieuw plezier vinden in je werk én je leven' (translation: 'BLISS! Finding your joy in work and life again'). The book really triggered me in a good way.

While reading the foreword of the new edition by Els' colleague Rilla Lyssens, I felt how the book drew me in from two perspectives: I realized that I would not only read the book through the reviewer's eyes. Due to the specific nature and the instant recognizability, I could not help but read the book with a hunger for inspiration. The pencil I held while reading to mark points of interest for the review has more than once served to tick tips and interesting tidbits, as well as to complete the many helpful exercises provided in the book.



On the back cover of the book, the book is described as follows: *“GOESTING! is a practical job-and-life crafting workbook that helps you start the working day again with joy. Through numerous practical examples of career coaching and applicable exercises, you learn to shape your happiness at work and in life so that the whole picture is right for you.”*

To me, the book lives up to every letter of that description.

In general, the strength of the book lies mainly in the fact that it is a buffet of experiences, examples, useful models, quotes, exercises, moments of reflection. Els does not present herself as the waiter who promotes the menu of the day, she sincerely starts from a 'buffet approach': a lot is offered – in a clear and well-arranged way – and as a reader you have the freedom to choose what suits you according to your needs. It sounds easy but it isn't: 'GOESTING!' is quite a 'care-fronting' book that makes the reader aware of the fact that it is up to him/her to actually make choices. You have to do it yourself, from a thorough understanding of yourself and your environment, 'finding new joy in your work and in your life'.

The book helps you on your way to gain those insights, and helps you to dare. After reading 'GOESTING!' I have already converted a few sleeping actions of my own like 'I might someday...' into concrete steps that I will take with one hundred percent certainty. I even know how and when.

How does the book achieve this? It starts with the very extensive table of contents. Admittedly, when I flipped through the book for the first time, without actually reading it, I frowned at the five-page table of contents. That frown quickly faded, however, as I actually began to read through that table of contents: it indicated how structured and complete the book was, and it gave me an "eagerness" to dive into it. Now that I've read the book, I find that extensive table of contents a very handy 'quick guide' to be able to find the various aspects that are covered at a glance.

As a solution focused coach, the solution focused approach really appeals to me: in all descriptions, tips, examples and experiences it is a consistent thread throughout the book. It makes it a very constructive book, without avoiding problems: bumps and obstacles are really mentioned, they are just not made heavier than necessary. After all, the basic principle here is 'Everything you pay attention to grows'...

Structure is certainly a key word: many aspects are discussed in the book: self-awareness, exploring the internal and external market, drafting a CV, acing assessment centers, dealing with obstacles, starting your own business, health, ... And yet it is a whole: the interplay between different aspects are highlighted, there is pointing back and forward. I never lost track at any point.

The useful exercises that are provided are clearly described and are each elaborated with an example. As a reader, you can immediately get started with it, without first having to think about how exactly to start.

The book is full of striking examples, both from career coaching and from Els's own life. The latter makes the book very authentic. It is really written from the inside out, without exaggerating. It never gets 'cheesy', all examples are clarifying illustrations of the core message that I already gave above: 'Finding new pleasure in your work and in your life' is something you have to do yourself, from a thorough understanding of yourself and your environment.

Many models and tools are provided, without however pretending to provide an exhaustive overview, and without forcing the reader in a certain direction. What is provided serves as inspiration, for example an overview of places and media where you can find jobs in the external market: a handy overview that inspires you to explore further yourself.

Concreteness is also contained in very practical tips, for example on how to draw up a compelling CV or how to approach an assessment. And Els manages to provide information about it without coming across as pedantic.

I also find the book innovative, without describing earth-shaking new things. Through the 'inspiration buffet' of ideas, experiences, models and exercises, the reader is invited to look with an awake view at what he/she has not yet tried, to take new steps.

The language really appeals to me: I like the wit, the simplicity, the no-nonsense approach, the countless comparisons with everyday things or situations. Some examples:

- *"However, we do crazy things with that body. (...) It's like driving your car with an empty tank. It simply stops."*
- *"The point is that you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs. If you keep doing what you are doing now, there will be no change."*
- *"Job hunting is a lot similar to dating: you want someone to choose you because you're attractive, because of what you have to offer, not because someone else wasn't free or that you seem an ok or good enough choice."*

What I can't put my finger on is the definition of the specific target group. In terms of content, I say with full conviction that this book is a must-read for anyone who is looking for "Re-finding joy in your work and your life". What I like less is the graphical aspect of the book. I hope potential readers don't categorize the book purely on layout (colours, visuals) as 'soft', and/or 'for women only'. I would find that a 'damn shame': the content is rock solid, shows professionalism and encourages people to make effective choices. In short, I think "GOESTING!" a valuable and gutsy book for anyone who wants to be in charge of his or her work and life. It certainly inspired me a lot!

The reviewer



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