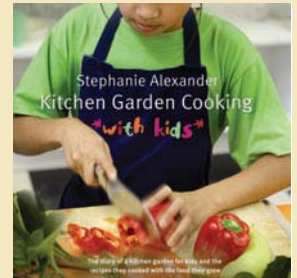


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Book reviews by Elizabeth Holmes

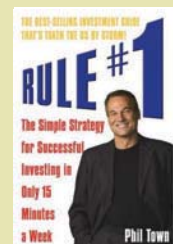
Kitchen Garden Cooking With Kids by Stephanie Alexander with Anna Dollard (Penguin)

I loved this book! Written by one of Australia's leading cooks and the brain behind the kitchen garden at Collingwood College, a project designed to introduce inner-city children to the joys of homemade healthy food, Alexander has put together over 120 recipes that children can cook for themselves with just the minimum of adult supervision. Her emphasis is on health, the use of inexpensive ingredients and her recipes can't fail to inspire even the most stubborn of palates! The book covers the kitchen garden year by year as well as menus and recipes organised by the seasons. It has great guidance for children to read before they get cooking, is blissfully straightforward to follow and not in the slightest bit patronising. With childhood obesity a seemingly intractable problem, a copy of this book should at the very least be in every school and college library, if not every kitchen.



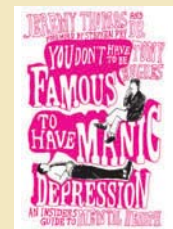
Rule #1: The Simple Strategy for Successful Investing in Only 15 Minutes a Week by Phil Town (Random House Business Books)

So, some pensions are looking dubious and property investment has (at last) revealed itself to be risky, immensely time-consuming and ultimately inefficient (why would anyone tolerate the negative yields suffered by today's BTL brigade?) when compared with other forms of investment. But what else can those with cash do? Phil Town, himself an incredibly successful stock market investor, believes that with just 15 minutes a week anyone can achieve 15 per cent or better annual returns. The book sets out five key numbers that really count when buying stocks and shares, explains how to use the internet to simplify research, shows how to exploit the advantages of being an individual investor and demonstrates how to pay 50p for every pound's worth of investment. It promises much, and if you've woken up to the reality of today's economy, you'll no doubt be glad to hear what this book has to say.



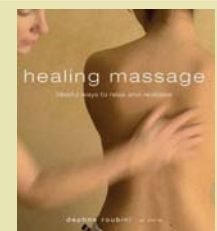
You Don't Have to be Famous to Have Manic Depression: An Insider's Guide to Mental Health by Jeremy Thomas and Dr Tony Hughes (Michael Joseph)

If you managed to catch Stephen Fry's documentary on manic depression last autumn you'll probably be intrigued by this. Written by the associate producers of the programme, Jeremy Thomas (who has manic depression) and Dr Tony Hughes (his GP), this is both a sympathetic and at times eccentric excursion into the realms of mental health. The book has three sections: 'The manic dialogues' (tracing an actual manic depressive's journey), case studies and an A-Z insider's guide to mental health. The line between sanity and mental illness is so fine, and crossed by virtually all at some time or other, but with poignant guides like this to turn to, navigating this landscape need not be so traumatic.



Healing Massage: Blissful Ways to Relax and Revitalise by Daphne Roubini (Cico Books)

Beautifully presented and logically organised, this is a wonderful introduction to the world of massage. It takes a truly holistic approach, blending Eastern and Western styles and techniques and covering massage basics, the spirituality and sensuality of massage, ayurveda, acupressure and massage on the move. There's an authoritativeness about this book, yet its style is gentle, educative and inspiring. Definitely one of the more nurturing massage guides available.



Fast Track to Happiness: From Fed-up to Fabulous in 10 Days by Lynda Field (Ebury)

I'm generally suspicious of anything which claims to bypass the 'downs' in favour of the 'ups', not least because a life without both is monochrome. But there are times when a quick-fix mood boost can be useful and this book is ideal. It balances simple exercises, quizzes and straightforward advice, gently reminding the reader of the power of optimism and the many ways in which we can make practical changes. A book like this is never going to be a replacement for ongoing personal development, but it is a mood-boosting tool for life's mini-blips.



The Prince's Bedtime by Joanne Oppenheim (Barefoot Books)

For the wavelet in your life, this is a real Gem! The cook brings biscuits, the physician brings medicine, the king and queen bring an entire troupe of dancers but still the young prince will not sleep. Can it be that an old woman, drawn to the palace on a blustery night, holds the key to getting him to sleep?

