



COUNTER CULTURE

REVIEWS BY HOLLY CUNNEEN, KATE DUNCAN,
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DVDS



The Lady in the Van (left) delights, *Trumbo* educates and *Hail, Caesar!* (below) tickles.

THE LADY IN THE VAN

DIRECTED BY NICHOLAS HYTNER
STARRING MAGGIE SMITH,
ALEX JENNINGS

TRUMBO

DIRECTED BY JAY ROACH
STARRING BRYAN CRANSTON

HAIL, CAESAR!

DIRECTED BY JOEL & ETHAN COEN
STARRING GEORGE CLOONEY,
JOSH BROLIN



Art and truth share a tangential relationship at best. In film, especially, the way to artistic truth isn't necessarily via the road of historical fact.

English playwright and raconteur Alan Bennett knows this better than most. In *The Lady in the Van*, the true story of an ageing vagrant who parked her camper van in his driveway and stayed there for 15 years, he freely admits that facts are often coloured by memory and perception. And so he presents two Alan Bennetts (both played by Alex Jennings) — “the one who writes”, “the one who lives” — who at one point even bicker about whether something happened exactly how it's depicted. Indeed, it's plain that some details of the woman's life are embroidered for dramatic purposes.

Arty flourishes aside, the movie's heart is Maggie Smith, who inhabits the title character and her filthy thrift-shop wardrobe so convincingly you can almost smell her. She manages to make the irascible old bag likeable.

Art, history and writing come together in *Trumbo*, a biopic about famed screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, one of 10 writers blacklisted in the postwar anti-communist witch-hunts conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee

(HUAC). Ironically, unlike some whose careers were destroyed by HUAC, Trumbo was a self-admitted communist, albeit a rich one. Unable to work openly, he became Hollywood's go-to ghostwriter while others took the kudos until actor-producer Kirk Douglas defied the ban and gave him a screen credit for *Spartacus*.

Bryan Cranston's breezy performance keeps things from becoming too dull and worthy while the screenplay refuses to demonise right-wing crusader John Wayne, back-flipping Edward G Robinson or even vile gossip columnist Hedda Hopper (Helen Mirren). In light of current US politics, it's a story worth retelling.

The absurdities of old Hollywood are close to the hearts of the Coen brothers. In their new screwball comedy, set in 1951, they toy with the mischievous notion that there really is a cabal of communist writers who abduct the dim-witted star (George Clooney) of Capitol Pictures' latest prestige production, *Hail, Caesar!*

Josh Brolin is the studio fixer who deals daily with this and other scandals, while the action frequently pauses for glitzy set pieces: Scarlett Johansson in an Esther Williams swimming spectacular; Channing Tatum and fellow sailor boys doing a Gene Kelly song-and-dance number; and Alden Ehrenreich, both hilarious and touching as a singing cowboy. Like *Trumbo*, it's a treat for both film and history buffs. **CS**



HORSES WHO HEAL

SUE SPENCE, MACMILLAN

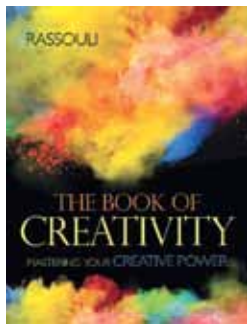
Sue Spence embarks on a road less travelled with *Horses Who Heal*. The pages of this book are alive with her personal tales of how horses have helped her overcome the countless adversities, some big, others small, she has encountered in her life. It's amazing to learn, as we do through Spence, the different ways our emotions and feelings can subtly influence our behaviour and subsequent actions, often in ways people don't consciously notice yet subconsciously react to. The acute sensitivity of horses means they immediately respond to these cues, making such subtleties become glaringly obvious. Spence makes a convincing case for the intuitive nature of horses and their ability to help us heal. **HC**



REINVENTING EMMA

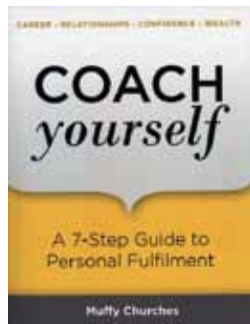
EMMA GEE, SELF-PUBLISHED

This is the confronting story of Emma Gee, a young girl barely in her 20s who suffered a stroke during invasive neurosurgery. As a result, her life, and the lives of her close friends and family, was drastically and permanently altered. As she recounts her journey with no-holds-barred honesty, the bravery Gee displays among a general public who were at times rude or dismissive and at other times well-meaning yet patronising is at once heart wrenching and grounding. What really struck me about *Reinventing Emma* was the way it challenges our preconceived notions of how to help, ensuring that by meaning well we are doing well, and in trying to help we are actually helping. **HC**



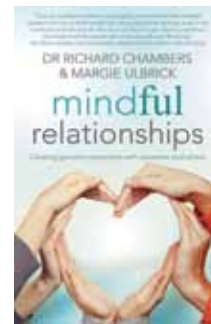
THE BOOK OF CREATIVITY

RASSOULI, BLUE ANGEL PUBLISHING
Creativity is a wonderful by-product of being human. We have access to our inner creative power at every given moment, but sometimes we forget our tools or, as American abstract artist Rassouli likes to put it, our paintbrushes. In *The Book of Creativity*, he shares how creative energy can be stimulated and directed to awaken the inner artist. With Rassouli as our guide, we discover that creativity is not limited in any way or to any form; creativity comes from within and can be channelled into every area of life to help manifest your heart's deepest desires. This broad-ranging book explores the creative power of the muse, intuition, chaos, freedom, sex and silence and is a palette of wild colours and infinite possibilities for you to masterfully create the work of art that is your life. **KD**



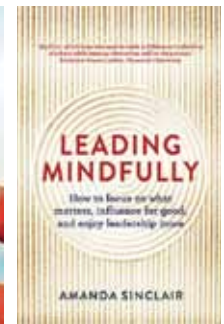
COACH YOURSELF

MUFFY CHURCHES, LOVE & WRITE PUBLISHING
Are you ready for change? Ready to self-observe with a view to positively affecting your relationships, career, lifestyle, confidence and health? Buckle up tight: these are the questions success coach Muffy Churches asks in *Coach Yourself: A 7-Step Guide to Personal Fulfilment*. In this simple and comprehensive guide, she teaches the essential skills and mindset needed for effective self-coaching. We're encouraged to be brave and daring with our lives, with the help of methods such as Churches' "Experience, Assess and Shift" and others. Filled with practical advice, tips, tools, case studies and exercises, *Coach Yourself* is for those looking to improve all aspects of their lives and step into a more confident, bright and fulfilling future. **KD**



MINDFUL RELATIONSHIPS

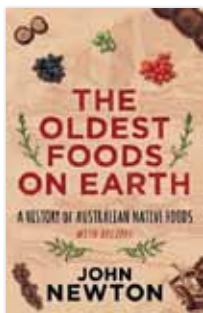
DR RICHARD CHAMBERS & MARGIE ULBRICK, EXISLE



LEADING MINDFULLY

AMANDA SINCLAIR, ALLEN & UNWIN
Mindfulness is officially A Big Deal. And it's big for a reason: being fully present, experiencing what *is* rather than what was or what might be, has been shown to help us become calmer and more compassionate and empathetic. As clinical psychologist Dr Richard Chambers and relationships counsellor Margie Ulbrick know all too well, this enriches all areas of life. In *Mindful Relationships*, they explore the many uses of mindfulness and examine how cultivating mindfulness and self-compassion can help us better connect with our selves and, from this base, go on to build better, more connected relationships with our partners, children, workmates and ultimately society as a whole. Real-life case studies and short exercises make this a very practical guide.

As you may guess from the title, *Leading Mindfully* is also centred on the practice *du jour*, but it was written specifically for those who influence and lead. Leadership teacher and researcher Amanda Sinclair shares 20 mindful practices, such as being mindful in crises and tuning in to the senses, which can help leaders better manage their day-to-day roles. Through sharing her own experiences as well as the latest neuro-scientific and leadership research, Sinclair warmly encourages leaders to focus on who and what is here, now, rather than being absorbed in future goals; to lead in a way that is not merely effective but also life affirming. **DK**



THE OLDEST FOODS ON EARTH

JOHN NEWTON, NEWSOUTH
When was the last time you heard warrigal greens described as superfoods? Why do we Aussies lap up global cuisines but not the flora and fauna that have been nourishing our First Nations people for over 50,000 years? How does the concept of what native foods chef Jean-Paul Bruneteau terms "food racism" affect our diets? In *The Oldest Foods on Earth*, John Newton addresses all this and more, believing that acceptance of native foods will contribute to "culinary reconciliation". His history of Australian bush tucker captivates, and it's made even better by the inclusion of recipes using native ingredients from much-loved chefs plus a list of edible native plants, animals and grains. **DK**



KNOW YOUR FLOW

AMANDA HOWE, AS NATURE INTENDED
"Have a perfect period and live the life you want any time of the month" — how's that for a subtitle? A tad melodramatic perhaps but, as naturopath Amanda Howe explains, the uncomfortable symptoms many women experience during their monthly cycles aren't normal; rather, they show that our hormones are unhappy, our health is sub-optimal and our bodies need nurturing. *Know Your Flow* is all about tuning in to the body and empowering you so you can have a period that's pain-free (and harm-free for loved ones). Howe teaches about hormone behaviour, menstrual phases and the pros and cons of synthetic hormones, and gives practical advice on how to optimise mindset, diet, lifestyle and supplements. Refreshing and immensely valuable. **DK**

WANT A WINTER WELLNESS READ?

We'll be giving away books throughout the month of July to warm up your winter nights. Get involved from July 1 via Facebook (facebook.com/WellBeingMagazine) and Instagram (@wellbeing_mag).