

Review of *Seeing Clearly* by Charlotte Giblin - A memoir

“For all the worriers
the over-thinkers
the dreamers
the artists
and everyone
in between.” (C. Giblin)

Charlotte Giblin’s second book, *Seeing Clearly*, is an open invitation for readers of any ilk to be laugh-out-loud entertained whilst empathetically stirred and sympathetically roused. Narrated by Giblin, the reader is quickly drawn into her early life in England; a quirky yet culturally enriched childhood suffused with the glow of hippy-radical parents, school yard bullying at Giblin’s own fair hands, storms of adolescent anxiety and identity crises, and the burgeoning forces of a strikingly unique artistic talent.

Giblin’s daily journaling provides colourful fodder to illustrate her personal conflicts as she dips and dives into the fantasies revealed by wonderful imaginary worlds and the realities of life growing up as a sensitive over-thinker born to a rather odd family. From self-imposed teenage angst, a deluded sense of self, and an all-consuming desire to fit in with the melancholic status quo of her friends, Giblin incubates a series of dubious resolutions to her increasingly destructive real life issues.

Predominantly of the self-help genre, *Seeing Clearly* draws on Giblin’s innovative idea that all individuals are born carrying a ‘virtual (psychological) backpack’ of inbuilt emotions and reactions. This bag of nature/nurture responses is developed, fed, and intensified according to genetics, early childhood influencers, and community and global events. Giblin likens them to ‘rocks’ - maintaining that the rock we choose to pull out and throw at any provocative situation is determined by our unconscious state, set in prenatal stone.

In Giblin’s case, this state undergoes a perpetual balancing act with her natural Wellspring of happiness. Assailed by insecurity, fears for Planet Earth, self-doubt, disappointment, and rejection, Giblin identifies her repeated patterns of negative reactions, and reveals which rock she prefers to hurl - mirrored via her visual art practice. She then puts in play an effective and easily accessible strategy to counter and pre-empt their harmful effects.

Seeing Clearly takes the reader on a humorous, honest, and slightly gawky rollercoaster ride, devoid of any unbelievable hurrahs.

We hyperventilate alongside Giblin as we experience every pointed rock just as sharply. We cringe as we watch her emotional repartee in a high-stress litany of disappointments, backslides, and fearful introspections. We urge her on as she seeks artistic meaning and works at navigating her love relationship. Slowly (and eye-rollingly painfully) her personal and professional persona changes - almost subliminally - and we sigh in relief as she eventually starbursts as an accomplished, self-composed, contented fine artist, partner, and friend to many.

Helpful, hopeful, relatable, practical, and gloriously endowed with Giblin’s private art collection, *Seeing Clearly* is a gem of a memoir which will not fail to please.

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