

Research shows how reading for pleasure can improve your life

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Research by the University of Liverpool's Centre for Research into Reading, Literature and Society (CRILS) has found that people who read are more likely to be satisfied with their lives.

The study, headed by Dr Josie Billington, explored the emotional, social and [psychological benefits](#) to adults of regular reading for pleasure.

Commissioned by Galaxy chocolate on behalf of Quick Reads, a programme that produces short books by well-known authors for busy people and less confident readers, the study reveals that regular reading has the unique ability to empower us to embark on positive journeys in life, connect us with others and make us feel happier in our own skin. This year, the campaigner for education Malala leads the line-up of authors, shining a light on how reading can empower us all.

Confidence

The research shows that books can provide the fundamental confidence we need to pursue our goals and make big life decisions:

- 27% of the population have been inspired to make a positive change in their life from reading such as look for a new job or end a bad relationship)
- 36% of the population have been inspired to go travelling by a book

The study also revealed that reading has inspired us to make other positive changes in our lives:

- A fifth of the nation has been motivated to take better care of their health by reading a book
- 19% of adults say books have given them the impetus they need to take up a new hobby

Ultimate stress remedy

A third (35%) of the population admits that they would like to read more but are often distracted by using their phone or watching TV. However, highlighting the profound and significant effect that a good book can have on our overall contentment and fulfilment, the research revealed that over a third (38%) of the nation chooses reading as their ultimate stress remedy. What is more, reading is proven to be a greater comfort to us than some more obvious go-to solutions:

- 35% of participants revealed that books are most likely to bring them comfort when they are feeling down, versus 31% who choose a glass of wine and 10% who choose a hot bath
- 41% of adults even find reading to be a better cure for their everyday worries than a night out with friends

The nation may also find it heartening to learn that the research found the lovably flawed Bridget Jones to be the literary character most women could identify with – with 1 in 10 respondents also agreeing that reading comforts them by showing it is okay to be flawed. In fact, the research showed that we prefer to [read](#) about someone who makes mistakes (23%) and is funny (20%) more than we value a character who is brave (19%), loyal (17%), or kind (11%).

Dr Josie Billington, Deputy Director, Centre for Research into Reading at the University of Liverpool, said: "35% of respondents in our research reported that they would like to spend more time reading, but cite using their phones or watching television as frequent distractions: no wonder there is concern that reading is at risk of becoming a forgotten pleasure.

"The positive effects that reading can have on society are widely documented and what has been made abundantly clear by this research is that books can help us to enjoy the little things in life, and be happier in ourselves; a useful and timely reminder for all of us to draw on the many benefits that only reading can deliver."

Top 5 most inspiring literary characters from bestselling novels

Women are inspired by...

1. Atticus Finch (To Kill a Mockingbird)
2. Katniss Everdeen (The Hunger Games series)
3. Harry Potter (Harry Potter series)
4. Bridget Jones (Bridget Jones' Diary series)
5. Anna Fitzgerald (My Sister's Keeper)

Men are inspired by...

1. Atticus Finch (To Kill a Mockingbird)
2. Frodo Baggins (Lord of the Rings series)
3. Harry Potter (Harry Potter series)
4. Robert Langdon (Da Vinci Code / Angels and Demons)
5. Amir (The Kite Runner) / Pi Patel (Life of Pi)

In this, the tenth anniversary year of Quick Reads, founder Baroness Gail Rebuck, DBE comments: "I consider reading to not only be one of life's greatest pleasures but also a source of empowerment and enrichment. Books can change people's lives. I hope that the benefits highlighted in this report will encourage the one in three adults who never pick up a book to consider how their lives – and their children's – could be enhanced with the simple act of reading."

Provided by University of Liverpool

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