



## **Book Recommendation**

### Reasons to Stay Alive by Matt Haig

At **my manifesto** we are passionate about helping individuals and teams to live fulfilling and authentic lives. The work Sue and I are co-creating for our clients is deeply meaningful and purposeful to us. Our ongoing work is shaped by our personal experiences, our commitment to professional learning, and our enjoyment of reading widely.

Matt Haig's book, *Reasons to Stay Alive*, is a book that has recently captured my head and my heart. I purchased it in Hay-On-Wye in England, which is often described as 'the town of books.' The small historical town, with a population of around 2000 people has more than 20 bookshops and if you are ever in the vicinity (near the border of Wales and England), I highly recommend a full day visit. I won't share how many books I purchased on the day, but two of them were written by the warm, honest, and inspiring author Matt Haig.

*Reasons to Stay Alive* is the true story of how Matt Haig experienced and lived with a major depressive disorder, and how he was able to cope, manage, and fight his mental illness to learn to live again. I know many, if not all, readers of this blog have been touched by mental illness – whether personally, or indirectly through family members, friends, or colleagues. For me, Matt's book gave me a far deeper and more personal understanding of what it looks, sounds, and feels like for someone living with depression.

Whilst Matt regularly acknowledges that no two people's mental illness will be the same, I felt through his raw and powerful writing that I was able to empathise at a deeper level cognitively and emotionally.

Within the introduction Matt writes: *"There is no right or wrong way to have depression, or to have a panic attack, or to feel suicidal. These things just are. Misery, like yoga, is not a competitive sport. But I have found over the years that reading about other people who have suffered, survived, and overcome despair I have felt comforted. It has given me hope, I hope this book can do the same."*

The book is dedicated to Matt's partner, Andrea, who helped and supported him over a period of more than twenty years. The book is a collection of approximately 100 two or three page chapters – each providing personal insight into an aspect of life, or mental illness, or mental health.

I found this book to be full of hope and I add my thanks to Matt Haig – along with the millions of other readers of his best-seller books – for his courage in sharing his story and his wisdom.