



Happiness  
Book Club

# Building a happy relationship

This month, Vanessa King of Action for Happiness and author of *10 Keys To Happier Living* recommends *Happy Together: Using The Science Of Positive Psychology To Build Love That Lasts* by Suzann Pileggi Pawelski and James Pawelski

**D**o we get our ideas about what a good relationship takes from fairy tales and Hollywood? We certainly put plenty of energy into finding a partner and the exciting early stages of a relationship but, once we are committed, our efforts tend to reduce and real life often doesn't live up to the promise of 'happily ever after'. The truth is, maintaining and building a strong, loving relationship takes attention and hard work, but that doesn't always make a great movie. That's where this month's book aims to help – whether you are in a romantic relationship right now, looking for one or want to reflect on what has or hasn't worked in the past.

Drawing on both research and philosophy, it starts by exploring what a 'good' relationship really means. Is it where the other person completes us? Or one which motivates and supports us both to grow into better versions of ourselves? The former, the authors posit, is actually self-, not other-focused, which can set relationships up to fail in the long run. Whereas actively seeing and appreciating the good in our partner – and them in us – and nurturing the context of the relationship to bring out the best in and between you, is more likely to lead to relationship satisfaction.

Like becoming and staying physically strong, building long-lasting love takes regular effort and work, so as well as ideas to reflect on, this book offers lots of simple, practical activities to put into practice together.

Next month, we're reading *The Strength Switch: How The New Science Of Strength-Based Parenting Helps Your Child And Your Teen Flourish* by Lea Waters (Scribe, £14.99)

ILLUSTRATION: LESLEY BUCKINGHAM

## Questions to discuss at your book club

- What are three personal qualities in your partner (or someone close) that you appreciate and why? When and how could you tell them? How can you make this something you do regularly?
- In what ways does or could your partner (or someone close) help you feel good about the person you are?
- What is a new activity or experience you and your partner (or someone close) could try together?



*Happy Together: Using The Science Of Positive Psychology To Build Love That Lasts* by Suzann Pileggi Pawelski and James Pawelski (TarcherPerigee, £11.99)