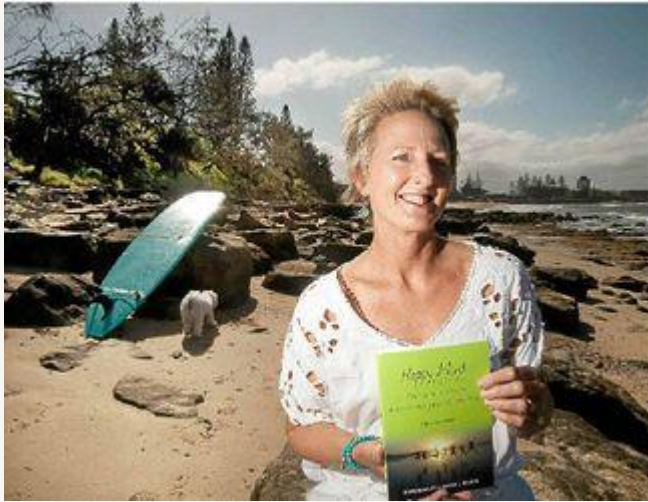


Author's quest for happiness

Janine Hill | 11th February 2012



HAPPY: Tracey Carmichael has released a book about the formula for being happy.

Warren Lynam

TRACEY Carmichael does not hold the keys to happiness but she has worked out where to look. When Mrs Carmichael hit rock bottom 20 years ago, she decided major changes were needed to ensure she did not succumb to the depression that had plagued past generations of her family. The young single mum began monitoring the triggers for her anxiety and depression, and investigated ways to combat the symptoms without anti-depressants.

What she learnt not only turned her life around but has become the basis for a book, Happy Mind Formula, which has been released in time for World Happy Day today.

Mrs Carmichael, 47, of Mooloolaba, said her journey began with admitting to herself that she was not all right and had to change.

"Once I accepted it, that was when I was able to start doing some work on myself and on the way I lived," she said.

She delved into personal development courses and books, changed her diet, cut out alcohol, and began practising yoga and meditation.

A daily combination of yoga, meditation and surfing - if the waves co-operate - now help her keep mentally and emotionally in tune.

"If you're eating well and feeling fit and getting enough sleep, you can pretty much cope with anything," she said.

Mrs Carmichael said depression was escalating at an alarming rate in modern society.

She said modern diets overloaded with sugars and carbohydrates were a contributing factor.

However, too many people looked to external factors for their happiness, she said.

"Happiness to me isn't about things or events, it's just about feeling light each day and feeling that life is easy," she said.

Mrs Carmichael said people had to be prepared to look at themselves, take some responsibility, and commit to making changes to become happier.

"When we change, everything changes," she said.-