



# What Makes Us Tick?: The Ten Desires That Drive Us

*Hugh Mackay*

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'vintage Mackay' *Courier-Mail*

'humanistic and balanced, encouraging and optimistic' *Canberra Times*

**Insightful and engaging, *What Makes Us Tick?* helps to explain what drives us, concerns us and is important to each of us ? from Australia's leading social researcher, Hugh Mackay.**

Dr Mackay has spent a lifetime listening to people talk about their dreams, fears, hopes, disappointments and passions. As well, his bestselling books have documented the impact of the changes that have been radically reshaping our society. In *What Makes Us Tick?* he reflects on some of the things that don't change, identifies ten desires that drive us all, and asks: 'Why do we talk as if we're rational, but act as if we're not?'; 'Why do some people always want to take control?'; 'Why do we seek change, yet resist it?'; 'Why do we want more of the things that have failed to satisfy us?'. His exploration of these and other issues goes to the heart of some of life's big questions.

In this **new edition** Hugh Mackay offers a postscript that delves into the many concerns that were raised by people around the country when he was first promoting *What Makes Us Tick?*. They include: 'Why do people become workaholics?'; 'How can religious people hold such irrational beliefs?'; 'Why are so many people hooked on social media?'; 'What about gender and generational differences?'; 'Shouldn't our desire for security be on the list?', as well as many other issues that resonate with modern Australia. He also offers more thoughts on ? the desire to be taken seriously; the desire for 'my place'; the desire for something to believe in; the desire to connect; the desire to be useful. Raising all these ideas, this is a book that will explain us to ourselves.

Hugh Mackay is a psychologist, social researcher and novelist, and is the author of the the bestselling ADVANCE AUSTRALIA? WHERE?

## What Makes Us Tick?: The Ten Desires That Drive Us Details

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# From Reader Review What Makes Us Tick?: The Ten Desires That Drive Us for online ebook

## Banafsheh Serov says

Truth be told, I am a sucker for studies on social behaviours. Complex and insecure, we have a tendency to think of ourselves as the most important person in the world, with problems and desires that are uniquely our own. In *What Makes Us Tick?* Mackay reveals that as a whole, we share ten 'social' desires that motivate our behavior and are linked to our sense of identity, relationship with people and place in the society. Interestingly, Mackay also offers explanations as to the motivation behind some of the uglier characteristics of our behaviour.

'The darkest shadow cast by each of our desires is the wish to see that same desire frustrated in someone else...Refusing to acknowledge another person, for instance, is usually a shadow cast by our own unfulfilled desire to be taken seriously.'

A longtime social researcher, Mackay's conclusions revolve around studying small groups of people and observing their interaction with one another. Peppered throughout the book are quotes that add personal colour and life to each chapter. There is nothing new or earth shattering revealed here. Most readers will recognise these desires in themselves and in their daily interactions with others. But maybe that's the point: maybe we're not so different after all. The ten desires chronicled connect us and by recognizing and acknowledging them, we can learn to be a little kinder, more accepting and a little less self-possessed. 3.5 stars

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## J.L. Whitaker says

Liked this book, much to chew on and explains much about modern life. Hugh writes with a purpose, providing his ideas and categories, along with examples so you can understand his premises. Although he suggests that you can read the chapters out of order, I read it straight through.

Ever wonder about the differences between a tribe and a herd? It's in there. Ever wonder how you can feel like you need a change, but you also want to not change? It's in there as part of the desire for control. The final desire is Love, of all sorts. It's a nice way to end.

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## Lynley says

I'm a bit wary of 'how to make sense of people in general' when written by old white guys, which is not a reflection on Hugh Mackay but after a history in which we privilege the old white guy demographic.

But *What Makes Us Tick* is having a bit of a moment this week in 2018, 8 years after originally published. Jane Caro wrote a column in the newspaper about how reading the first chapter made her redefine feminism for her. Feminism = The Desire To Be Taken Seriously. I happen to own a second hand copy of this book. It's been sitting in my wardrobe for ages. (I actually bought it when it was first out and gave it as a gift to my mother-in-law, who likes to read. When I asked her what she thought of it she said it was dense. Now I've read it, I don't think it's the slightest bit dense, though I don't read to fall asleep. Which is key here.)

Jane Caro was right -- chapter one is very thought provoking. The rest doesn't really feel new, but perhaps it's unfair to judge something like this when it was written 8 years ago, and the culture is changing so fast.

The phrase 'sufferers of autism' really grated. Was it really okay to use that phrase just eight short years ago?

There's plenty of gender binary stuff in here and dividing people up via era they were born, though I wouldn't say he's hard on women -- if anything, the reverse.

Another word he kept using which really grated -- 'nagging'. Nagging is such a gendered word, yet Mackay seems blind to that (or maybe not -- maybe a female referent was intended). The same week I read this, I read a news headline telling everyone that -- not for the first time -- a man had killed his female partner 'because she wouldn't stop nagging'.

Though it's not for me to say, I suspect this is a book about what white, middle class people want. The desires themselves are probably universal, though the examples probably not.

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### **Ben Scobie says**

A bit boring really. Missing the flair i'm used to from books that try to explain why we are the way we are...

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### **Ms Tlaskal says**

Very interesting to dip into and reflect that all of our impulses are ways of having these ten desires fulfilled. Some of the desires are obvious; such as the desire for love and belonging whilst others are more circumspect; the desire for something to happen. Each of the ten desires would be a great starting point for a short story.

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### **Zahraa says**

Very well written and a pleasure to read - Mackay addressed the desires thoroughly enough considering the relatively short length of the book. I wish there was just a bit more than just a "discussion" of the desires.

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### **Jacqui Allen says**

This book was a fascinating insight into the 10 desires that drive all human beings: to be taken seriously; for 'my place'; for something to believe in; to connect; to be useful; to belong; for more; for control; for something to happen; for love.

What I found most interesting was the fact that often when we are in conflict with ourselves or others this is a sign that some of these desires are being 'frustrated'. And, I could actually relate this to my own experiences.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone looking to understand themselves and others more.

I love Hugh Mackay's work and look forward to reading his insights further.

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### **Ian Kloester says**

Every time I read Hugh's work i find an insightful voice. A voice full of reason, compassion and understanding of what it is to be human. Although drawn from observations that are arguably more anecdotal than empirical, Hugh's list of 'ten desires that make us tick' are as compelling and as convincing as anything I've read on the subject. Especially his assertion that our most important desire of all is...the desire to be taken seriously. Simple and easy to read, Hugh has found another reason for us to take him seriously. (As if he needed another). This will help you understand why we do what we do. And maybe why some seem more or less engaged in life around them than others.

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### **Chris Walker says**

At times I thought this book was a bit too comfortably middle class Australian but in general I found some kernels of wisdom and reassurance here. It is a useful exercise to stop and think about what we all are striving for and I think Hugh Mackay has listened to enough people in his career to be able to make a good stab at the essentials. The fact that he is able to come away from the experience with a feeling of optimism and faith in us despite his assurance that there is little we can control apart from ourselves - and we don't seem to be doing a great job of that - speaks volumes about the man himself.

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### **Robert Lewis says**

Not as scientific as many other Behavioral Economics works, but extremely insightful.

Mackay breaks down the 10 basic desires that drive us as humans, with significant detail in how this interacts with our view of society, the world and interpersonal relationships.

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### **Kaz says**

Some interesting ideas, but read with a grain of salt.

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### **Cyn says**

The book layout lots of facts and knowledge, well written and very easy to read.

'We dressed war up in stirring, inspiring stories of heroism and sacrifice, but there's a nasty story we don't often tell: we go to war because that's one of the things we want more of - why else do we maintain the

world's armies and arsenals? Our desire for war is bound up with patriotic greed, economic greed, religious greed, territorial greed, delusions of grandeur, paranoia, insecurity, cultural identity and values, and with the dark, ignoble side of human nature - the side that wants to crush opponents rather than deal with them.'

'...but in the end, falling in love is a fall, and we have to land somewhere.'

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### **Jeremy Elias says**

Interesting read. It covers a lot of things that most already know. There are some intriguing parts to the book however there is plenty of fluff in between. Interesting concept, reasonable execution.

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### **Paige Turner says**

Human behaviour is fascinating. Social researcher Hugh Mackay has selected 10 desires that motivate us. Each desire is expanded upon in an interesting way with observations and facts and figures presented to support his views. It is an engaging piece of writing... and Mackay cleverly weaves current topics of interest such as Australia's population debate, economic growth, the environment, obesity, the placebo effect, etc. into his writing.

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### **Heather Iveson says**

This is a book that really made me think - it gave me a lens to look through when thinking about my own choices and actions and those of others. I plan to revisit it again in future as it's knowledge well worth keeping active in my mind. Along with other books I'm currently reading or have read in the recent past I'm finding that I'm developing a new way of looking at things and learning from them. This can only be a good thing.

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