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Volume 64 | Issue 2

Article 37

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12-1-2021

## Sagan and Witheys' "What I Do to Get Through: How to Run, Siwm, Cycle, Sew, or Sing Your Way Through Depression" (book review)

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### Recommended Citation

Brady, Jennifer M. (2021) "Sagan and Witheys' "What I Do to Get Through: How to Run, Siwm, Cycle, Sew, or Sing Your Way Through Depression" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 64: Iss. 2, Article 37. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55221/2572-7478.2319>

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# Book Reviews

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Sagan, O., & Withey, J. (Ed.). (2021). *What I do to get through: How to run, swim, cycle, sew, or sing your way through depression*. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 190 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 9781787752986

It is easy to dismiss to-do lists and invitations from friends when one is in a slump but getting out of that slump is not always so easy. Experienced co-editors Olivia Sagan and James Withey have once again come together to compile a book of ideas and tools from individuals who have fought their own mental illness battles and are willing to share their stories in hopes of helping someone else. The book is written for individuals from all walks of life by many who have never written about their mental illness before. James is the founder of the internationally renowned The Recovery Letters project. He is the author of *How to Tell Depression to Piss Off* and co-editor of *The Recovery Letters* with Olivia.

This book is comprised of ideas for everyone: from the individual who enjoys solitary meditation to the performance and group choir singing individuals, those who thrive on exercise and physical endurance, to the artistic individuals who would rather knit or throw pottery, and everyone in between or a combination of all the above. This book is not intended to be read cover to cover, instead “Just try to say, ‘That [activity] didn’t work for me; I’ll try some crocheting/fishing/running/knitting/pottery/hillwalking/origami/yoga/dogwalking/boxing/photography/meditation/horse riding/cycling/decoupage...instead’ (pg. 15). Readers are encouraged to flip through the book until an idea looks interesting, try it out, and if it does not work, keep trying other ideas. As the title outlines, this book is not meant to replace other tools such as doctors or therapy, but is meant to help the reader get through the rough patches. The authors acknowledge in the afterword that there are many activities and resources not addressed in the book that many have found helpful such as religious or spiritual activities, overtly esoteric or difficult to access concepts, and the plethora of animal centered pastimes. There is a small list of additional resources included on the activities that are mentioned if the reader finds one they would like to pursue.

This book is most effective for individual use; however, it could be used in a peer or small group setting as a discussion starter. It would fall under the secular self-help umbrella, containing mild expletives and a reference to ‘Mother Ocean’. It is accessible for the general reader. It is recommended for the public library setting.

## Reviewer

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