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## Reading for well-being

David Fearnley

Patients and carers tell us about themselves using stories. Indeed, psychiatry prides itself on its ability to listen carefully and then to record these stories (or *histories*). What is less well developed is the use of fiction, or imaginary narrative, to improve health and well-being. Nevertheless, we may quietly turn to the greatest writers, expecting them to entertain but also guide us towards feeling better about ourselves. Books are often readily available, portable and inexpensive. Reading can offer a chance for self-discovery and self-help, and is a unique emotional and cognitive experience that should be of major interest to psychiatry.

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