

New Children's Book Encourages Tech-Addicted Parents to Look Up from their Phones

Launched today on the popular crowdfunding platform, Kickstarter, "I Am Important!" by mother of two Michelle Lowbeer, teaches children that they matter... even if their parents are busy or distracted.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—Research shows that addiction to technology has become somewhat of a global epidemic. In Australia, recent studies reveal that Aussies look at their smartphones about 85 times a day. Meanwhile, separate studies show that Americans check their phones 80 times a day and Brits 28 times a day. But it's not just adolescents who can suffer from "digital addiction." Parents can too, as author Michelle Lowbeer lays out in her book, *I Am Important!*

"I check my phone less than 85 times a day, but I do spend a lot of time on the screen," Lowbeer admitted. "Since having written the book, my children sometimes tell me to 'look up!' whenever they want my attention."

Lowbeer's latest book builds on research by AVG Technologies that states that nearly one third of children feel unimportant when their parents are using smartphones. This can lead to children who exhibit more behavioural problems including acting out, crying or other negative behaviors, a separate study suggests.

"It can also result in children concluding that they're not important. And if that thought is left unchallenged, it can turn into a negative belief that can limit a child for the rest of their lives," Lowbeer added. "So I wrote a children's book about it, because I know that children learn through the power of story."

Lowbeer's book, *I Am Important!*, chronicles a little girl named Katie who regularly feels ignored by her parents because they simply can't break their addiction to their digital devices. Over time, Katie, the main character, begins to feel that she's not a priority in her parents' lives. As she begins to feel unimportant, Hairy Thought-Buster - a lovable, humorous and hairy superhero - comes to the rescue and busts her negative thought with his amazing magic popper, reminding her that she is, in fact, important.

"When children read this book, I hope it helps them to understand that they are not alone in their predicament (of not always being attended to), and secondly – I hope that they learn the truth of their being – that they are intrinsically important, no matter what is going on outside of them," explained Lowbeer.

According to the author, the intent of the book is by no means to judge or shame parents who use their tech devices a lot, but to simply help them become aware of the issue, and to communicate with their children that they matter. The book also contains questions that can be used as the basis for a family discussion.

"Even I will be the first to admit to checking my phone more often than necessary. I sometimes feel guilty, though I am quick to let it go," explained Lowbeer. "Ultimately, I want to be a great parent, which means modelling good behavior and connecting with my kids. Guilt doesn't serve anyone, though. It is as important for us as parents to be kind to ourselves as it is for us to connect with our kids."

Lowbeer was inspired to write the book after listening to the audio parenting program, *Parenting the Lefkoe Way*, in which she learned that children are always concluding things about themselves based on their interactions with their parents.

"I wondered whether perhaps there might be a whole generation of children growing up with the belief of 'I'm not important'," Lowbeer said, "as we are now living in an age where digital addiction is the norm."

Parenting educator Shelly Lefkoe (founder of *Parenting the Lefkoe Way*) concurred. "I love this book," Lefkoe stated. "It lets parents know that their actions have consequences in a respectful and loving way. This book is a must read with your child."

To fund the first production run of *I Am Important!*, Lowbeer has launched a Kickstarter campaign with the goal of raising \$6,000 AUD on the popular crowdfunding platform. During the Kickstarter campaign - which runs from August 14, 2019 through September 12, 2019 - a paperback copy of the book will be available for pre-order at a cost of \$15 AUD. For more information and to order at early-bird discounts during crowdfunding, visit the

Hairy Thought-Buster Web Page at: <http://www.hairythoughtbuster.com>

Lowbeer is available for media interviews, author talks and thought-busting workshops for children in Sydney's north shore or by Skype. Contact michelle@hairythoughtbuster.com for further details.

Note: Hairy Thought-Buster was busy busting children's negative thoughts in Greenland and, unfortunately, was not available for comment.

ABOUT MICHELLE LOWBEER:

Michelle Lowbeer is a children's book author, storyteller and mindset coach for children. She is the creator of Hairy Thought-Buster and his helpers The Fluffies. (Each Fluffy represents a different self-esteem truth about every child on the planet!) Together they are on a mission to empower children with positive self-esteem beliefs on the inside, no matter what is happening on the outside.

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FURTHER RESOURCES:

Weekend Sunrise interview:

<https://twitter.com/sunriseon7/status/1160363080108265478?fbclid=IwAR3Kr5fIHTHdj75hCsNG2u2qeAAz-37j1JadlZMSK5mQOj8wv8xd63aA7aI>

Media Kit: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_C5RiAgjQKFNzIQLVhiNEIQU3c

Kickstarter live link:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/michellelowbeer/i-am-important-book-with-superhero-hairy-thought-buster-0>

Digital copy of I Am Important! (not for publication): <https://hairythoughtbuster.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/I-Am-Important-full-ebook.pdf>

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