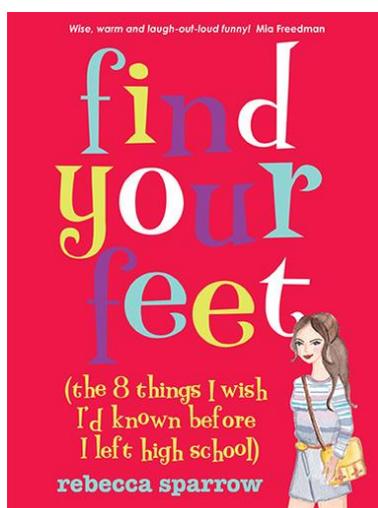


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FIND YOUR FEET

(the 8 things I wish I'd known
before I left high school)

Rebecca Sparrow



Teachers' Notes

Written by a practising Secondary Teacher in context with the
Australian Curriculum (English)

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SYNOPSIS

Find your feet (the 8 things I wish I'd known before I left high school) follows on from the highly successful *Find your tribe (and 9 other things I wish I'd known in high school)*. This is an easy guide for teens looking for guidance as they face the world beyond school. It covers a broad range of topics in an entertaining but informative manner.

Rebecca Sparrow's use of humour and her ability to speak *to* teens, rather than *at* them, enables her to communicate at their level and in their voice, while never becoming patronising or preachy.

The book covers many key concerns of newly graduated school students providing helpful and sensible advice and suggestions. The inclusion of personal anecdotes from both the author and other well-known people helps to personalise the book and prove to students that they are not alone and that even successful people have faced many of the same concerns.

Many of the topics covered would be well suited to Pastoral Care or Human Rights Education (HRE) classes, while the topic on health would support the content of Health and Physical Education (HPE) and provide a springboard for class discussion and research into relevant topics.

THEMES

Getting a fresh start:

- Chapter 1 'Who you are in school is *not* who you are for the rest of your life'

Taking responsibility:

- Chapter 2 'Real life has real consequences'

Goal setting:

- Chapter 3 'Follow your dream. Just make sure you choose the right one'

Being yourself:

- Chapter 4 'There is power in being authentic'

Getting ahead:

- Chapter 5 'Do work experience (and while you're there make the coffee)'

Standing up for yourself:

- Chapter 6 'You teach people how to treat you'

Staying healthy:

- Chapter 7 'Look after your body the way you'd look after your mobile phone'

Broadening your horizons:

- Chapter 8 'Read. Travel. Volunteer'

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STUDY NOTES

- What things happened to you at school that embarrassed you or that you wish you (or others) could forget? Write them down on a piece of paper. Hold a 'letting go' ceremony in which you release your paper.
- What stereotyped groups exist in your school? Write a feature article for a teen magazine, blog or website, or the school magazine about the dangers of stereotyping teens.
- How can popularity be seen as a negative? Research a popular or famous young person and consider how his or her popularity has negatively impacted their life. What advice might you offer this person?
- Consider what types of crimes school leavers are likely to engage in. Research the differences in our legal system for crimes committed by minors (those under 17) and those committed by adults (those above 17). In small groups, discuss the best way to inform students of the possible consequences and present this idea to the class.
- What do you need to do in order to vote responsibly? Divide the class into small groups and assign each one with a political party to research and represent. Hold a panel forum similar to ABC's Q&A to debate 1–2 key themes impacting on young adults from the different party perspectives.
- Why is it important for all Australians to vote? What are the benefits of living in a country that allows popular voting? Research a country that does not have democratic elections. What difficulties do the people in these countries face?
- What are your goals? Write down one long-term goal, three medium-term goals and five short-term goals. Note the time frame in which you would like to achieve these goals. Share these goals with another person in the class.
- Consider what you need to do in order to achieve your goals and write this next to each goal in order to make it a reality. Keep a blog or a journal to record your journey towards these goals, possibly using mindtools.com.
- Discover your strengths by taking a personality test such as the Myers Briggs test or a learning styles test (there are many different types available online). Use these findings in combination with one of the themes from the book to complete an activity. As a class, discuss

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students' different responses and approaches and what we can learn from these.

- Choose a character from a novel or film who would be regarded as being 'perfect'. What do you think about this person? How do others react to this person? Is his or her life as wonderful as you might expect?
- Think of a time when you experienced failure and write a personal reflection or a blog about it. Turn this into a positive and list all the things you learnt from this experience.
- Think about what sort of work you might like to do and organise some form of work experience at a relevant workplace (or voluntary assistance). Write a letter of introduction and a resume highlighting your strengths in relation to the organisation. Hold mock job interviews in pairs.
- Round robin. Divide the class into small groups and give each group an issue to discuss, along with a piece of butcher's paper. Ask each group to write down their response to the issue before passing both items to the next group. When all issues have been circulated, bring the class together for a more in-depth discussion.
- Choose someone in your community that you admire and believe is a role model for young people. What is it about this person that you find inspirational? Prepare a script and film a short documentary on this person (e.g. similar to ABC's *Australian Story*).
- Find some images of young women in magazines. Consider what messages these images might be sending to people and the effects they may have. Watch the DOVE Beauty campaign on YouTube and discuss what message it is sending. Prepare a presentation that could help younger students better understand and be resilient to the messages being portrayed. Discuss how this relates to "teaching others how to treat you".
- Promote a 'healthy' week at your school and decide on fun and interesting ways to encourage students to take part while also learning about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- As a group, brainstorm and Mind Map some healthy and constructive ways of dealing with stress. Examples of stressful situations could be Grade 12 final exams, applying to university or TAFE, and job interviews.

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- Ask your parents or some recent school leavers what they wish they had known before they left school. Write an additional chapter for the book based on their responses.
- Research some local charities. Who does the author help out? What can you do to help out in your local community?
- The book says that knowing what is going on in the world around you, and being able to talk about it, is important. Research something in the news and present your findings to the group, pretending that you are catching up with them in the break room at work.
- Organise a class read-a-thon with set reading goals. This could be a 'travel book' themed, along the lines of the final chapter, 'Read. Travel. Volunteer.'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Over the past 20 years Rebecca Sparrow has earned a living selling touch lamps, working as a nanny, a travel writer, a television publicist, a marketing executive, a magazine editor, a television scriptwriter, a newspaper columnist and a secret shopper (once). In her spare time she is an ambassador of The Pyjama Foundation which sends 'reading angels' into the homes of foster children and GIVIT which matches donated items to those people most in need.

Rebecca's first novel, *The Girl Most Likely*, was published in 2003 and is currently in development to be turned into a feature film. Her second novel, *The Year Nick McGowan Came to Stay*, was published in 2006 and debuted as a stage play at La Boite Theatre in Brisbane in 2007. Her third novel, *Joel & Cat Set the Story Straight*, was co-written with Nick Earls and published in 2007. Her fourth book, *Find Your Tribe (and 9 other things I wish I'd known in high school)*, was released in March 2010.

Rebecca currently writes a weekly column for popular website mamamia.com.au. She lives in Brisbane with her family.