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The mid-20s through the mid-30s can be a time of difficult transition: the security blanket of college and parents is gone, and it's suddenly time to make far-reaching decisions about career, investments, even adult identity. When author Christine Hassler experienced such a quarter-life crisis, she found that she was not alone. In fact, an entire generation of young women is questioning their choices, unsure if what they've been striving for is what they really want. They're eager to set a new course for their lives, even if that means giving up what they have.

Hassler herself left a fast-moving career that wasn't right for her and instead took the risk of starting her own business. Now, based on her own experience and interviews with hundreds of women, she shares heartfelt stories on issues from career to parents to boyfriends to babies. Yet she provides practical exercises, too, to enable the woman of today to chart a new direction for her own life.

20-Something, 20-Everything: A Quarter-Life Woman's Guide to Balance and Direction Details

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Leah says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading 20 Something Manifesto. I am 23 years old and unhappy with the way my life has turned out so far. This book helped me by letting me know I am not alone. Christine Hassler shares her own experiences as well as stories from several other 20-somethings like me who are having trouble adjusting to the real world. She gives advice on dealing with friends, family, love, and career aspirations. I spend a lot of my time thinking about the future without being sure how to make that future happen, but she helps me feel as though I can actually accomplish the goals I have laid out for myself. Hassler lays out several exercises in the book which help you to figure out your thoughts in a clear way, set up legitimate plans to get your life on track, and gives you instruction on ways to get over those bumps in the road. I felt so lost and alone before reading this book, and now I see that I accomplish anything and everything I put my mind to, as long as I am willing to put in the work. If you are a lost 20-something like I was, whose life is just not turning out how you planned, then this book is for you.

Uma C says

I'm someone who spends a lot of time thinking about the future and what I want to do. I worry about whether I'm going to please my parents and if I will obtain the things that society says we should have. As I began to realize that there must be others going through the same thing, I came across the term 'quarter-life crisis' and looked into finding some books that could help me clarify my life as a 20-something. What I found was Hassler's manifesto and I zoomed right through it. The book features stories and quotes from hundreds of 20-somethings that are easy to read, relevant and easy to relate to. Hassler also includes concrete tips and advice on how to approach life's conundrums and how to work through this stage. She discusses our expectations of life and why we have them, and encourages us to look within us and figure out what we really want and how we really are going to get there. She includes a few exercises, asks some important questions, and focuses on work, love, money, etc. I recommend this book to anyone in their 20s who is looking for a way to focus their goals and find the first steps to fulfill their life plans.

Hoan says

At first I thought it would be another book to motivate and inspire but then as I got more into it, towards the middle and end, it was just more assuring that life is about acceptance and if you really want change to come about - you are the only one who will make that happen. It think the author hit the 20's decade head on - she was able to tell me exactly what I am going through and what I feel, and it's really made me feel better about my situation. I mean I was pretty happy with my life but not I feel like I can accept it more and not feel so antsy to keep trying to get to the top fast. I think I love the notion of being successful being applied to all areas of your life, not just your career, because who will really be a hit success right out of college except for the very exceptional few. So now I'm feel successful in my relationships with friends, family and with love. I feel fulfilled that I've done so much already and have done things that I have sought out to do like set up some websites, and promoted my art. There are so many things we can be grateful for and I think Hassler surely spells it out for us.

I definitely recommend this to all 20 Somethings!! Even guys - cuz they go through the same crap and have the same thoughts (just maybe wouldn't admit to it).

Rachel Rueckert says

I did not love this book, but it helped me in a round-about way by helping me realize that no one and nothing—and especially not a book—is going to be a comprehensive prescription of where I am and how I should live my life. Interestingly enough, I ended up getting out of the book the very message it intended despite my mini rebellion: realize learning is a continuum, and give myself freedom and forgiveness as I figure it out.

Despite the sometimes over-the-top, corny commentary, here were a few lines that resonated with me: “Somehow this decade has gotten the reputation for being a time when you are supposed to figure out your entire life while having the time of your life” (xvi).

“You are probably craving expert advice from someone. Like some kind of sign from the heavens that will tell you what to do or reassure you that what you are doing is “right”” (xvii).

“Why these checklists exist: expectations and uncertainty. Checklists and plans help us feel more secure and in control” (4).

“Anxiety (anticipation about something yet to happen) lives in the future; depression (sadness over things you did or didn't do) signs a lease in the past. That is why, if you are a checklister, you probably suffer from a mixed bag of anxiety and depression” (5).

“Be proud of your accomplishments...self-discovery is a curriculum for life, not just college..Don't worry if college does not answer the “who I am and what I want to be”; it probably won't” (6).

“Sometimes you just have to decide to be content with your decision, otherwise you will continue to be overwhelmed by possibilities and torn between the reality of what you have and the fantasy in your head that you think would be better” (9).

“If we really understand now that our entire life is about learning, we can free ourselves from having to be “right”” (11).

“This is your life. It's not a dress rehearsal, and you don't get a twenty-something do-over. If you want to be happier, more focused, more decisive—you have that choice...As Victor Frankl says...”The last of one's freedom is to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance””(34).

“Distinguish a goal from an expectation...the definition of a goal involves action...an expectation is more of an emotion...Goals refer to things we can do, while expectations refer to what we desire or hope for” (35).

“If you consistently focus on what you don't have or what you think can't be done, you are impairing your ability to arrive at what you want” (42).

“Twenty-somethings spend less time in the present than an atheist spends at church...Live in the moment, focus on your own short-term goals, and trust that life does have a way of working itself out” (44).

“I'm learning the art of saying no, though I still feel like I'm letting people down” (45).

"I got used to living life in the four-month sections of semesters—now everything feels so long term and overwhelming" (50).

"I've stopped buying into the belief that work defines who I am as a person—which is emotionally freeing!" (51).

"When you are feeling sorry for yourself, commit to finding some way to be of service to others" (52).

"My life is not a race" (54).

"We are not the roles we play in life or who other people want us to be. We are not our jobs, our relationships, our bodies, our accomplishments, or our bank accounts" (59).

"Without the well-defined "good student" identity and structure of college, I was lost. I knew who I was in the land of academia, but I struggled to know who I was as an adult out on my own" (63-64).

"We pursue compliments like candy" (65).

"I feel like every decision I make...has a domino effect and impacts my life. I wish someone would make all of these decisions for me because I don't have a clue as to what I am doing" (75).

"Money enables me to pursue my personal goals and does not serve to define me or indicate my future success" (95).

"Life doesn't wait for self-enlightenment: it gives us responsibilities and forces us to make decisions whether we're ready or not. We have to move forward—figuring out what we want and how to get it even as we're still discovering who we are" (106).

"I was extremely motivated as a student, but when it came to planning for my future, I was paralyzed" (111).

"Your attention is to the urgent, not necessarily the important" (121).

"Enjoy and appreciate yourself, your life, and the people in it. Admire the view from where you are" (154).

"Or perhaps the Cheesecake Factory Theory applies here as we try to be "everything on the menu" to everyone. If we're trying too hard to please others, what kind of friend are we to ourselves?" (167).

"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself" (316).

Chelsea Marie says

I couldn't even get past the intro. This book was written for the woman who wants the "Sex in the City" kind of lifestyle, which I certainly do not.

Stephany says

It took me 4 months but I finally finished this book! WOO!

Highly recommend for anyone facing a quarterlife crisis, or just anyone who wants to dig deep into what they really want out of this life. The journaling portions are long, but they are so vital to getting everything out of this book. I didn't do them all, but I did the majority of them and I can see myself rereading through certain chapters again and again.

I learned a LOT throughout the process of reading this book and it was useful in so many ways... it's the kind of book you want to reread once you're finished to make sure you didn't miss anything important!

Some favorite quotes:

"We think we must decide in our twenties who we want to be for the rest of our lives, but we don't - our goals can and do change."

"It is often easier to fall into the expectation cycle than to let go and be okay with what happens in our lives."

"Nobody has it all. That is a big thing that my twenties finally drilled into my head. I think having it all is a very American concept, and it is worthless. It doesn't account for the texture of daily life, or the fact that luck and chance play a huge role in 'success', or those incredibly important lessons that come from not getting what you want."

"In life you will discover that what you want may not be what you need, and that what you need is not always what you want. Life is a journey and the less we try to control it, the happier we will be."

Colleenish says

I loved this book when I could stomach the gimmicky, sticky motivational seminar writing. Also there was a lot of self-actualization theories that I don't necessarily believe in in light of my personal and religious beliefs. But it still was very helpful and encouraging to hear, "You're not alone in feeling stuck," "Keep going," "It's okay to admit that things suck." I actually stopped reading and made a list of things I'm discouraged about or feel that I did badly, and then made a list of good ways that I have responded, and good ways that I want to respond.

If you have recently graduated and feel disappointed or stuck, this is a good read.

Lisamarie Landreth says

20-Something 20-Everything was the first book of its kind addressing the Odyssey Years we twenty-somethings find ourselves traversing. I had high hopes for this book and bought "The Twenty Something Manifesto" with it. As a weekly columnist for the Huffington Post, I expected Christine to deliver on her promise to clarify the quarter-life crisis and "provide insights to balance and direction." This book was fluff mixed with meaningless "exercises" with a penchant for stating the obvious. It took me five months to crawl through this book in the hopes of a nugget of wisdom to redeem the time I spent trying to get through it. No nuggets were uncovered, only disappointment and the feeling that I was bamboozled by a book that promised much and delivered little.

