



How to Be Everything: A Guide for Those Who (Still) Don't Know What They Want to Be When They Grow Up

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What do you want to be when you grow up? It's a familiar question we're all asked as kids. While seemingly harmless, the question has unintended consequences. It can make you feel like you need to choose one job, one passion, one thing to be about. Guess what? You don't.

Having a lot of different interests, projects and curiosities doesn't make you a "jack-of-all-trades, master of none." Your endless curiosity doesn't mean you are broken or flaky. What you are is a *multipotentialite*: someone with many interests and creative pursuits. And that is actually your biggest strength.

How to Be Everything helps you channel your diverse passions and skills to work for you. Based on her popular TED talk, "Why some of us don't have one true calling", Emilie Wapnick flips the script on conventional career advice. Instead of suggesting that you specialize, choose a niche or accumulate 10,000 hours of practice in a single area, Wapnick provides a practical framework for building a sustainable life around ALL of your passions.

You'll discover:

- Why your multipotentiality is your biggest strength, especially in today's uncertain job market.
- How to make a living and structure your work if you have many skills and interests.
- How to focus on multiple projects and make progress on all of them.
- How to handle common insecurities such as the fear of not being the best, the guilt associated with losing interest in something you used to love and the challenge of explaining "what you do" to others.

Not fitting neatly into a box can be a beautiful thing. *How to Be Everything* teaches you how to design a life, at any age and stage of your career, that allows you to be fully you, and find the kind of work you'll love.

How to Be Everything: A Guide for Those Who (Still) Don't Know What They Want to Be When They Grow Up Details

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From Reader Review How to Be Everything: A Guide for Those Who (Still) Don't Know What They Want to Be When They Grow Up for online ebook

Bianca Bancroft says

Advanced Reader Copy - I'm a grown up. There I've said it! You happy, world? I'm a grown up, but I really don't want to be one & really don't know how to be one. I feel like just yesterday I was roaming the halls of my elementary school with my safety patrol sash and harry potter wand tucked in my back pocket. You know what, maybe I did do that yesterday... No no no. Yesterday I did my taxes because I'm a grown up. *insert barf sound* I love this book because it teaches you that adulthood can be fun! You don't have to have a job that you hate. You don't have to stay on one career track. And you don't have to feel guilty when you start a new hobby or project and end up hating it!

This book helps you figure out the answer to the dreaded question "what do you want to be when you grow up." *Spoiler alert* The answer can just be as simple as idk! BUT Wapnick goes deeper than that and gives real advice. She's also incredibly skilled at being inclusive and not making me feel like a loser. Oh, and she includes activities for you to take what she's saying and apply it to your own life.

Claire Brear says

Really helpful language for thinking and talking differently about specialisation vs generalisation. I especially enjoyed the practical advice about how to introduce yourself as a multi-potentialite in response to the dreaded 'So, what do you do?' question, and tips on how to talk about your work/projects. I also think this would be great reading and subject matter for discussion in schools. A very encouraging read all round!

Elisabeth Bridges says

It started out so promising... but honestly, the most enlightening part of the book was simply the word "Multipotentialite." The rest of it was... stuff I've basically already worked out for myself, without knowing it was a "thing."

Still, I'm grateful to know I'm not the only person in the world who can't fit themselves into a singular passion career.

José Antonio Lopez says

Emilie Wapnick rose to fame after her TED talk "Why some of us don't have one true calling" that has almost 4M views. Emilie has devoted to help people who are "multipotentialites" or someone with many interests and creative pursuits. This book is an extension of her talk giving anecdotal support to what multipotentialites are, and what they do to be more effective in spite of their multiple interests and lack of consistency.

The book is a good intro for multipotentialites, a feel good, "Welcome to the tribe" (as the title of one of the chapters) book. It provides some tools to assess if one is indeed a multipotentialite and its kind. Finally it offers some tools to improve effectiveness. However the book is somehow soft, in a way it is expected since the core idea of multipotentialites is that they don't follow social norms on how to live one's lives. Nonetheless, that softness seems like a rationalization, an excuse to fail on delivering. Like it or not multipotentialites live in the real world where people expect results on time, on cost and on quality, no excuses.

Hope Wapnick's work gets the attention in academic circles to become a research subject and thus future books and papers. Meanwhile you can find more about Wapnick and multipotentialites in her site Puttylike.com

Chris Wolak says

A couple years ago I stumbled across Emilie Wapnick's TED talk -- "Why some of us don't have one true calling" -- and I felt like I'd found a soul mate. In that presentation, Wapnick talks about how she had a life-long pattern of getting very deep into a subject and then eventually losing interest. Repeatedly. She thought there was something wrong with her.

I've gone through the same struggle in my life and felt as if there was something wrong with me. I bounced from the Marines to hospital work to college/graduate school, teaching, retail management, marketing, library work, massage therapy, et. al. Luckily for me, I had a father who was interested in a variety of things who modeled taking the time to pursue those interests, so I didn't feel like a complete alien. I can still hear my dad and his sister, one of my favorite aunts, laughing about how they hadn't figured out what they wanted to be when they grew up. They were in their 40s then. However, both my dad and my aunt were gainfully employed and I, back then, sometimes worried about my ability to support myself.

In 2007 I took Tom Rath's Strength Finder test and my top strength was learning, which, according to his definition, means I'm more interested in the process of learning than in outcomes. No surprise there. That helped me feel better about my jumping around on the career stage. I've also come to see how skills gained at one job or area of interest have helped me in subsequent jobs or interests.

However, it was seeing Wapnick's TED Talk that helped me let go of my worries and actually embrace the fact that I don't have one true calling when it comes to career. All that I've done thus far has been awesome-- it's fed my soul (well, not everything did that), advanced my knowledge and skills, and helped me make great connections with people. She gave me the freedom to let go of some of the shame I'd been carrying around about not completing programs, staying in jobs for way too long, and interests that I once proclaimed were IT that fizzled out.

I jumped at the chance to review Wapnick's new book, *How to Be Everything: A Guide For Those Who (Still) Don't Know What They Want To Be When They Grow Up*, for TLC Book Tours and now available from HarperOne.

The book has three parts:

Part I: Everything? Welcome to the Tribe. This section is all about giving consolation and encouragement to

world-weary multipotentialites, Emilie's word for those who have multiple interests and creative pursuits. There's nothing wrong with you! She goes over the strengths of being a multipotentialite and offers advice on how to live a happy life balancing money, meaning, and variety.

Part II: The Four Multipotentialite Work Models. Different Strokes for Different Folks. Wapnick has found that there are four major ways multipotentialites work and offers strategies on how to figure out what your style is and how to best work it/them. Fascinating perspectives that will give you insight into yourself and how you might work most effectively.

Part III: Common Multipotentialite Stumbling Blocks. Slaying Your Dragons. This section was the most interesting to me because it's where I am now. I'm working on my personal productivity system, embracing all the things that make me unique, and gaining confidence in my choices. Wapnick offers advice on how to talk with people in various contexts about your multipotentialite life. This section is helpful for me and I think it would be INCREDIBLY helpful for younger folks just starting out on their journey or those who are embracing their various passions for the first time, no matter what their age.

Wapnick's ideas as presented in her TED Talk were a big part of my decision last year to jump into entrepreneurship with my wife Laura. She's a personal coach and we're taking her in-person workshops and transitioning them into online classes. My love of learning, teaching experience, customer service skills, and marketing background, among other things, are all coming into play. It's been a fun and challenging year and Wapnick's book is full of hope and helpful tips for the work I'm doing with our business and my own projects. All of Wapnick's advice is geared toward helping multipotentialites enjoy the work they're doing and the life they're living. This is a book I'll read again and dip into here and there for reminders.

Graduation season is here and this would be a great gift for the high school or college graduate in your life. I wish I'd had a book like this when I was in my 20s. It would've saved me from a lot of worry, self-flagellation, and sticking around in programs/jobs for too long. The way our business world is changing--relying on and rewarding people who are adaptable and well-versed in a variety of fields--this could be a success manual for those who aren't satisfied being specialists in one field.

This review originally posted on my blog at <http://www.wildmoobooks.com/2017/05/w...>

Kelly says

This one isn't necessarily life-changing for me, since this is sort of how I've decided to craft my career, but I can see a book like this being huge for a younger person who is tired of being asked "what do you want to do?" or "what do you want to major in?" I used to choke up at that question and sometimes answer in a really smartass way. I'd say I want to be nothing or, for a long time, I said I'd like to hold the stop sign in construction zones. As snarky as it sounds, the point of both those answers was really simple: stop asking me to choose something and allow me to cultivate a career my way, how I need to, and in a way that offers ample opportunity to explore.

I did dig looking at four ways to consider a career when you have so many interests and skills. I thought that I saw myself as one way but as I dug into the descriptions, I saw how I've been many of these ways and that priorities changing is a normal progression in terms of career growth.

Most career books are finding the how. This one is about the why, and I really appreciate it. Wapnick is a

queer woman, too, and I can't help but see that her own personal intersections influence her thinking on this topic.

A great one to pair with *The Big Life: Embrace the Mess, Work Your Side Hustle, Find a Monumental Relationship, and Become the BADASS BABE You Were Meant to Be* and in a slightly less obvious way, *Radical Candor: Be a Kickass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity*.

Melanie Young says

I discovered Emilie when I watched her TED talk a couple of years ago. I think this was my first introduction to the fact that there are people like me who are not wired to specialize in one subject, and to the **why**. It is not that we are "flighty" or any of those other adjectives. We are multipotentialites, or 'scanners'. We are interested in many different subjects, often all at the same time. This knowledge, and the ideas and discussions on Emilie's website Puttylike.com, have been a source of insight and a force for change for me personally.

Emilie knows her subject very well. If you have struggled with how to deal with the pressures (internal or external) of thinking that you **have to** specialize and that this is the only way to be successful, I think you will find this book very enlightening and very useful.

Katie Whitt says

I think I might have ugly cried while reading this book because it was so nice to feel like I wasn't a weirdo for not having a career path at 30. I found this book to be genuinely helpful, as well as easy to use and engaging. I might want to actually hug Emilie Wapnick and I am not a physical contact person. My copy, which thank goodness I had the foresight to buy, is bristling like a hedgehog with all the sticky notes I stuck onto passages that resonated with me. I will definitely be referring to this book in the future, and if you think this applies to you at all, please buy it and read it!

L. says

Thank goodness for this book which provides the "simple" but often-overlooked answer to "What do you want to be when you grow up" -- MORE THAN ONE THING! And, you can do those more than one things at the same time! What a relief. This book was perfect for middle-aged me who is struggling with the idea that I wasn't completely satisfied in my job, yet no other job called to me. I saw a career counselor who showed me appealing options, but I knew those weren't the right fit either. I toyed with the idea of gravitating back toward sexuality education, but knew I didn't want to completely throw myself into that. Huzzah! Enter *How to be Everything* and I learn it's OK to keep my job (part time, as it is) AND also pursue sex ed stuff.

You may be thinking that this is not an exciting revelation, but it sort of is for me. The idea of choosing multiple careers and holding them simultaneously goes against how I was raised and goes against my prior understanding of how careers work. Thinking about having two careers, and having that be the answer to my professional identity, provides me with peace. I no longer feel I should choose or find my "one true calling." I am never going to have one true calling, and that's OK.

Please read this book if you aren't sure what you want to be when you "grow up." Read it if you can't decide which fork in the road to take. You are not alone in your confusion and insecurities. It is OK to be many things. Humans are complicated. Embrace all of you.

Alyson Allman says

While I don't have a strict opinion on this book in regards to how it applies to me, I think it would be a great gift for someone who may be a little lost after college (or before) or even farther into their lives....the trick will just be giving it to them without hurting their feelings.

So many of my generation go to college and get a degree without realizing they don't know what they want to really do with their lives, or they think they do but get into the real world and realize it's not for them. Some of my generation don't go to college much later (or at all) because they haven't gotten it figured out. And the thing I love about this book is that it reminds us all that it's perfectly okay to not have it all figured out! No one does really, we all change and so should our goals and aspirations.

The reason I did not give this book five stars is that I feel like it's pretty non committal in some areas and that parts of the book are just throwing out possible job suggestions.

I received this book as a Goodreads giveaway in Uncorrected proof format in hopes of a review.

Andrea says

I had a bit of an existential crisis this week, so when I saw this book in the library it seemed to call out my name. Truth to be told, I am 30 years old and I have no idea what I want to be when I grow up. I have a pretty useful degree, a stable job where I am valued (at least I hope so), and an array of hobbies I enjoy, but something is missing - the spark that really motivates me. The routine is a heavy burden. I pick up side projects on a whim and lose interest in them just as fast. One day I'm learning Swedish, the next I am starting a blog, and next week I'm planning to launch a small business.

And then I find my answer... I'm a multipotentialist! Excellent, just what I needed in life when I can't even decide which flavour of pizza to order for Saturday night.

Multipotentialists are people who have a variety of interests, who tend to jump between projects without finishing them, and who grow bored with doing one thing for the rest of their lives. Apparently there is a way to turn these qualities into positive skill sets with a little bit of...

I'm going to say it straight up: I hate self-help books. I think they belong in the shady pile of pyramid scheme manuals along with the likes of Rich Dad, Poor Dad. Call me a cynic. These authors with no real profession, and who like to call themselves "motivational speakers", find a way to take advantage of poor, gullible chumps looking for that one solution to all their worldly problems, and all for \$29.99 plus shipping. I don't subscribe to the value of that. So judge me if you will, but I approached this book with a grain of salt (if not for existential crisis, I'd probably never have picked it up).

Fortunately, Emilie Wapnick's *How to Be Everything* resonated with me more than your average self-help book. It helped me to understand my own squirrel syndrome and to accept it for what it is. It also did what I needed it to do: validated the fact that I'm not the only weirdo out there. While I found exercises for "finding" myself gimmicky in that The Secret way, and some types of multipotentialism unrealistic/exhausting, I did think that chapters about kicking self-doubt, fear, and procrastination to the curb useful.

Not groundbreaking (mostly common sense), but helpful if you feel a bit lost about lack of direction in your own career path.

Valerie says

I enjoyed this book for the most part. The writer's tone throughout was not necessarily my favorite (it often felt like she was adding a lot of jokes to the text to be funny/relatable but it felt a bit put on). However, the overall idea of not forcing yourself into one specific role or position or business appealed to me enough that I powered through. Wapnick cites a lot of other authors throughout the text, making me wonder if their books would be worth checking out further or if this book would suffice as a general understanding of what to take from them... I haven't decided where I stand on that yet.

Of the approaches mentioned, I definitely see myself as one to take The Einstein Approach. In many ways, this alignment reinforced ideas I'd read about and related to in McGinnis' *The 10% Entrepreneur*. I appreciated the exercise of taking the time to write out and narrow down between each and every interest I may hold, advice I'd seen before but never actually acted on. Having this concrete (but also always growing) list is a good way to check in and make sure I'm still doing things that align with my vision for myself and my future.

Overall, I enjoyed the book. I wouldn't call it a must read, but if you have the time and the topic interests you, I'd say it's worth a read (or a skim at the very least).

Audra (Unabridged Chick) says

I agreed to review this book purely on the title: I was unfamiliar with Wapnick and her TEDx talk on calling but have long struggled with what I "want to be when I grow up" (even now, in my mid-30s). While I love learning, I don't love it enough to want to attempt a Master's degree or expensive classes, and I've struggled with understanding if I'm happy or not in my vocation(s).

Still, I was apprehensive about this book when I started, fearing it'd be a long form essay on #YOLO (you only live once) or a passionate defense of the gig economy.

Instead, I found this a fascinating, empathetic, empowering read that acknowledges today's economic realities, the personal temperament of many people I know, and the ways current US culture is oriented toward a rigid, specialist-type career path (and how that need not be the way everyone works).

Wapnick argues that many folks are what she calls multipotentialites -- people for whom one settled career isn't right, for whom learning is a life long endeavor -- and that rather than walk around feeling crappy about

their varied interests and meandering professional path(s), multipotentialites should embrace their personalities and skills and lean in.

From providing some great definitions of who a multipotentialite might be, Wapnick moves into the meat of the book -- how to find happiness as someone who enjoys variety and change. Whether one identifies as a multipotentialite or not, her advice is sound and was really thought-provoking. She argues for life design rather than career planning -- consider money, meaning, and variety and how much of each you need to be happy -- and provides exercises for discernment. Then she has rich chapters on ascertaining the kind of money/meaning/variety life design that might work for you (ie, are you a phoenix, someone who likes to do intense work for a brief chunk of time, then switch to something new?; or are you the type who likes having a "good enough" job that gives enough free time for more meaningful endeavors?, etc. etc.).

There are also wonderful tips on how to effectively market yourself if you're someone for whom professional work hasn't followed the "specialist"/one career trajectory; how to reframe what others might see as "flakiness"; and how to use an interest in a wide swathe of topics to find a professional field that fulfills and provides an income.

I'm sure I'm not breaking this down well. What I'll say is that I saw so many people I know in this book -- from my wife, who still suffers from crippling guilt that her childhood vocation didn't end up being her career, to many of my colleagues who find pleasure in a variety of part-time work that feeds their soul and checkbooks -- and Wapnick's compassion and understanding helped me "get" them and see how even I can tap into my desire to do everything while getting paid enough to support my family.

Obviously, this feels like a no-brainer gift for grads, but I think most folks would benefit from Wapnick's wisdom and reassurance. This is a book that encourages a kind of "follow your bliss" mentality with real world advice on how to do that (while making rent). I'm surprised -- but delighted -- at how much I got from it, and I think many others will as well.

Jessica Gillies says

I'm not entirely sure how to rate this book; I really enjoyed the first 1/4 or so; however in all honesty I can't even remember much of the rest. The idea behind it is great: not all of us are suited to one particular career path, and the book goes on to explain various ways in which those whom the author dubs "multipotentialites" can find fulfilment in their work and ways in which they can combine their interests, even if they don't seem to hold much correlation. This is however much of a DIY thing, with a few very quick exercises to help you along (understandable I guess- much of the book is around not worrying about fitting into society or other peoples moulds for how you *should* be.). A lot of the ideas are geared towards cultures in which networking plays a large role in finding employment, but many other ideas are explored too (and the need for specialization in particular careers- surgery, for example ;-)-is not forgotten). Some of it read like we need to "come out" about having more than one interest, which I found a little bizarre- but maybe this is because I haven't grown up in the same culture.

Zuzka Namu Jakubkova says

Awesome guide with meaningful exercises. Career book for anyone who has difficulties sticking with one

career. Structured and concise. Would recommend.
