



Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties

Alexandra Robbins , Abby Wilner

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While the midlife crisis has been thoroughly explored by experts, there is another landmine period in our adult development, called the quarterlife crisis, which can be just as devastating. When young adults emerge at graduation from almost two decades of schooling, during which each step to take is clearly marked, they encounter an overwhelming number of choices regarding their careers, finances, homes, and social networks. Confronted by an often shattering whirlwind of new responsibilities, new liberties, and new options, they feel helpless, panicked, indecisive, and apprehensive.

Quarterlife Crisis is the first book to document this phenomenon and offer insightful advice on smoothly navigating the challenging transition from childhood to adulthood, from school to the world beyond. It includes the personal stories of more than one hundred twentysomethings who describe their struggles to carve out personal identities; to cope with their fears of failure; to face making choices rather than avoiding them; and to balance all the demanding aspects of personal and professional life. From "What do all my doubts mean?" to "How do I know if the decisions I'm making are right?" this book compellingly addresses the hardest questions facing young adults today.

Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges of Life in Your Twenties Details

Date : Published May 21st 2001 by Penguin Putnam (first published January 1st 2001)

ISBN : 9781585421060

Author : Alexandra Robbins , Abby Wilner

Format : Paperback 224 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Self Help, Psychology, Personal Development

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Dani says

I decided to read this book because I just graduated from college and feel as if this is the lost summer. I thought that this book would be like "Reviving Ophelia" (which I cherished as a kid when I was going through that stage in my life as well as an adult when I was trying to look back on my adolescence). The same is not true of this book. Though there are many vignettes of post-graduates and their tribulations in the adult world, there is very little guidance or advice. Though the reader is comforted by these stories and have a feeling that he or she is not alone, it eventually gets boring. For a reader who is in a position that is similar to many of the women in this book, I was disappointed to find that the authors didn't do any follow-up work on these people to see where they are now. Due to this, some of the stories and information seemed a bit out dated. Instead of reading this book, I would just look up "Quarterlife Crisis" on Wikipedia.

Lee says

The synchronicities made me laughing out loud..

I was looking for a gift for my soon-to-be 25 years old best friend when I found this book, and the concept of quarter-life crisis has been a running joke for both of us; long before we even experience it.

Yeah, the quarter-life crisis is not an entirely new concept, a little unnoticed.. maybe. But it could be because we, the twenty-somethings, couldn't be easily generalized.

So when I read this book, I was annoyed with the feelings of 'being forced' to understand the sufferings of being twentysomethings. Trust us, we DO.

Still, it was nice to read some points, knowing that someone also feels the same. If only it had a right amount..

truth hits like a bricks, too many of it can suffocate you.

and then the too much 'relate to' stories feels like a constant whining. Which ironically, the thing we do too much in our twenties.

(okay, okay, *some* of us)

One way or another, I can't finished the book. It's like being preached about the details of pain when a knife cut your finger. Sometimes my dear fellows in suffer, the answer is relax, and enjoy the journey.

then..

a few shelf after it, I found Time Flies, by Bill Cosby. Ah, guess which one I chose.

Victoria says

Like exit loan counseling, Alexandra Robbins and Abby Wilner's Quarterlife Crisis: The Unique Challenges

of Life in Your Twenties should be required for college graduates. While Robbins and Wilner do not provide a guide on how to survive these challenging years, readers will benefit if they reflect on the thought provoking dialogue and as a result, may find they can generate their own hope and possible ways to cope with the transition from college to the "real world" on their own. Although the authors can be quite redundant at times and devote less attention to the plight of unemployed grads vs. employed grads, Robbins and Wilner's work is still a good read. I recommend this book not just to recent college grads and young adults, but also to family, friends, and significant others of recent college grads and young adults.

"The years that one of our twentysomething sources described as the limbo between "young adult" and "adult" are hard," Robbins and Wilner stated, "but they are hard in part because the rest of the population believes they are so easy. There are many advantages to being a twentysomething, surely, but people know about those. What they do not acknowledge is that there is a dark side as well." Robbins and Wilner will introduce you to that dark side and for those readers who long passed that twentysomething stage will surely find the rules have indeed changed.

Bouke says

The only thing I learned from this book is that being young in the US fucking sucks, because everyone is far away, there's no healthcare, and you need to have a masters degree to do something such as being an inferior designer (which costs \$50,000). Wtf?

Shar says

I enjoyed it but it definitely ran in circles at times regarding themes. It was surprising how relevant some of the content was even a decade later after publication. It was definitely not a how-to book or guidebook for actually navigating the unique challenges.

It covered everything from the difficulty of moving to a new city solo but how satisfying it could be, how goal posts could shift as you navigate your twenties, how you should examine if you're really learning new skills at your entry-level job, etc. This book was written in a conversational tone for a reason. It articulated what exactly was the unease of growing pains and it's done in a "you're not alone, now figure it out" fashion.

I know a lot of the reviews logged for this book are people ragging on the millennial-woe-is-me vibe but that's not quite it. I think for a lot of ambitious twenty-somethings, it was just reassuring to know that other twenty-somethings - even the twenty-somethings back in 2001 - had the same "are we doing things right?" thoughts.

Heather says

As a 25 year old, I was intrigued by the concept of this book. However, I think that this book was completely not meant for me (perhaps, it would have been 8 years ago). I believe the minute I became a mom that this book no longer could apply. While there was some mention of young parents, I could not relate to them at all.

I got pregnant (I dealt with it and grew up in those nine months); when my daughter was born, it was done. I was an adult, it wasn't about me. One person stated "having my child made me feel more like a kid". Perhaps, but I just don't relate.

This book is worth looking at if you're bored, or if you honestly feel as though becoming an "adult" is the scariest reality to face. I am not discounting other people's feelings, but the transition to adult should be occurring way before 25 to 27 years old.

Melissa says

This book was gathering dust since my 25th birthday, so I gave it a read. It's written by submitted responses and composed by some magazine authors. If, you are a twenty-something lost in limbo post-college, this may be a good read for you. There isn't a ton of advice, but a lot of stories to help you feel less alone. It's a fairly quick read. Worth a quick read even if you are beyond your twenties (uh hmm). Passing it along to the Little Free Library.

Bitchin' Reads says

I purchased this book when I was in college, and now I understand why it was in the bargain bin--it is almost 200 pages of millennials 20 years and older airing their griefs against the world. This massive 'woe is me' attitude is laughable, especially since this book is story after story after story of how life early on did not prepare someone to succeed and be happy as an adult in the Real World. I am 25, so I can agree that my upbringing and my education up to my bachelors did not prepare me to be a successfully functioning adult, BUT I LEARNED. I think this turns more into a book highlighting the survival of the fittest--those who can adapt and learn to overcome obstacles and play the game of Life do well, and those who can't don't progress.

This book had great potential. Just as there is a midlife crisis, I agree that there is a quarterlife crisis. However, for this book to be taken seriously it needs more than anecdotes and a TWO PAGE CONCLUSION. Yes, you read that right. After 190 something pages of 'pity me' personal testaments to the quarterlife crisis cause, there are 2 pages devoted to a conclusion to the authors' "research." Nothing explaining what could be done to bring life the quarterlife crises, or maybe an idea as to how to cope with this period in one's life...Nada. No true research, no studies, no suggestions or resolutions.

This is literally a book of complaints regarding how life as an under prepared adult (practically everyone) is hard and boo-hoo.

Please do not read. Your time is worth more and could be better spent doing something else or reading something entertaining/enlightening.

Amelia says

A must-read for anyone who is in their 20's or early 30's and is questioning their life's passions and purpose. A great reality check to show that while the quarterlife crisis still is not widely discussed, you're not alone in this time of questioning.

Scott Dinsmore says

Why I Read this Book: So many of us think we have the answers before we even realize we don't fully understand all of the problems. I looked to this book for help with these problems at an age when I needed it most.

Review:

No matter what age you are as you read this or what experiences you have had in your lifetime, you can be pretty sure you have gone through a quarterlife crisis. It is actually a pretty funny thing to think about. If you were like me when I first read this book, the idea of a quarterlife crisis was completely foreign. I had recently graduated from university and a close friend of mine gave this book to me as a gift and introduction into life's next chapter. I did not initially plan to read it, but one day I found myself with some extra time and decided to dig in. As is the case so often in life, what I discovered was not at all what I expected. It turns out that the idea of a quarterlife crisis is very real and a great majority of people in their twenties go through it one way or another. On one side I was a bit upset for having started the book in the first place since it was not until then that I realized I too was experiencing my own quarterlife crisis of sorts. Although as I continued on, it was comforting to know that some of the insecurities I was feeling as a recent graduate being humbled with a career search and lifestyle changes, was normal.

It is amazing that it often takes someone (or two people in this case) to decide to stand up and do something different and recognize an issue for others to relate to it. I have to hand it to Robbins and Wilner, the two women who wrote this book. I believe that it was their very own challenges as twenty- somethings and their need for comfort and answers that compelled them to write it. It is such a service to those readers who are going through the same issues and trying to understand them.

If you are in your twenties you may read this review and think to yourself "yeah I am sure there are plenty of people my age who have issues qualifying as a quarterlife crisis, in fact I can name a few right now, but I am certainly not one of them. I did great in school, I have a career lined up and I know what I will be doing for the next five or so years." Then for those of you who are in your thirties, forties or older as you read this, you are probably thinking "that is one of the most bogus and naïve thoughts for a recent graduate to have." That's the funny part of every year of experience we gain. All we really gain is more understanding of the fact that there is so much we do not know. I was that twenty-one year old who graduated in the top of his class and had a very "clear" idea of what was next. It did not take me long to realize how wrong I was, and reading through this book greatly helped me understand these concerns.

I give the above example because I believe that everyone in this world can benefit from additional information in whatever they do. This is especially true for the less-experienced. Quarterlife Crisis does a fantastic job of brining to light so many of the things recent graduates had, have, or will have to face in their early roads to success. You can be sure that not all of the topics in this book will apply to you, but you can be equally sure that at least a portion of them will. And for the parts to which you cannot personally relate, I encourage you to still take note because chances are that at least some of the people are around you will be feeling those pains. Bringing these issues to light will not only serve you to better understand yourself but also to better understand those around you. And in a world where the path to success is paved with a firm and clear understanding of yourself and those around you, I do not see how you could afford to miss this first step of the journey.

Colleen says

"Don't look back. They might be gaining on you."

-- The Quarterlife Crisis, p. 84.

The authors of The Quarterlife Crisis provide their own hypocrisy and congratulations.

As they highlight in the introductory chapters, our generation is different. "Gen X" is meaningless. We have more choices than any other generation. Finally, we have few common momentous events to tie us together, as the baby-boomers did with the JFK assassination, for instance. (9/11 predated this publication.)

Moreover, Robbins and Wilner load on their own self-lauding in recognizing that we need insight into the rarely recognized precarious period after college and before (deadening?) stability. I agree that crises of identity are happening earlier these days. Our culture and the media should focus more on the plight of those who will steer our future.

However, I didn't find the inspiration or understanding I need in my own crisis. Robbins and Wilner interviewed hundreds of twentysomethings to discover what makes them feel lost and depressed. Many of these crisis-ers offered their own solutions to their problems. For the most part, their advice is self-evident.

Additionally, the authors don't follow their own admonition, above, that one shouldn't focus on the past. Indeed, I walked away from this book MORE worried. I learned that I should be worrying about when to have kids, why I'm not married, and why I don't have a house or a big bucks job. Optimism and practical, well-tested strategies for navigating the rough seas of one's youth are sorely lacking.

If you're in a crisis yourself, don't read this book. It will only make you feel worse. There is a little comfort to be found in realizing that you're not alone in your concerns, but you'd be better served in getting that information from your friends and family. This book is more a disjointed case study. It reads like the senior project of a sociology student without an editor.

Instead, read Po Bronson's "What Should I Do With My Life." It is far more universal, gentle, and interesting.

Brandi says

I picked this book up because one of my friends showed me the website that goes along with the book. Even when I looked at the cover I was unsure how I felt about it.

I'm normally a fast reader, but this one took me a long time to get through - I think because as one other reviewer pointed out, it's mostly other 20-somethings whining about how difficult their lives are. Now, don't get me wrong... as a 27 year old, I know that things are difficult. I know it's hard to make decisions, find the right job, make new friends, and establish a lasting relationship. Oh trust me, I know.

I didn't need a 200 page book to tell me that. Or to tell me that other people feel that way.

So - what's good about the book? For people who do not have established friendships with people who are also going through a crisis, as small as it may be, it is probably reassuring to know that others go through it. And their reassurance that "its ok to go to therapy" is nice. But what it doesn't give is real coping mechanisms that we can use in our day to day lives to get through the crisis. If we're all searching for ways to make better decisions, and we're missing the guidance that college offered - then give us what college did. Give us *tools* to survive, not just "I can relate" stories.

Mike says

When they wrote in the introduction that the entire book was based on interviews and not any psychological or sociological research and that their purpose was solely in defining the problem--I should have put the book down. But I was trapped in jury duty with few other options. I only made it to page 50, but I'll rewrite the book so you don't have to read it:

Post-school life is hard because it doesn't have clearly defined goals. Now is the time in your life when all that "you can be whatever you want" talk is supposed to come to fruition. So you have decide what you want to be. Once you do that, you should set a plan on how to get there. This will give your life the structure it once had. You should be patient and realistic. You should frequently reevaluate your goals and be open to new experiences. The end.

Thanh says

Quy?n sách v? nh?ng tr?i nghi?m kh?ng ho?ng tu?i thành niên ?ã ho?c ?ang di?n ra ?? ?úc k?t thành kinh nghi?m, l?i khuyên thông qua các cu?c ph?ng các cá nhân tham gia, t? nh?ng ng??i ?ang h?c ??i h?c ho?c ?ã ?i làm, t? nh?ng ng??i lao ??ng trí óc ??n nh?ng ng??i lao ??ng tay chân hay c? nh?ng ng??i không bi?t làm gì, t? nh?ng ng??i có tài chính v?ng m?nh ??n nh?ng ng??i có nh?ng kho?n n? to l?n, v.v... Quy?n sách ???c chia ra thành các khía c?nh trong cu?c s?ng nh? công vi?c, tình c?m, gia ?ình, b?n thân v?i nh?ng câu h?i t?p trung vào các m?i liên quan ?? t? ?ó có th? h?ng ??n vi?c tìm ra câu tr? l?i, nh?ng câu h?i mà ?ôi khi chúng ta quá s? ?? h?i chính b?n thân.

Bryan says

I read this for a class. It's personal accounts from countless recent grads—no actual studies or research. All anecdotal. It also paints millennials as negatively as you possibly can while trying to advocate on their behalf

It's 200 pages of mini interviews; mostly the same story, but with minor details changed. Every time I picked this up, it was a chore. I knew that, even if I were to relate to a certain situation, it would be laid out in such a repetitive & boring manner that it would lose all gravity.

This was a bear to slog through & I would've just stopped after 20 pages if it wasn't required. You could probably find a TED Talk that will cover all the points in this book in less than 20 minutes with better style & information.

