



Is Anyone Else Like Me?

Jean Posusta

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Sharing a personal methodology for achieving happiness, Is Anyone Else Like Me? is a joyful and empathetic self-help text.

Replete with interactive tables and guiding questions, Jean Posusta's inspirational memoir-cum-self-help text *Is Anyone Else Like Me?* outlines an idiosyncratic path to personal fulfillment.

Posusta's personal story centers the text. She survived psychological abuse to pursue peace, goodness, and personal satisfaction. She also dealt with alcoholism, grieved a suicide, and faced depression. Made up of stories, psychological strategies, scientific research, quotes, and wisdom designed to facilitate inward evaluations, the book's chapters are short, pointed, and declarative, musing through subjects including fear and outward appearances. Some are even playful, as with "Death by Chocoholism." Despite this outward range, though, the chapters' content is similar: each introduces numerous, varied techniques for achieving personal insight and analyzing the gap between experience and emotion.

The book draws its inspiration from psychology, Christianity, and literary sources. It aims to be practical and informative, even when it is illustrating Posusta's thoughts and personal lessons, as when she recalls engaging with different religions. And the book addresses its audience in direct terms, asking them to scrutinize their emotions and behaviors, to sift through synonyms, and to ponder philosophical questions. Still, while it is fanciful and personable, the book's casual tone impedes its authority: Posusta is given to offhanded expressions, including "uh oh" and "big difference," that undercut her heady topics.

In the end, the book's progress is overwhelmed by its instances of repetition. Its methods for connecting ideas from different contexts are haphazard and unconvincing as well. It moves between topics with speed and without clear thematic development, preventing its ideas and lessons from cohering into a tangible whole. And even when thematic patterns do emerge, they are loose and subject to digression. The final quarter of the book has a preponderance of chapters on religion and death, for example, but it is also broken up by critiques of the #MeToo movement and exhortations on the values of wonder, fun, and peace. Life advice for twenty-year-olds is shoehorned in as well. This lack of direction is made more apparent by the absence of a table of contents, index, or any other formal organizing principle. Blank pages are interspersed in the text at random; these add to the overarching sense of disorganization.

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WILLEM MARX (October 6, 2023)

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