



Making It Without Losing It: How to Stay Motivated in a World Where We Are Never Done

Jess Ekstrom

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About achieving personal success without losing sight of one's values in the process, Making It Without Losing It is an encouraging self-help resource.

Jess Ekstrom's incisive career guide *Making It Without Losing It* is about striking a balance between professional aspiration and personal fulfillment.

Questioning the society-wide prioritization of external rewards over internal fulfillment, and why people believe that reaching certain goals will make them happy, this book forwards guidance for pursuing one's ambitions without relinquishing peace or personal satisfaction. It asserts that internal fulfillment derives from the concerted pursuit of one's goals and encourages people to nurture an intrinsic sense of purpose. It intones that chasing someone else's dream will not bring fulfillment, that it is important to be present in the moment, and that curiosity is preferable to certainty in its chapters geared toward fostering a clear sense of self-worth.

The book brings together a wide array of insights about attaining purpose, fomenting personal growth, and creating a worthwhile legacy. Strategies for feeling capable and in control are shared alongside tips for becoming connected and content. Conceptual frameworks like the arrival trap and arrived mindset are introduced alongside encouragements to reframe satisfaction as a daily choice rather than a distant destination. It also puts the evolutionary function of negative thinking into context, prompting deeper understanding of natural human thought patterns in order to shift perception, reconfigure one's experiences, and minimize stress and self-doubt.

The book draws from personal experience to support its claims, for instance extracting lessons from a retreat for high-achieving women. But it also delves into brain science and other disciplines, citing academic research and established psychological concepts. At times, it leans too much on pop psychology phrases like "the Wanting Mind" to illustrate how unsatisfying it can be to always ask what's next, obscuring its distinctive insights.

The prose is lively, and the book's personal anecdotes are engaging and make use of popular culture references, as with a story about saving in a piggy bank, cashing in on a shopping spree, and realizing that purchases lost their luster once they were no longer on the store shelves. A sheen of comedic exaggeration in the storytelling ("Somebody better call security because it's about to go nuts") brightens the prose further. Indeed, it strikes a harmonious balance between style and substance throughout.

An insightful self-help guide, *Making It Without Losing It* is about finding a sense of personal meaning while remaining ambitious.

JOSEPH S. PETE (April 30, 2026)

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