

The Freelance Academic: Transform Your Creative Life and Career

Katie Rose Guest Pryal

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The Freelance Academic is both a how-to guide for those thinking of branching out on their own in academia and the personal story of what led its author, Katie Rose Guest Pryal, to freelance herself.

Pryal worked as a contingent faculty member for several universities over an eleven-year period. She describes the differences between being a tenured versus non-tenured track faculty member in detail. As a contingent contractor, she worked exceedingly long hours, received negligible pay for doing the same work as a tenured professor, and found limited opportunities for advancement.

Pryal also alludes to an unnamed disability and talks about the challenges of being a working mother, but her book concentrates on these points less. When she received a gut-punching “no” to the long-held question of whether her academic career would ever move forward, she was propelled to make a career shift.

Though she is an academic, Pryal writes in a conversational tone that is digestible for nonacademic audiences, too. Personal and reported anecdotes about the obstacles to achieving tenure, and stories from the halls of academia, make what could have been a dry book a work of substantial interest.

Pryal's story is told in a no-holds-barred manner that offers a way out for those facing similar career hurdles. She forwards practical advice while highlighting her own experiences. For example, for those transitioning into freelance writing, she suggests turning your personal expertise into your “beats” and running your freelancing like a business.

Though it is narrow in focus and targeted to a specific audience—academics looking to transition from traditional tracks—the book's tips could extend to other freelancers as well. Ultimately, Pryal's becomes both a cautionary tale and a beacon of hope for frustrated academics in similar positions.

The Freelance Academic traces a path out of traditional academia with grace and humor.

HILARY DANINHIRSCH (May/June 2019)

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