

Why Bother? Discover the Desire for What's Next

Jennifer Louden

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Jennifer Louden's *Why Bother?* turns the despairing question on its head to encourage real change through personal growth.

Despair and lethargy often begin at a moment of crisis, but both can lead to lifestyles defined by resignation and powerlessness. Acknowledging this dark reality, Louden suggests more productive responses to trauma, fear of failure, and relational stress, turning past-oriented views around to embrace hope and possibility instead.

While people's momentary holdups may seem rooted in specific situations, like new jobs or broken relationships, the book argues that problems and solutions are usually much larger than any one circumstance. As such, a total perspective overhaul is called for, not just a change of single conditions. This proposition is both daunting and refreshing.

The book suggests adopting a paradigm that serves the greater good and that also helps when it comes to savoring each moment. It offers direction through deep emotional wisdom; practical tips and practices, including journaling; and psychological perspectives, as with suggestions for short circuiting the brain's resistance to change. Each method disarms personal defense mechanisms and roadblocks.

Cutting through common excuses for staying stuck in fear and unwanted situations—I'm too old, I don't have enough money, I'm not smart enough—the book makes room for continual self-forgiveness and exhibits grace in saying that it takes time to change. It is inviting and honest, and its real-life examples suggest that people can transform their lives for the better.

Working to get people who no longer care to care again, this empathetic project invites the thought: "Maybe I could do what I've always dreamed." *Why Bother?* is a self-help book that sparks desire for a future beyond hopelessness.

MELISSA WUSKE (May / June 2020)

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