

In Search of You: How to Find Joy When Doing More Isn't Doing It Anymore

Kasey Compton

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A template for delving into one's past to make fresh meaning from its stories, In Search of You is a gracious example of pursuing happiness and self-worth.

Part memoir, part self-help guide, Kasey Compton's book *In Search of You* models finding joy in life.

At her first book launch party in 2021, instead of the fulfillment of her life's dreams, Compton experienced despair. The moment prompted her to explore her feelings through therapy. With the goal of rising from a two to a ten on the self-love scale, she discovered her inner child and defined the "Big Things" that structured her life and the "Little Things" that connected them. Her awareness of her life's architecture grounded the new choices she made for her future, enabling her to welcome new love into her life and, in so doing, to gain a confidant and an ally.

A template for delving into the past despite fear and tendencies toward avoidance that's best approached in concert with in-person therapeutic work, the book addresses those who are also confounded by their feelings. This prospective audience is said to be made up of seekers also in search of love. To facilitate their searching, the book's chapters begin with journal entries, epigraphs drawing on general wisdom, and letters to the audience that direct progression through their contents. And the chapters end with inquiries—assignments to work on between the chapters that make their lessons applicable in real time.

Although the chapters' uniform format makes for a steady pace, the final chapters drag. Herein, moments are recombed for fresh meaning until the chronology becomes jumbled. The stories come to be analyzed more than narrated, and they sound less natural the more they are revisited.

Still, the use of slang makes the prose personable and inviting, as does its use of hefty metaphors related to architecture and landscapes, incorporation of conversations with family and friends, and evocative setting details. It is emotive and tactile, indulging in concise phrases and exclamations. At times, its intimacy limits the book's general applicability: the advice feels outweighed by examples, as with Compton's use of items saved after her grandmother's death to prompt recollections of time spent together. It models curiosity and growth well, though: the more Compton remembers, the more she wants to know, until her initial self-hatred dissolves, replaced by gracious tales from a full life.

With its empowering messages for women seeking deeper meaning, the therapeutic self-help book *In Search of You* models the development of self-love by way of story building.

MARI CARLSON (September 6, 2024)

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