



Present Over Perfect: Leaving Behind Frantic for a Simpler, More Soulful Way of Living

By Shauna Niequist

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LIVE A LIFE OF MEANING AND CONNECTION

Instead of pushing for perfection

A few years ago, I found myself exhausted and isolated, my soul and body sick. I was tired of being tired, burned out on busy. And, it seemed almost everyone I talked with was in the same boat: longing for connection, meaning, depth, but settling for busy.

I am a wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, neighbor, writer, and I know all too well that settling feeling. But over the course of the last few years, I've learned a way to live, marked by grace, love, rest, and play. And it's changing everything.

Present Over Perfect is an invitation to this journey that changed my life. I'll walk this path with you, a path away from frantic pushing and proving, and toward your essential self, the one you were created to be before you began proving and earning for your worth.

Written in Shauna's warm and vulnerable style, this collection of essays focuses on the most important transformation in her life, and maybe yours too: leaving behind busyness and frantic living and rediscovering the person you were made to be. *Present Over Perfect* is a hand reaching out, pulling you free from the constant pressure to perform faster, push harder, and produce more, all while maintaining an exhausting image of perfection.

Shauna offers an honest account of what led her to begin this journey, and a compelling vision for an entirely new way to live: soaked in grace, rest, silence, simplicity, prayer, and connection with the people that matter most to us.

In these pages, you'll be invited to consider the landscape of your own life, and what it might look like to leave behind the pressure to be perfect and begin the life-changing practice of simply being present, in the middle of the mess and the ordinariness of life.

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Editorial Review

Review

Returning to the theme of decluttering everyday life and concentrating on what is truly important, Niequist (Savor) weaves together a series of essays concerning her personal experiences overcoming a life overwrought with busyness, stress, and feelings of inadequacy. After years of frantic living, Niequist has come to the realization that she's missing out on the beauty of everyday life with her husband and children--- that it will all speed past her if she doesn't slow down and simplify, learn how to say no to demands on her time, and stop worrying about others' opinions of her. "Present over perfect living is real over image, connecting over comparing, meaning over mania, depth over artifice," she writes, explaining along the way that she's found a new "strength" in embracing quiet surroundings and in spending time alone. To emphasize her points, she quotes Scripture, but does so sparingly and intentionally---more often than not, her included references to her faith are intended only to bolster her own experiences of mindful living. Her style is conversational, friendly, inviting, and never heavy-handed, making the book accessible to people of all faiths. Women will find the advice hits closest to home. Niequist's latest book is her most satisfying blend of mindfulness, scripture, and self-help to date, offering readers the blueprint for a life lived in the real instead of the ideal. (- *Publishers Weekly*)

I begged Shauna for this manuscript a year ago while it was half-baked. When I finally received it, I read it from cover to cover in one sitting, then sat down at my laptop and wrote four emails bowing out of engagements that no longer fit my life, made two hard phone calls, and gave an end date to two other commitments. Present Over Perfect loaned me the courage, integrity, and permission I'd been waiting for. I will go to the grave thankful for this message. It has changed my life. (?*Jennifer Hatmaker, author of For the Love and 7*)

Most of the teachers I've had didn't think they were teaching me anything; they just thought we were friends. Shauna is that kind of friend, and this is that kind of book. As you turn these pages, you'll be reminded about what you have loved, where you've found your joy, and perhaps what you've misplaced along the way. Most of all, you'll be guided into an honest conversation about your faith and where you want to go with it. (?*Bob Goff, author of Love Does*)

I cried tears of relief while inhaling Present Over Perfect. I cried because I'd completely forgotten that I don't have to earn worthiness, hustle for love, or fight to belong. Shauna's words---equal parts elegant and urgent---invited me to remember that my worthiness, belonging, and beloved-ness are birthrights. I can't think of a more important, more desperately needed invitation. (?*Glennon Doyle Melton, author of Love Warrior and the New York Times bestseller Carry On, Warrior, founder of Momastery and Together Rising*)

I've watched Shauna walk this journey away from proving and pushing toward connection and grace, and as a friend, I'm proud of her. As a reader, I'm thankful to have these pages as an inspiration and guide. For all of us who yearn for meaningful, connected lives but find ourselves sometimes settling for busy, her words are the push we've been waiting for. (?*Donald Miller, New York Times bestselling author of Scary Close and Blue Like Jazz*)

Shauna awakens our desire to not miss our lives. Because that pursuit costs us our distracting habits, we need motivation beyond disciplines and rules. We have to want to really live and be with our people and enjoy this gift of a life that God has given us. Shauna's life makes me not want to miss mine, and her words here will

make you not want to miss yours. (*Jennie Allen, founder and visionary of IF: Gathering, author of Anything and Restless*)

We live in a society that can easily have us running in circles if we aren't careful. And this can result in having a life full of things we actually never intended to sign up for. Shauna helps us take a step back and reset our minds and souls. In these pages you will find wisdom and encouragement to see past temporal success and accolades to experience the deeper, more connected and truly enjoyable life. After all, it is the power of connection with others that helps us thrive in every sense of the word. (*Dr. Henry Cloud, New York Times bestselling author of Boundaries and The Power of the Other*)

I have already read this book seven times. It's about pursuing the present over the perfect--but it is nonetheless a nearly perfect thing, a nearly perfect book. Shauna speaks exactly to my condition. (*Lauren Winner, author of Girl Meets God, Still, and Wearing God*)

With graceful confession, Shauna has created a memoir of her heart---a racing, fragmented heart that is becoming a contented, loved, and present heart. Reading this book heartened me for her, for her family, for her church, and for her generation. Shauna summons each of us to resist being sucked into the fast-paced draft of saying Yes and offers us a better way: the way of presence, the way of saying No. But this No is a Yes to something far better. (*Scot McKnight, author of A Fellowship of Differents and The Blue Parakeet*)

About the Author

Shauna Niequist is the author of *Cold Tangerines*, *Bittersweet*, *Bread & Wine* and *Savor*. She is married to Aaron, and they have two wild & silly & darling boys, Henry & Mac. They live outside Chicago, where Aaron leads The Practice and is recording a project called A New Liturgy. Shauna also writes for the Storyline Blog, and for IF:Table, and she is a member of the Relevant podcast, and a guest teacher at her church. Shauna's three great loves are her family, dinner parties, and books, and she believes that vulnerable storytelling, hard laughter, and cold pizza for breakfast can cure almost anything.

Users Review

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Richard Endsley:

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Mandy Jackson:

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