

High Impact Factor 8.1458 ISSN



Vol. 12, No. 1



**Double-blind
peer reviewed**



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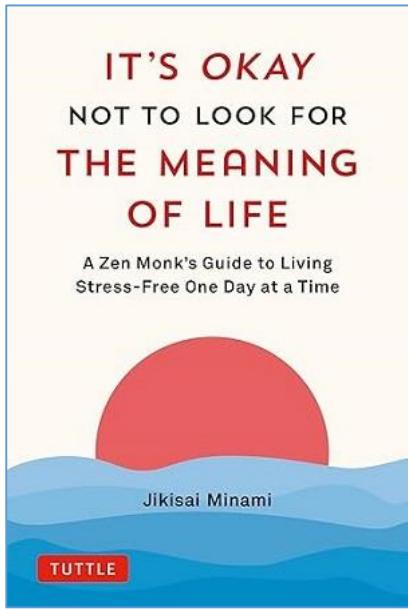
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Book Review of Jikisai Minami's *It's Okay Not to Look for The Meaning of Life* by Nikhil Vijay

Introduction

In the book, the introduction, "A Technique for Living," sets the stage for a transformative exploration of self-fulfilment and resilience. It presents a foundational approach to living a meaningful life by emphasizing the importance of introspection and self-awareness. The technique introduced

here is designed to guide individuals in aligning their actions with their core values and authentic self.



[The chapter 1 "What is the Self You Value?" builds on this by](#) encouraging readers to examine and define their true selves. It prompts a deep reflection on personal values and aspirations, helping individuals to discern what genuinely matters to them, rather than what society or external pressures might dictate. This introspection is crucial for cultivating a sense of purpose and direction.

In Chapter 2 "Shake off the Burden of Hopes and Dreams," the book challenges readers to release unrealistic expectations

and societal pressures. This chapter advocates for a more grounded approach to life, where one can let go of the anxiety that comes with chasing idealized visions of success and instead focus on what is attainable and fulfilling in the present moment.

The chapter 3 "Don't Be Swayed by Emotions" addresses the importance of emotional regulation and mental clarity. It offers strategies to prevent emotions from overwhelming decision-making processes and instead encourages a balanced approach to handling life's challenges. By cultivating emotional resilience, individuals can make more rational and effective choices.

Finally, chapter 4 "Live Life to the Full While Looking Death in the Face" is a profound exploration of mortality and its role in enriching life. This chapter underscores the value of

embracing the inevitability of death as a means to live more fully and authentically. By confronting the reality of our limited time, readers are encouraged to prioritize what truly matters and to live with intention and courage.

Exploration of Ideas & Concept

The chapter one explores the concept of self and identity, emphasizing that the self is formed both through personal consciousness and through recognition by others. It suggests that individuals are shaped by their interactions with others and that acknowledgment and praise from others are crucial for self-acceptance.

It highlights the transient nature of worldly things and the pervasive reality of suffering, proposing that most problems stem from interpersonal relationships and the difficulty in distinguishing between actual experiences and perceived issues. The text also touches on the inherent passive state of humans at birth and the necessity of external assistance for survival.

The chapter discusses the significance of illusions in human life and suggests that one's choice of illusion influences their actions and decisions. It presents a metaphor about the perception of problems, using the example of a ball on paper to illustrate how the scale of a problem affects one's view of it.

Additionally, it addresses the value of education and wisdom, noting that education is not merely about acquiring knowledge but about developing a comprehensive worldview. It advises patience and thoughtful reflection in addressing problems and stresses that life involves choosing which stresses to endure.

The chapter two addresses the idea that it's okay if one doesn't have grand dreams or ambitions, as long as they are living well. It challenges the notion that dreams are solely about

career aspirations or achieving self-fulfilment through work. The author emphasizes that work should not be overly burdened with the expectation of fulfilling dreams, and that resilience in the face of frustration can be a valuable asset for personal growth.

The chapter introduces the idea of "cold hopes" and "cold dreams," which involve a realistic assessment of how far one is from their goals. It suggests that having a "theme" in life—a guiding principle or passion—can provide direction and mental fortitude, helping individuals make decisions with confidence and without undue hesitation.

The author argues that the value of life is not measured by whether it was good or bad but by the fact that one lived it fully, embracing both the highs and lows. It promotes the idea of moving beyond mere calculations of gain and loss and focusing on meaningful connections with others. In a world driven by competition and transactions, the chapter highlights that true identity and fulfilment come from the quality of one's relationships with others.

The chapter three begins by noting that self-interest and power often underpin relationships. It aims to offer practical advice for dealing with emotional struggles and gaining clarity about one's problems. A central theme is that many emotional issues stem from incorrect perceptions or thinking patterns, and that developing "steadfastness" involves learning to manage and sometimes detach from overwhelming emotions.

The text suggests practical methods for regaining emotional balance, such as engaging in solitary activities that are calming and require minimal physical effort, like walking, reading, or enjoying a meal alone. It emphasizes the importance of finding personal coping strategies and being physically alone during these activities.

For clearer problem-solving, the chapter advises expressing issues in simple, concise sentences to make them easier to understand. It compares this approach to stepping back and objectively viewing a building during construction to better understand its overall structure.

The chapter discusses common emotional reactions, such as anger and jealousy, explaining that these feelings often stem from misguided beliefs and rarely lead to positive outcomes. To manage these emotions, it suggests mentally separating oneself into two parts: letting emotions swirl in the "head" while keeping the "body" calm and active.

It also introduces the concept of "understanding" as an "agreed misunderstanding," highlighting that only a few key relationships are crucial for survival. It underscores the importance of investing in family relationships through consistent, sincere communication, comparing it to nurturing plants. Effective communication requires ongoing practice and trust, and good listening involves actively reflecting and stimulating the other person's thoughts.

The Chapter 4 of the book explore themes of grief, the significance of human relationships, and the process of coping with loss. The chapter seems to focus on how people attempt to connect with the deceased, particularly through spiritual mediums like "itako" in Osorezan, a place known for helping people come to terms with their grief. It highlights the enduring impact of parent-child relationships on an individual's emotional life and the importance of nurturing human connections. The text emphasizes that a "dead person" is defined by their meaningful role in someone else's life, underscoring the lasting influence of relationships even after death. Ultimately, it suggests that while we are alive, we have the responsibility and opportunity to cultivate and strengthen our relationships with others.

Conclusion

This book helps readers understand how their identity is shaped by both internal and external factors, offering a framework for cultivating purpose, direction, and resilience. It emphasizes the importance of realistic goals, emotional balance, and finding fulfilment in the present, rather than chasing grand ambitions. This also introduces the idea of having a life "theme" to provide direction and mental strength, along with practical methods for managing emotions and problem-solving. It also encourages readers to confront mortality to prioritize what truly matters and live more authentically, highlighting the significance of meaningful relationships.

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