

Late Bloomers - Reflection

I found Rich Karlgaard's "Late Bloomers" to be overall very reassuring. Even as someone who is known for their ability to handle stress well, I find the societal pressures to succeed daunting and burdensome sometimes and I have no shortage of friends afflicted with crippling anxiety and depression because of it. The pressure to be super successful super early stems from a fear we are given or wasting time and falling behind. Karlgaard puts a spotlight on our tendency to epitomize early success. I believe it comes with an idea that people who are succeeding early are getting a headstart on everybody else and that the time you spend **not** succeeding is a complete waste. I also felt he did a good job catalyzing the youth experience of feeling like they are failures and how this is very detrimental to their mental health. He acts to alleviate this pressure by providing many examples of extremely successful late bloomers and giving people hope that they too have hidden talents that are yet to be discovered and that they will be able to change the world. I found this approach helpful, but not optimal. I believe the problem is the obsession with the idea that in order to have worth, you need to become successful and change or affect the world somehow. I know many people who feel like if they aren't the top in everything they do, they will fail, they won't be able to get a job, they will become poor, sad, and worthless. They are taught that happiness isn't possible without succeeding which I feel is absolutely not true, and despite his best efforts, I feel Karlgaard still pushes this sort of narrative: it doesn't matter when you become exemplary, just that you do.