

FINDING YOURSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL

Stop Rushing Life:

*Why It's Okay
to Be Lost
in Your 20's*

*Sowmiya
Venkatachalam*

Stop Rushing Life!

Why
It's Okay
to Be
Lost in Your 20's

Finding Yourself in the Middle of It All

Sowmiya Venkatachalam

PREFACE

There was a time when I believed I had to figure everything out before I turned 25. My career, my relationship, my finances — all neatly tied in a bow. That's what everyone around me seemed to be doing, or at least pretending to. But when my own life refused to follow the “perfect plan,” I felt like I was falling behind in a race I didn't even sign up for.

If you've ever scrolled through social media and felt that everyone else is winning while you're still **“loading,”** this book is for you. If you've ever feared you're wasting time while figuring yourself out, you're in the right place.

I used to think success had an expiry date — that if I didn't **“make it”** by a certain age, I'd somehow be locked out of opportunities forever. What I didn't realize was that life doesn't happen in a straight line. It twists, pauses, loops back, and sometimes throws you into places you never expected. Those detours? They often lead to the most important discoveries about yourself.

This isn't a guide to **“fix”** you. It's not here to push toxic positivity or tell you to **“just be grateful.”** It's a warm seat next to someone who knows how it feels — to be ambitious yet unsure, hopeful yet anxious. To have moments where you feel unstoppable, and others where you question if you're even moving at all.

Through these pages, we'll talk about the messy in-betweens: the gap between who you are and who you want to be, the pressure to always **"be doing more,"** the quiet loneliness that hides behind busy schedules, and the courage it takes to choose a path that actually fits you — not the one others expect.

You won't find a five-step formula for success here. Instead, you'll find stories, reflections, and reminders that your pace is valid, your timeline is yours, and your worth has never been dependent on how quickly you get somewhere.

So take a deep breath. You are not late. You are not behind. You are exactly where you need to be to start your own version of "right on time."

@talk2moon

CONTENTS

Part I - The Noise Around You

1. Life Through a Filter
2. How to Handle Everyone's Opinions
3. Financial Reality vs. Expectations
4. Friendships That Evolve With You

Part II - The Turning Point

5. Why It's Okay to Feel Lost
6. Lessons, Failure Gives for Free
7. Redefining Success in Your 20s
8. You're Not Late, The Clock Is Yours

Part III - Calm in My Corner

9. Choose peace, skip drama
10. Learning to Say "No" Without Guilt
11. Your Inner Mirror
12. Celebrate the Little Things

Part IV - The seasons of your 20s

13. Lost Doesn't Mean Left Behind

14. Healing from the Past You Hide

15. Choosing Quality Over Quantity in Everything

16. Letting Time Do Its Magic

Part V - Surviving your adulting era

17. The Pressure of Turning 25

18. The Weight of "Once You're an Adult, You'll Understand"

19. Surviving the "What's Next?" Question

20. Feeling Behind Without a "Valid" Reason

The Noise Around You

Every day, we wake up and step into a world that's already talking to us—sometimes too loudly. The notifications on our phone, the opinions of people around us, the endless comparisons we make online, and the subtle expectations of family, friends, and society. All of it creates a constant hum in the background, a noise that slowly shapes the way we think, feel, and act—often without us even realizing it. This noise tells us who we should be, what we should want, and how quickly we should achieve it. It pushes us to compete, to prove, to fit in—sometimes at the cost of our own peace. *We chase trends we don't care about, seek approval we don't really need, and lose touch with the person we actually are.*

In this part, we'll explore where this noise comes from, why it affects us so deeply, and most importantly, how to lower the volume so we can hear something far more valuable—our own voice. Because true clarity begins when the outside world stops drowning out our inner world. Silencing the noise doesn't mean disconnecting from everything and everyone. It means choosing what gets your attention and what doesn't. *It's about asking*

yourself, “Is this making me better or just making me busy?” and giving yourself permission to step back from anything that drains your energy without adding value.

It also means building small daily habits that strengthen your connection with yourself—like journaling your thoughts before you scroll through social media, taking a quiet walk without your phone, or spending a few minutes in mindful breathing before starting your day. These are not just “self-care” activities; they’re anchors that keep you steady when the world’s noise tries to pull you away from your center.

Over time, you’ll start to notice a shift. The voices of comparison and judgment will grow faint, and the voice of your own values, dreams, and truth will grow louder. That’s when *you’ll realize that peace was never about escaping the world—it was about learning to live in it without losing yourself.*

From this point, we’ll explore four key ideas: recognizing when *dreams aren’t truly our own*, breaking free from the trap of comparison, finding clarity in moments of stillness, and setting boundaries as a form of self-respect. Together, these will guide us toward living with more purpose and authenticity.

1. Life Through a Filter

We live in a world where everything we see isn’t always the full picture. Social media is the obvious one, where people post their happiest moments, perfect trips, and flawless selfies. But even offline, life has its filters. Friends may share only the good

parts of their relationships, hiding the fights and struggles. Colleagues might look like they have it all together at work while quietly battling stress or burnout. These filters shape what we believe is “normal” and can make us question our own life in comparison.

It's the same with family expectations or cultural norms. Sometimes the “filter” is about how we're expected to behave, dress, or choose our career. You might hide your real feelings because you're told to “be strong” or “not make a scene.” Over time, these filters can make us feel like we're living for other people's approval instead of our own peace of mind.

The truth is, *no one's life is as perfect as it looks through these filters*. Everyone has messy chapters, bad days, and struggles that aren't visible. When we remind ourselves of this, it becomes easier to stop comparing, let go of unrealistic expectations, and live more authentically, even if that means showing a little of our unfiltered, imperfect self to the world.

2. How to Handle Everyone's Opinions

In today's world, opinions travel faster than facts. Whether it's family, friends, colleagues, or strangers, everyone seems to have something to say about the way you look, live, or choose your path. Sometimes, it's genuine advice meant to help, and other times, it's just noise that can shake your confidence. Learning to filter out what truly matters and what's just unnecessary chatter is the first step to peace of mind.

People will often speak from their own experiences, beliefs, or insecurities, not from a full understanding of your situation. Accepting that you cannot please everyone frees you from the constant need for validation. Instead of reacting to every comment, take a moment to ask, “*Does this opinion help me grow or pull me down?*” This habit creates mental space to focus on your own goals and values rather than getting lost in others’ expectations.

In real life, handling opinions might mean smiling politely when relatives question your career choice, calmly listening when a friend disagrees with your plans, or simply choosing not to reply to a stranger’s online comment. Some opinions may contain a useful perspective worth reflecting on, while others are best left behind without emotional weight. Respecting other viewpoints without letting them define you is a skill that, once developed, makes you both calmer and stronger.

At the end of the day, opinions are like passing clouds—they may shade your path for a while but will eventually move away. Staying rooted in self-awareness and clarity helps navigate through them without losing confidence or direction.

3. Financial Reality vs. Expectations

When that first salary hits, it feels like the start of a new life, the freedom to buy what you want, go where you please, and finally feel “*grown up.*” But the truth slowly sinks in. Rent takes a piece, bills take another, and by the time daily expenses are

covered, what's left feels like a fraction of what you imagined. That excitement of earning can quickly turn into the quiet stress of trying to make it last until the next month.

There's an unspoken pressure to achieve big things fast — owning a home, driving a nice car, ticking off dream destinations. But reality teaches patience. These milestones aren't just about hard work; they're about time, discipline, and sometimes putting off pleasures today for peace tomorrow. And for many, especially those helping family or paying off loans, the road can feel longer and heavier than they thought.

Some earn more than they ever imagined in their 20s, yet still end up struggling later. The reason? Money flowed out as quickly as it came in — on things that felt important at the moment but left no trace for the future. It's a painful realization when hard days arrive and there's no safety net to fall back on. Learning to save, to spend with purpose, and to think beyond the next weekend isn't just smart — it's the difference between constantly chasing stability and finally living in it.

4. Friendships That Evolve With You

Growing up, it feels like friendships will last forever — the late-night calls, inside jokes, and promises that nothing will change. But life has its own way of rearranging the people around us. Careers, relationships, and personal struggles slowly shift priorities. Sometimes, you look around and realize the friends who once knew every detail of your day are now people you catch up with once in a blue moon.

It's not always about fights or fallouts. Sometimes it's simply about growing in different directions. You may find yourself connecting more with people who understand your current challenges, while older friendships quietly take a back seat. This can feel bittersweet missing the comfort of the past while accepting that some bonds are meant to transform rather than remain the same.

The most beautiful part, though, is realizing that real friendships don't demand constant presence; they adapt. Some friends will cheer from afar, some will resurface years later as if nothing changed, and a few will stay through every chapter. The key is to cherish each one for what they bring, instead of holding on to what you think they should be. After all, evolving doesn't mean losing — it can mean finding new ways to hold each other close.

"You're not lost, you're just exploring without a map."