



## **Juliet's School of Possibilities: A Little Story about the Power of Priorities**

*Laura Vanderkam*

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# Juliet's School of Possibilities: A Little Story about the Power of Priorities

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**Juliet's School of Possibilities: A Little Story about the Power of Priorities** Laura Vanderkam  
**A charming, life-changing fable that will help you rethink your whole approach to time, priorities, and possibilities.**

Riley Jenkins is in trouble. An ambitious, hardworking consultant in her late twenties, she's used to a lifetime of nearly perfect evaluations - until she gets a terrible performance review from her boss. How is that possible when Riley does everything her clients want - including answering emails 24/7 - faster than they expect it?

That's precisely the problem: she's spread too thin. Despite her insane hours and attention to detail, Riley can't produce the thoughtful work her clients expect. Now she's been given thirty days to close a major deal, or she's out. Meanwhile, her personal life is also on the edge of disaster, with her boyfriend and close friends losing patience with her chronic unavailability.

The last thing Riley wants, at a stressful time like this, is to attend a women's leadership retreat with some of her colleagues. But she can't get out of her commitment: a weekend in New Jersey at some silly-sounding place called Juliet's School of Possibilities.

Yet before long, Riley is surprised to find herself intrigued by Juliet, the lifestyle maven who hosts the conference. How does a single mother of two run a successful business while acting as if she has all the time in the world? The answer may lie in one of Juliet's Zen-like comments: "Expectations are infinite. Time is finite. You are always choosing. Choose well."

By the end of this story, you'll join Riley in rethinking the balance between your present and your future, between the things you have to do and the things you want to do. Like Riley, you can free yourself from feeling overwhelmed and pursue your highest possibilities.

## Juliet's School of Possibilities: A Little Story about the Power of Priorities Details

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Author : Laura Vanderkam

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## **From Reader Review Juliet's School of Possibilities: A Little Story about the Power of Priorities for online ebook**

### **Kelsey says**

I love Laura's other books and enjoyed reading her smart time use insights in a fable format. I think Juliet's School of Possibilities would be especially great for people who aren't as familiar with Laura's work yet and/or who are skeptical of self-improvement books since this reads like a novel. I also think this book would make an excellent graduation/job change/retirement gift!

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### **Pamela says**

The perfect place to begin your journey to taking control of your time and your life. It's short but impactful read that illustrates the power of priorities.

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### **Annarella says**

I worked as consultant for years and I found a bit hard to believe that someone as clueless and disorganized as the main character can make to associate partner. Especially in a top consultancy firm, after working as project manager.

On a general level the book was a nice and easy read, with interesting ideas and hints.

The tone reminded sometimes of a fairy tale but I can appreciate how this was used to pass the message.

I think it can useful for people who have issue in prioritizing and managing their time.

Many thanks to the publisher and Netgalley for this ARC

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### **Caitlin says**

This book was enjoyable & a good read. It had great tips to help with time management & realizing what is important & what you should make time for.

This book would be great to read in a women's group or book club & to gain some valuable tips to use in real life applications.

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### **Kacie says**

Juliet's School of Possibilities is a parable designed to help readers consider the choices and priorities they have in their lives, particularly as those choices relate to their careers.

The parable centers around a young woman named Riley who is struggling. She's having trouble meeting her employer's and clients' expectations; her boyfriend is fed up with her not having time for him; her best friend has has enough of the brush-offs.

It's as if Riley is trying to keep 1,000 plates spinning at once, but her priorities are in the minutiae of responding to emails as they come in (rather than delegating to her assistant, or prioritizing the important email). She's so distracted with everything calling for her attention that she succeeds at nothing.

Riley attends a corporate retreat at a mystical place run by a prominent, has-it-all-together woman, Juliet. Juliet takes an interest in Riley and is able to help Riley "see" some possibilities: one a lonely life with nothing to be proud of; another with all of her dreams coming true and then some. This part of the book reminded me a little of *The Alchemist*, and I see I'm not the only reviewer who had that thought.

The story continues, and I'll stop the plot summary so you can see how it concludes.

At page 117, Laura Vanderkam steps in and speaks directly to the reader. She reminds us something from the parable: expectations are infinite, and time is finite. Vanderkam has questions designed to help the reader look to the future and consider some possibilities with regard to career and personal life. There's blank space to record your responses.

There are additional questions for those reading the book as a group. Reading groups, especially formed among colleagues, might yield interesting conversation and practical ways someone might be able to adjust their own workflow.

I think some readers will appreciate the example within the story and discussing Riley's life and her choices. Maybe they'll see aspects of themselves in Riley; or maybe they can't relate to her.

The parable fell flat for me. I didn't think Riley's situation or the way it was presented was believable.

My favorite part was at the end where Vanderkam asks questions designed to challenge us and how we treat our priorities. These are ideas similar to what she explores in depth in her previous books.

Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for providing me with a digital review copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

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### **Marie (Marie Meets Books) says**

I am a huge Laura Vanderkam fan. I have read and loved all of her books, and I listen to her podcast weekly. *Juliet's School of Possibilities* is a small, enjoyable book that takes some of Vanderkam's most important lessons and turns them into a work of literary fiction. This book is perfect for people who don't think they like non-fiction, or don't think a time management book would be interesting. The main character of this story, Riley, is struggling in her career and personal life. She feels like she never has enough time and she's failing in both areas. Then a hugely successful woman teaches her that "Expectations are infinite. Time is finite. You are always choosing. Choose well." Riley learned that possibilities are endless when you learn how to prioritize in all aspects of life. We can all benefit from thinking about that and how we can use it in our own lives. I highly recommend this powerful book.

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## **Mary says**

Of course I ranked this fable five stars. My daughter wrote it and I enjoyed it! It's a short read and incorporates the ideas she promotes in her non-fiction books, blogs, and podcasts in a story of a young woman who learns that--

Expectations are infinite.  
Time is finite.  
You are always choosing.  
Choose well.

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## **Kelly Faysash says**

This was an inspiring, quick read. If you are familiar with Jon Gordon's books, this is in a similar style. This parable follows Riley, a young business woman, who receives a less than stellar review from her employer. Caught off guard, her life begins to spiral downward as she is forced to face the fact that she is not managing her time well. At an already scheduled retreat, she discovers a new way to look at her life and the decisions she can make to improve her situation.

If you like Laura Vanderkam (who doesn't?), you will really enjoy this short parable. It is a breezy read, but has a lot of underlying big ideas. The end of the book also includes tips to restructure your days and some questions to consider as you move forward planning your life.

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## **Sarah says**

This fable-ish story drives home the point of time management and how to make good decisions with the limited time we all have.

The character's personalities are exaggerated opposites - extremely busy and harried Riley vs. calm and collected Juliet. I could actually feel my blood pressure rising when reading about Riley and lowering while reading Juliet.

While the take away from this parable is clearly meant to be "choose well", it also reinforced the idea that sometimes you need to step back and away to get some perspective on a situation. Our best ideas can come when we are not trying too hard.

This quick read is perfect for anyone needing a little help seeing the big picture in their life, and gives permission to make the best decisions to get to the life you want to lead. A message I feel we all need to hear, and one I am glad I read.

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## **Genevieve Trono says**

I have been looking forward to Juliet's School of Possibilities since I first heard Laura Vanderkam mention it

on the Best of Both Worlds Podcast last year. I love Vanderkam's books about time management and this is her first novella. She incorporates her knowledge and expertise into a short fable about a woman named Riley who is spread too thin. ???

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In a society where “busy” reigns supreme, Vanderkam’s books are a wonderful reminder about how we get to choose how we spend our time and energy and this book is such a fun spin-off. We meet Juliet who shares wisdom and helps Riley rethink this balance. “Expectations are infinite. Time is finite. You are always choosing. Choose well.”

A big thank you to NetGalley and Penguin Books for a copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

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## **Phoebe says**

This is Laura Vanderkam's first "business fable," and it's a great one, perhaps better than many other business fables I have read. I felt this one connected with my own work experience more than some others. This book is a great way to get introduced to the principles of productivity and time management that Vanderkam writes about in her nonfiction works in a story that sticks with you.

As a work of fiction, I enjoyed way Vanderkam developed her characters and set the scene. I could envision that inn at the beach, the exhilarating bike ride, and even feel the main character's excitement when she had a great idea. I won't spoil the ending, and almost wished the book were a little longer, but if you want a book to reset or remind you of what's important, this is a great one.

One of my favorite quotes: ““Our actions determine our courses. How we live our hours is how we live our lives.” Juliet paused. “Could how you live your hours lead to a place where you can’t even say what you’re proud of?”

I recommended this book on my 2019 Lenten reading list this year: <https://beingincommunity.com/my-2019-...>

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## **Seema Rao says**

Fable-like ~ Easy to Read ~ Useful

tl;dr: Woman with "busy" life and excessive email learns to make better choices.

This book is like if Coelho wrote a book about the modern work world. It's extremely short, like the finish on the ride into work short. The prose isn't exceptional, or Coelho worthy, but not awful either. It's written in a sort of mass-market tone, easy for anyone to access. But, literary quality aside, I have always appreciated Vanderkam's discussions of time-management. She isn't out to shame readers or teach through hard-truths. She has a gentle way of reminding everyone we are in charge of choosing well, as she says. I would love to see women choosing this book for book clubs, as it is a great book to discuss. Most women have been the main character at one time or another. In fact, at one point, the character mentions her 1000 email inbox, and I commiserated! rather than startled. Very useful little book.

Thanks to NetGalley for the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Gina says**

I wanted to read this little parable because I enjoyed Ms Vanderkam's book, "Off the Clock: Feel Less Busy While Getting Things Done." Thanks to Amazon's pre-order system, the book arrived yesterday, on its release date; I read most of it during my son's basketball practice and finished in bed.

I found the writing better and, as a result, the story more engaging than is the case with most parables/edutainment stories. The form is the same, however, because that's what makes it a parable— the main character's life falls rapidly apart; the wise guru magically appears, imparts the secret to life, and changes the main character's perspective; the main character instantly sees the error in his/her ways, knows exactly what to do, and changes his/her entire life more or less immediately.

That sounds pretty jaded, and you might be wondering why I keep reading these things. Frankly, I am, too. I guess the answer is simply that they're fun and hopeful. Short, quick, and easy is fun— Hey! I finished a book today!— and, like a good romantic comedy with a great "make-over scene," the main character eventually wakes up, takes control of the situation, and gets exactly what is desired. Who doesn't want that? And who doesn't want to feel less alone in the early "plight" part of the story?

I'm pretty sure the whole all-at-once, life-changing Cinderella thing doesn't happen all that often, but hey, if even one small thing changes each time I read one of these stories, eventually I will have read and enjoyed enough of them to experience a cumulative effect, right? I like to think so, but maybe it's just a possibility...

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### **Maureen says**

This was a good parable that has me thinking more about the idea of "choose well". I joke that 2018 was supposed to be the year of "No", but what needed up happening was I started to get more choosy about where I spent my time. The book helps frame and solidify that concept for me. I am hoping that I can keep it up!

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### **Lorie says**

Quick read about time management and the importance of prioritizing how to spend that time. Not a bad reminder, especially for those who are juggling a busy work schedule, running a household, trying to keep up with kids/school/sports, and have other family obligations.

Thanks to NetGalley for the advance copy!

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