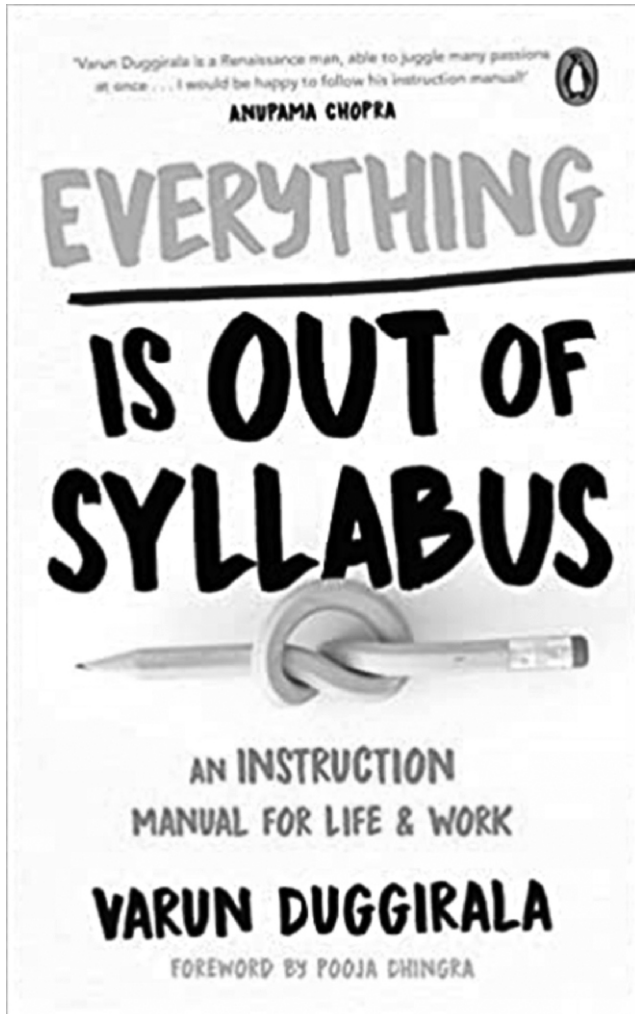


Book Review

Everything Is Out of Syllabus

An Instruction Manual for Life & Work

Dr. Hiteshwari Jadeja



Written By : Varun Duggirala
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Reviewed by : Dr. Hiteshwari Jadeja

1. Introduction

Life seldom comes with an instruction manual or a guidebook. It's often messy and unpredictable too.

While our education may prepare us for situations covered within its set syllabus, most of life happens outside this realm and this leaves us grappling with questions around work, life and everything in between. Hence the book, "Everything is out of Syllabus" offers myriad learning and lessons drawn from unexpected and messy situations in life. Packed with anecdotal wisdom, Everything Is Out of Syllabus is partly funny, most reflective, and completely authentic. It is a must-read for anyone who is trying to decode life and work out their own roadmap to navigate it.

The author, Varun Duggirala has survived and thrived in a system that throws curve balls at us without the tools to actually overcome them. He clears the confusion around overwhelming questions like what the true meaning of success is, how can we adopt an out-of-the-box thinking, how can we connect with both people and ourselves, and a lot more. The book, however, is not just about success. It is a guide on how to attain the most important goal of life: happiness.

2. Objective of the Book

The book aims to give readers a series of profound insights into how to start, make choices, connect with others and themselves, and reflect on life.

3. Main Content

The book is a collection of incidents, excerpts, insights and moments that will help the reader to write their own manual for life. Each chapter helps you pause, introspect and be able to draw parallels in your life. The overview is as follows:

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3.1 Start:

'Do what you can't!' – Casey Neistat

Our mind likes us to play safe by telling us not to take on the task at hand but rather focus on something harmless, less risky or something that's comfortable and if we let it have its way, we'll go through life not facing failure the way we should. Because failure shouldn't make you run away from trying something new rather it should teach how to do it better next time. The author suggested to embrace the beginner's mindset, work out the worst case scenario and flip the script on failure and make it your ally. He suggested to start with what comes easily to you and expand on it as you work toward being the person you want to be and learning the skills you'll need to succeed in life.

3.2 Choose:

'It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.' – Albus Dumbledore

Through his own experiences and choices he made in life during his early age, the author followed the three-step strategy that changed the trajectory of the early days of his career. Step one was to pay attention and understand the machinery at work which include people, tasks, roles and responsibilities, work culture. Step two was to identify the gaps in the wall, know the right time to speak and offer to fill them in and the last step was to do the work and don't compromise.

3.3 Learn

'Knowledge is knowing that tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a Fruit Salad.' – Miles Kingston

In the road towards life long learning, we often spend too much time dumping information into our minds and little time reflecting on it. Over time our mind tends to push the unused information out. Deriving the right insights from knowledge and using them at the right time in the right way is wisdom. In order to not miss out on the information we can choose to meticulously catalogue it. The author beautifully shares the examples about various aspects of learning like it's so much more than education. One should not follow the tradition blindly but learn to question it

and evolve it. This drive will keep you going and help you not just accumulate knowledge but also truly find wisdom.

3.4 Connect

'The Best ideas start as Conversations.' – Jonathan Ive

On the surface, conversation is a simple dialogue of thoughts and ideas, but underneath, it carries rich opportunities to build and strengthen bonds, uncover new information, and present information of your own. The author suggested that to get better at having conversations, three stages should be kept in mind, what we feel, what we say and what we hear. Sometimes when you find something interesting, you should store it for a rainy day and use every chance you have to share it. Also not all conversations are meant to be meaningful or have to necessarily drive some deep form or learning. Few with your close set of people where we feel safe enough to speak our mind and be stupid is the best investment we can make.

3.5 Reflect

'It's not who I am underneath, but what I do that defines me.' – Batman

Not all of us are naturally gifted. But that doesn't force us to sit on the sidelines and follow order. Rather, we should understand our strengths and weaknesses and work towards getting ourselves onto an equal footing with the others. The choices we make in life help us decide who we can be and we definitely control the choices we make.

4. Readers and their reflections:

The book is meant to show the path to happiness to individuals across industries. Several figures in the media and entrepreneurship scene have expressed their thoughts on the read:

4.1 “**Varun Duggirala** is a Renaissance man, able to juggle many passions at once. His energy is infectious and inspiring. I would be happy to follow his instruction manual,” said Anupama Chopra, film critic and author.

4.2 “**Varun Duggirala** delves deep into his innumerable experiences to teach everyone the unspoken fundamentals we were never taught

growing up. Everything Is Out of Syllabus is a book that I wish schools would actually put into their syllabus,” Varun Mayya, CEO and Founder, Avalon, said.

4.3 Amit Verma, writer and podcaster, said, “Life is hard, the world is messy, and we all need a helping hand. Well, thank goodness Varun Duggirala wrote Everything Is Out of Syllabus. Varun takes one for the team by figuring out life, productivity, the creator economy and how to lead a fulfilled life – and he shares these learnings with us! This book is full of lessons I wish I had learnt 25 years ago – but it's never too late.”

4.4 Pooja Dhingra - Entrepreneur and Founder & CEO - Le15 Patisserie, added, “Varun's knowledge stems from having critically examined his life, putting it into perspective, and allowing hindsight to be a great teacher. Everything Is Out of Syllabus is an excellent read--it's like talking to a person who knows what life is about and what makes it worth living.”

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5. Conclusion

The author said that Life comes without an instruction manual and with its own plot twists which are mostly 'out of syllabus.' However, the idea behind Everything Is Out of Syllabus is essentially a free-flowing conversation with the readers about the frameworks he used to make sense of moments that seemed tiny and inconsequential but, in reality, deeply impacted his perspective on the three pillars that are work, life and self. If we truly follow the lessons that he shared, we will be able to enjoy even the silliest and most routine things. The places, things, rituals, moments that you come across in your life will bring peace and happiness. All we need to do is simply pick the loose pages of the manual called life.