



You Are Not Special: ... And Other Encouragements

David McCullough Jr.

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A profound expansion of David McCullough, Jr.'s popular commencement speech—a call to arms against a prevailing, narrow, conception of success viewed by millions on YouTube—*You Are (Not) Special* is a love letter to students and parents as well as a guide to a truly fulfilling, happy life.

Children today, says David McCullough—high school English teacher, father of four, and son and namesake of the famous historian—are being encouraged to sacrifice passionate engagement with life for specious notions of success. The intense pressure to excel discourages kids from taking chances, failing, and learning empathy and self-confidence from those failures.

In *You Are (Not) Special*, McCullough elaborates on his now-famous speech exploring how, for what purpose, and for whose sake, we're raising our kids. With wry, affectionate humor, McCullough takes on hovering parents, ineffectual schools, professional college prep, electronic distractions, club sports, and generally the manifestations, and the applications and consequences of privilege. By acknowledging that the world is indifferent to them, McCullough takes pressure off of students to be extraordinary achievers and instead exhorts them to roll up their sleeves and do something useful with their advantages.

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