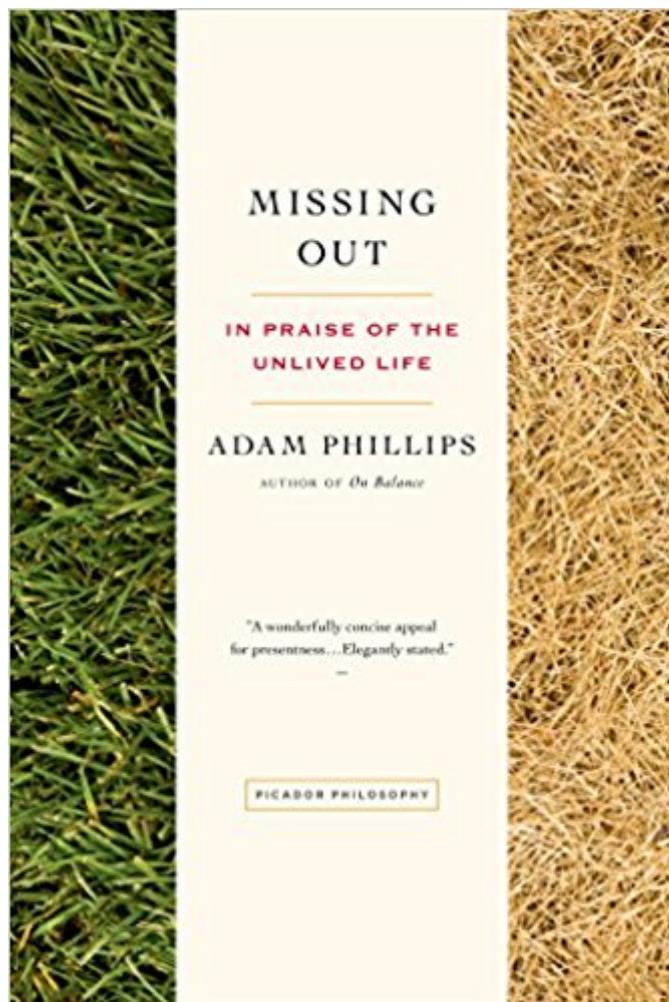


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# Missing Out: In Praise Of The Unlived Life



## Synopsis

A TRANSFORMATIVE BOOK ABOUT THE LIVES WE WISH WE HAD AND WHAT THEY CAN TEACH US ABOUT WHO WE ARE

All of us lead two parallel lives: the one we are actively living, and the one we feel we should have had or might yet have. As hard as we try to exist in the moment, the unlived life is an inescapable presence, a shadow at our heels. And this itself can become the story of our lives: an elegy to unmet needs and sacrificed desires. We become haunted by the myth of our own potential, of what we have in ourselves to be or to do. And this can make of our lives a perpetual game of falling short. But what happens if we remove the idea of failure from the equation? With his flair for graceful paradox, the acclaimed psychoanalyst Adam Phillips suggests that if we accept frustration as a way of outlining what we really want, satisfaction suddenly becomes possible. To crave a life without frustration is to crave a life without the potential to identify and accomplish our desires. In *Missing Out*, an elegant, compassionate, and absorbing book, Phillips draws deeply on his own clinical experience as well as on the works of Shakespeare and Freud, of D. W. Winnicott and William James, to suggest that frustration, not getting it, and getting away with it are all chapters in our unlived lives— and may be essential to the one fully lived.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *Missing Out*, Phillips seeks to render the self-punishing rigors of envisioning alternate lives— “denied lives, better lives, more outrageous lives”— into a normal-ish study in badly managed life expectations. While our lives are a seesaw of frustration and fulfillment, the eventual satisfaction

never quite measures up. Because of its wild ranginess, its unwillingness to be American and tell me what to think, Missing Out brought me a strange and maybe obvious kind of comfort. "Choire Sicha --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"A wonderfully concise appeal for presentness...Elegantly stated." • "The Boston Globe" Missing Out is [Adam Phillips's] most poetic, paradoxical, repetitive, and punning yet; he doesn't argue in a linear fashion but nestles ideas within ideas, like Russian dolls." • Sheila Heti, The New York Times Book Review "Adam Phillips" has an elegant prose style...with a talent for turning a phrase, a knack for epigrams" • "Los Angeles Review of Books" Extraordinary |Always humane, never reductive, Phillips is one of those writers whom it is a pleasure simply to hear think." • "The Sunday Telegraph (London)

I will admit that the end lacked the same substance as the beginning, but the beginning makes the book worth reading. Reading the reviews I was surprised to see so many negative comments, although upon reflection, the book is obviously not for everyone. I bought it after reading Joan Acocella's review in the New Yorker. She did not particularly like the book or understand it, so I figured there was probably something there. I was not disappointed.

I heard that Adam Phillips was coming to town to speak and so I investigated and this is the book I chose because it was a topic (missing out) that wove through my life and the life of so many clients. I suggest you read the book the same way that Adam suggested we listen and talk during the day we got to be with him in person: let yourself free associate. If you do, you will find your mind wandering in very useful directions. What I got out of it was the permission to live in all parts of my mind: the 'real' life I have now, and the 'lost' life that I had thought I'd have and didn't, and the 'imagined' life: what I can still hope for for myself in the future. Its a worthy book! if it does have its dry moments.

This was a fascinating analytic look at our desires, wants and needs. How we satisfy our frustrations and unmet wishes. Complex but fascinating to think about!

Sheer genius and deep.Overly well written. Can help you understand yourself and your course of life.

Adam Phillips is a damn genius. Buy this book. The item came as expected and in the advertised

time frame.

I'll repaste here what I just reviewed of another of his books, Unforbidden Pleasures, because the two go together. I read Adam Phillips "Missing Out". The topic and review sounded fascinating, unusual, something to broaden the thinking and challenge the mind. I was disappointed, and in reading the generous Look Inside of Unforbidden Pleasures it seems the same. Phillips seems very intelligent, extremely well read, puts a lot of work into his books, yet somehow manages to leave me wondering what insight I'm supposed to have received from what he just said. Like he can't get his words out of his own way so he can say what he thinks. Every once in a while he starts to write lucidly and you think, at last, here we go, and then he's back into muddled writing. This book sounds like another fascinating idea, and when I first started reading the Look Inside (lots of pages, presumably chosen by the author to best represent the book) I didn't even remember this was the same author, but as I read the fuzzy writing I had a sense of deja vu. Then I realized it's the same author as Missing Out. I think he has a lot to offer. I wish some very involved editor or a co-author could collaborate and get his insights clearly down on paper.

might be better for those more literary than me. interestin topic, but many literary references that i didn't have patience for

Adam takes our everyday experiences of life, ourselves and others, and peels off layer after layer - the manner in which we make sense of things, exposing the what and why beneath our attempts to satisfy our need to live without pain.

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