

Kaja Melsom

F#!king Freedom: Breaking with the tyranny of self-realisation. A philosophical but critical self-help book of sorts

Den fordømte friheten

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Photo: Julie Pike

Kaja Melsom is a philosopher, social commentator and frequent guest on the Norwegian public radio show called Verdibørsen (Exchange Value), which hosts debates on ethics and life. She works for the Humanist Association.

What happens when the freedom our parents and grandparents fought so hard for becomes the very thing that restricts and suppresses us? Kaja Melsom investigates how freedom in excess can in fact rob us of all choice, paralyse us even, and leave us anxious, ashamed and filled with self-doubt. "An overload of options, combined with a social code telling us that happiness is a matter of realising our potential, invites a continuous search for something better than what we already have. The constant certainty that a more attractive alternative could arise – one that might bring us into full bloom – makes it difficult to devote ourselves to anything wholeheartedly. It's like going on a date while scanning the room for a better prospect. It's difficult to enjoy life that way and impossible to attain the happiness that the ideal of freedom promises."

From Kaja Melsom's *F#!king Freedom*, p.9

Drawing on her background in psychology and philosophy, Kaja Melsom presents a thought-provoking and nuanced take on the concept of freedom in modern society. For the readers who liked Rebecca Solnit's *Men explain things to me*, Erling Kagge's *Quiet*, and Svend Brinkmann's *Stand Firmly*.

F#!king Freedom brings the reader on a timely and accessible journey of self-discovery by way of Kant and Rousseau as well as Geoff Dyer and Karl Ove Knausgaard while offering us the tools to free ourselves from too much freedom.

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