

YOU

are a

BADASS

HOW TO STOP DOUBTING  
YOUR GREATNESS  
AND START LIVING AN  
AWESOME LIFE

JEN SINCERO

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AND START LIVING AN Awesome life

Jen Sincero



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For my unfailingly sweet and supportive Dad and brother Stephen

*And still, after all this time,  
the Sun has never said to the Earth,  
“You owe me.”  
Look what happens with love like that. It lights up the sky.*

—Rumi

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## INTRODUCTION

*You can start out with nothing, and out of nothing, and out of no way, a way will be made.*

**—Reverend Michael Bernard Beckwith; former drug enthusiast turned spiritual enthusiast turned inspirational badass**

I used to think quotes like this were a bunch of crap. I also didn't understand what the hell they were talking about. I mean, not that I cared. I was too cool. What little I knew about the self-help/spiritual world I found to be unforgivably cheesy: it reeked of desperation, rah-rah churchiness and unwanted hugs from unappealing strangers. And don't even get me started on how grouchy I used to be about God.

At the same time, there was all this stuff about my life that I desperately wanted to change and, had I been able to bulldoze through my holier-than-thouism, I could have really used some help around here. I mean, overall I was doing pretty well—I'd published a couple of books, had lots of great friends, a close family, an apartment, a car that ran, food, teeth, clothes, clean drinking water—compared to the majority of the planet, my life was a total cream puff. But compared to what I knew I was capable of, I was, shall we say, unimpressed.

I always felt like, *Come ON, this is the best I can do? Really? I'm going to make just enough to pay my rent this month? Again? And I'm going to spend another year dating a bunch of weirdoes so I can be in all these wobbly, noncommittal relationships and create even more drama? Really?*



*And am I seriously going to question what my deeper purpose is and wallow in the misery of that quagmire for the millionth time?*

It. Was. A. Snore.

I felt like I was going through the motions of living my lukewarm life with the occasional flare-ups of awesomeness here and there. And the most painful part was that deep down I KNEW I was a total rock star, that I had the power to give and receive and love with the best of 'em, that I could leap tall buildings in a single bound and could create anything I put my mind to and . . . *What's that? I just got a parking ticket? You have got to be kidding me, let me see that. I can't afford to pay this, it's like my third one this month! I'm going down there to talk to them right now . . .* then, doop de do, off I'd go, consumed once again by low-level minutiae, only to find myself, a few weeks later, wondering where those few weeks went and how it could possibly be that I was still stuck in my rickety-ass apartment, eating dollar tacos by myself every night.

I'm assuming if you're reading this that there are some areas of your life that aren't looking so good either. And that you know could be looking a whole lot better. Maybe you're living with your soul mate and are joyfully sharing your gifts with the world, but are so broke that your dog is on his own if he wants to get fed. Maybe you're doing great financially and you have a deep connection to your higher purpose, but you can't remember the last time you wet your pants laughing. Or maybe you suck equally at all of the above and spend your free time crying. Or drinking. Or getting pissed off at all the meter maids who have precision timing and no sense of humor who, in your mind, are partly responsible for your personal financial crisis. Or maybe you have everything you've ever wanted but for some reason you still feel unfulfilled.

This isn't necessarily about making millions of dollars or helping solve the world's problems or getting your own TV show, unless that's your thing. Your calling could simply be to take care of your family or to grow the perfect tulip.

This is about getting mighty clear about what makes you happy and what makes you feel the most alive, and then creating it instead of pretending you can't have it. Or that you don't deserve it. Or that you're a greedy egomaniacal fathead for wanting more than you already have. Or listening to what Dad and Aunt Mary think you *should* be doing.

It's about having the cojones to show up as the brightest, happiest, badassiest version of yourself, whatever that looks like to you.

The good news is that in order to do this, all you need to do is make one simple shift:

You need to go from **wanting** to change your life to **deciding** to change your life.

Wanting can be done sitting on the couch with a bong in your hand and a travel magazine in your lap.

Deciding means jumping in all the way, doing whatever it takes, and going after your dreams with the tenacity of a dateless cheerleader a week before prom night.

You'll probably have to do things you never imagined you'd do because if any of your friends saw you doing it, or spending money on it, you'd never live it down. Or they'd be concerned about you. Or they'd stop being friends with you because now you're all weird and different. You'll have to believe in things you can't see as well as some things that you have full-on proof are impossible. You're gonna have to push past your fears, fail over and over again and make a habit of doing things you're not so comfy doing. You're going to have to let go of old, limiting beliefs and cling to your decision to create the life you desire like your life depends on it.

Because guess what? Your life does depend on it.

As challenging as this may sound, it's nowhere near as brutal as waking up in the middle of the night feeling like someone parked a car on your chest, crushed under the realization that your life is zooming by and you have yet to start living it in a way that has any real meaning to you.

You may have heard stories about people who had these major breakthroughs when the shit really hit the fan—they found a lump or got their electricity turned off or were moments away from having sex with strangers to buy drugs when suddenly they woke up, transformed. But you don't have to wait until you hit rock bottom to start crawling out of your hole. All you have to do is make the decision. And you can make it right now.

There's a great line from the poet Anaïs Nin that reads: "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom." This is how it was for me, and how I think it is for most people. My journey was a process (and still is) that started with my *decision* to make some serious changes, regardless of what I had to do to make them. None of the things I'd already tried were working: mulling it over and over with my equally broke friends and my therapist, working my ass off, going out for a beer and hoping it would take care of itself . . . I was at the point where I would try anything to get my act together, and Lawdy Lawd Lawd Lawd, it's like the Universe was testing me to see just how serious I was.

I went to motivational seminars where they made me wear a name tag and high-five the person next to me while shouting, "You're awesome and so am I!" I beat a pillow with a baseball bat and shrieked like I was on fire, I bonded with my spirit guide, participated in a group ceremony where I married myself, wrote a love letter to my uterus, read every self-help book under the sun, and spent blood-curdling amounts of money I did not have hiring private coaches.

Basically, I took one for the team.

If you're new to the self-help world, I'm hoping this book will ease you into some of the basic concepts that totally changed my life so you can have a breakthrough, too, without making you want to run off screaming in the process. If you've already dipped your toe in the self-help pond, I hope it will say something in a new way that turns a light on so you can make some major shifts, create some tangible results, and someday wake up crying tears of giddy disbelief that you get to be you.

And if I can save one person from ever having to take their inner child on a play date, I have done my job.

My main focus when I started working on myself was how to make money. I had no idea how to make it on a consistent basis, and was totally weirded out by admitting that I even wanted to in the first place. I was a

writer and a musician; I felt it was sufficient—and quite noble thank you very much—to focus on my art and let the money part work itself out. THAT went real well! But I saw so many people doing such sleazy and heartbreaking things to make money, not to mention those people who were working jobs that were death-of-a-thousand-wounds boring, that I wanted no part of it. Add to that my slew of other crippling beliefs about the unholy dollar and it's a wonder I wasn't eating out of a dumpster.

I finally realized that I needed not only to focus on making money, but that I also needed to get over my fear and loathing of it if I wanted to start pulling it in. This is when the self-help books started infiltrating my house, and the name tags assumed their mandatory and humiliating post above my left boob. Eventually I took my credit card debt to unthinkable heights by forking over more money than I'd paid for all my janky cars put together and hired my first coach. Within the first six months, I tripled my income with an online business that I created around coaching writers. And now I've grown it to a place where it affords me the means and the luxury to travel the world freely, while I write, speak, play music, and coach people in all areas of their lives, using many of the concepts I used to so enjoy rolling my eyes at and with which I am now obsessed.

In an attempt to help you get to where you want to go too, I'm going to ask you to roll with some pretty out-there things throughout this book, and I want to encourage you to have an open mind. No, on second thought, I want to yell in your face about it: STAY OPEN OR ELSE YOU ARE SCREWED. I mean it. This is really important. You've gotten to where you are right now by doing whatever it is you're doing, so if you're less than impressed with your current situation, you clearly need to change things up.

If you want to live a life you've never lived, you  
have to do things you've never done.

I don't care how big a loser you may or may not perceive yourself to be right now, the fact that you're literate, have the luxury of time to read this book and the money to buy it puts you way ahead of the game.

This isn't something to feel guilty or whiney or superior about. But it is something to appreciate, and should you make the decision to really go for it, know that you are extremely well-poised to knock it out of the park and share your awesomeness with the world. Because that's really what this is all about.

We need smart people with huge hearts and creative minds to manifest all the wealth, resources, and support they need to make their difference in the world.

We need people to feel happy and fulfilled and loved so they don't take their shit out on themselves and other people and the planet and our animal friends.

We need to be surrounded by people who radiate self-love and abundance so we don't program future generations with gnarly beliefs like *money is bad* and *I'm not good-enough* and *I can't live the way I want to live*.

We need kickass people to be out of struggle and living large and on purpose so they can be an inspiration to others who want to rise up, too.

The first thing I'm going to ask you to do is to believe that we live in a world of limitless possibilities. I don't care if you have a lifetime of proof that you can't stop shoving food in your face or that people are intrinsically evil or that you couldn't keep a man if you were handcuffed to his ankles—believe that anything is possible anyway.

See what happens—what do you have to lose? If you try getting through this book and decide it's a bunch of crap, you can go back to your sucky life. But maybe, if you put your disbelief aside, roll up your sleeves, take some risks, and totally go for it, you'll wake up one day and realize you're living the kind of life you used to be jealous of.

PART 1:  
HOW YOU GOT THIS WAY

## CHAPTER 1:

# MY SUBCONSCIOUS MADE ME DO IT

*You are a victim of the rules you live by.*

—**Jenny Holzer; artist, thinker, blurter of brilliance**

Many years ago I was in a terrible bowling accident. My friends and I were at the tail end of a heated tiebreaker, and I was so focused on making a great show of my final shot—leaping into action, loudly declaring my impending victory, dancing and twirling my way through my approach—that I didn't realize where my feet were when I let go of the ball.

This was the moment I was to learn how serious the bowling community is about penalizing those who roll with one toe over the line. They pour oil or wax or lube or something unimaginably slippery all over the alley, and should someone accidentally slide out of bounds while attempting the perfect hook shot, she will find her feet flying out from under her and her ass crashing down onto a surface that even an airborne bowling ball can't crack.

A few weeks later whilst lolling about in bed with this guy I met at Macy's, I explained that ever since my accident, I'm now woken up in the middle of the night with excruciating pain in my feet. According to my

acupuncturist, this is from the nerves in my back getting slammed when I fell, and in order to sleep through the night I'd need a new, firmer mattress.

"I have pains in my feet when I sleep too!" He said, raising himself up for an unreciprocated high five.

It's not just because I'm not into the whole high-five thing that I left him hanging, but also because I was annoyed with him. I already find mattress shopping to be totally bizarre and embarrassing—lying on your side with a pillow between your thighs for all to see like it's anyone's business—but the fact that I had to do it with my salesman lying next to me, begging for a high-fiver, was more than I could handle.

I couldn't help but notice that all the other salesmen simply stood at the end of the bed, rattling off mattress facts while their clients tested out a myriad of positions, but not mine. He'd lower down next to me on his back, arms crossed over his chest, and thoughtfully chat away, staring at the ceiling like we were at summer camp. I mean, he was nice enough and incredibly knowledgeable about coils and latex and memory foam, but I was scared to roll over for fear he'd start spooning me.

Was I too friendly? Should I not have asked him where he was from? Did he think I meant something else when I patted the empty space next to me to test the pillow top?

I obviously should have asked Freak Show Bob to get off the damn bed, or found someone else to help me, instead of sneaking out the door and blowing my only opportunity that week to go mattress shopping, but I didn't want to embarrass him.

*I didn't want to embarrass him!*

This is pretty much how my family was trained to deal with any sort of potentially uncomfortable interaction. Along with the fail-safe method of running in the opposite direction, other tools in our confrontation toolbox also included: freeze, talk about the weather, go blank, and burst into tears the moment you're out of earshot.

Our lack of confrontation-management skills was no great surprise considering the fact that my mother comes from a long lineage of WASPs. Her parents were the types who believed that children were to be seen and not heard, and who looked upon any sort of emotional display with the same, horrified disdain usually reserved for cheap scotch and non-Ivy League educations.



And even though my mother went on to create a household for us that was as warm, loving, and laughter-filled as they come, it took years for me to finally learn how to form a sentence when presented with the blood-chilling phrase, “We need to talk.”

All this is to say that it’s not your fault that you’re fucked up. It’s your fault if you *stay* fucked up, but the foundation of your fuckedupedness is something that’s been passed down through generations of your family, like a coat of arms or a killer cornbread recipe, or in my case, equating confrontation with heart failure.

When you came screaming onto this planet you were truly a bundle of joy, a wide-eyed creature incapable of doing anything but being in the moment. You had no idea that you had a body, let alone that you should be ashamed of it. When you looked around, everything just *was*. There was nothing about your world that was scary or too expensive or so last year as far as you were concerned. If something came near your mouth, you stuck it in, if it came near your hand, you grabbed it. You were simply a human . . . *being*.

While you explored and expanded into your new world, you also received messages from the people around you about the way things are. From the moment you could take it in, they started filling you up with a lifetime’s worth of beliefs, many of which have nothing to do with who you actually are or what is necessarily true (e.g. the world is a dangerous place, you’re too fat, homosexuality is a curse, size matters, hair shouldn’t grow there, going to college is important, being a musician or an artist isn’t a real career, etc.).

The main source of this information was, of course, your parents, assisted by society at large. When they were raising you, your parents, in a genuine effort to protect you and educate you and love you with all their hearts (hopefully), passed on the beliefs they learned from their parents, who learned them from their parents, who learned them from their parents. . . .

The trouble is, many of these beliefs have nothing to do with who *they* actually are/were or what is actually true.

I realize I’m making it sound like we’re all crazy, but that’s because we kind of are.

# Most people are living in an illusion based on someone else's beliefs.

Until they wake up. Which is what this book will hopefully help you do.

Here's how it works: We as humans have a conscious mind and a subconscious mind. Most of us are only aware of our conscious minds, however, because that's where we process all our information. It's where we figure things out, judge, obsess, analyze, criticize, worry that our ears are too big, decide once and for all to stop eating fried food, grasp that  $2 + 2 = 4$ , try to remember where the hell we left the car keys, etc.

The conscious mind is like a relentless overachiever, incessantly spinning around from thought to thought, stopping only when we sleep, and then starting up again the second we open our eyes. Our conscious mind, otherwise known as our frontal lobe, doesn't fully develop until sometime around puberty.

Our subconscious mind, on the other hand, is the non-analytical part of our brain that's fully developed the moment we arrive here on earth. It's all about feelings and instincts and erupting into ear-piercing temper tantrums in the middle of supermarkets. It's also where we store all the early, outside information we get.

The subconscious mind believes everything because it has no filter, it doesn't know the difference between what's true and what's not true. If our parents tell us that nobody in our family knows how to make money, we believe them. If they show us that marriage means punching each other in the face, we believe them. We believe them when they tell us that some fat guy in a red suit is going to climb down the chimney and bring us presents—why wouldn't we believe any of the other garbage they feed us?

Our subconscious mind is like a little kid who doesn't know any better and, not coincidentally, receives most of its information when we're little kids and don't know any better (because our frontal lobes, the conscious part of our brains, hasn't fully formed yet). We take in information via the words, smiles, frowns, heavy sighs, raised eyebrows, tears, laughter, etc., of the people surrounding us with zero ability to filter any of it, and it all gets lodged in our squishy little subconscious minds as the "truth" (otherwise

known as our “beliefs”) where it lives, undisturbed and unanalyzed, until we’re on the therapy couch decades later or checking ourselves into rehab, again.

I can pretty much guarantee that every time you tearfully ask yourself the question, “WTF is my problem?!” the answer lies in some lame, limiting, and false subconscious belief that you’ve been dragging around without even realizing it. Which means that understanding this is majorly important. So let’s review, shall we?

1) Our subconscious mind contains the blueprint for our lives. It’s running the show based on the unfiltered information it gathered when we were kids, otherwise known as our “beliefs.”

2) We are, for the most part, completely oblivious to these subconscious beliefs that run our lives.

3) When our conscious minds finally develop and show up for work, no matter how big and smart and highfalutin they grow to be, they’re still being controlled by the beliefs we’re carrying around in our subconscious minds.

Our conscious mind thinks it’s in control, but it isn’t.

Our subconscious mind doesn’t think about anything, but *is* in control.

This is why so many of us stumble through life doing everything we know in our conscious minds to do, yet remain mystified by what’s keeping us from creating the excellent lives we want.

For example, let’s say you were raised by a father who was constantly struggling financially, who walked around kicking the furniture and

grumbling about how money doesn't grow on trees, and who neglected you because he was always off trying, and for the most part failing, to make a living. Your subconscious took this in *at face value* and might have developed beliefs such as:

- Money = struggle
- Money is unavailable.
- It's money's fault that I was abandoned by my father.
- Money sucks and causes pain.

Cut to you as an adult who, in your conscious mind, would love nothing more than to be raking in the dough, but who is subconsciously mistrusting of money, believes it's unavailable to you and who worries that if you make it, you'll be abandoned by someone you love. You may then manifest these subconscious beliefs by staying broke no matter how hard you *consciously* try to make money, or by repeatedly making tons of money and then losing it in order to avoid being abandoned, or in a plethora of other, frustrating ways.

No matter what you say you want, if you've got an underlying subconscious belief that it's going to cause you pain or isn't available to you, you either A) Won't let yourself have it, or B) You will let yourself have it, but you'll be rill fucked up about it. And then you'll go off and lose it anyway.