

I'm OKAY, Life's OKAY

*An everyday guide to the
radical self acceptance of you,
life and everything else*



By Lisa Steingold

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Lisa's work is about unlocking the magic of individuals. For more information go to www.lisasteingold.com

I dedicate this book to everyone who is sick and tired of feeling bad about themselves. It is dedicated to those who are tired or worrying, trying to be better, working and just generally feeling less than.

I dedicate this book to my sister Lauren and my sisters from other mothers Jocelyn and Tshidi.

I dedicate this book to Jan who always encourages and praises my work and greets the world everyday with a chuckle.

I dedicate this book to my parents who loved me despite my flaws and for being the perfect ones for me.

I dedicate this book to my partner Jacques who taught me to love and treasure my body, my flaws and the fact that I am deeply in love with chocolate.

Last but in no way least, I dedicate this book to my mentor Silver Fox ~ you know who you are!

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Introduction

I remember some time ago listening to a podcast by a Buddhist trained therapist called “Accepting what is”. At the time, at the ripe old age of 32 I was living with my dad (actually I am still living with my dad now aged 34) having lost my money on an NGO that didn’t quite get off the ground. My vision of how my life was meant to turn out was shattered. In the podcast he was talking about acceptance of whatever comes along the path.

I was like *‘yeah right dude, that’s all well and good until life really falls apart’*.

It took me a few years of living with my dad and not being able to move forward, to understand that I really wasn’t in control. In the beginning I kept myself busy strategising, calling people and setting up meetings to ensure that my life and work went forward.

I wasn’t very successful and as time went on I realised I couldn’t force things to happen. There were days where I had no work and where my phone didn’t ring at all. Those days triggered massive anxiety within me. How would I get work? How would I survive?

I remember my sister saying to me once;

“Sis you’ve got to realise that the situation is just triggering anxiety that is already there.”

I thought she didn’t know how I felt but as time wore on I began to understand what she said was true. With little else to do I set

myself the task of embracing my anxiety. Little did I know I was doing the real work right there. Each moment I embraced my anxiety, I also embraced my fears. As I embraced my fears I began to realise how I'd been trying to run from myself and that actually I was okay just as I was.

I realised that for all the years I'd been struggling financially there wasn't a single day I hadn't eaten a great meal. I realised that there wasn't a day that I didn't have a place to sleep. I realised that whilst I had racked up quite a bit of debt, I was not my debt. I was not my debt because I was not my money. Sure there were fears that had been driving my behaviour with money but I wasn't my money. I had to realise the fears, I had to look into my patterns with money and I had to see what had been driving me and then? Well then I had to accept where I was and I had to accept myself and trust life. No easy task.

My value wasn't related to my life circumstance and if I continued to set my sense of 'okayness' in accordance with my external surroundings I'd forever be on an okay / not okay rollercoaster.

You and more specifically, your value is unrelated to absolutely anything. You are nothing, you are NO thing. What I mean is that your value is related to 'no' thing; not your house, not your work, not your money, not your relationship, not to your friends and family and certainly not to the way you look.

I've been a coach for some time and the thing that clients and I struggle with the most is when things go 'wrong'. This is because we see it as a reflection of ourselves. We think, if things

go wrong then I must have DONE something wrong. The thing it took me some 34 years to figure out is that things never go wrong; they might not go the way we'd hoped or wanted, but they never go wrong.

If we stick to the assumption that things have gone wrong then there must be someone who 'made' them go wrong. Someone must've DONE something wrong and more often than not, we assume that someone to be ourselves. We berate ourselves for not having done better, known better, and thought better; in fact we blame ourselves for not being better.

Assumptions are the mother of... know what I mean?

You're assuming that things, external people and situations are causing you suffering when in fact it is your assumptions that are causing you suffering. You see when you assume things; you create a context for a story that is to follow. When you assume something you have already created the story and just need a reason why to back it up.

You're assuming that things have gone wrong and that there is a definite way that things should have turned out. Secondly you're assuming, based on the first assumption, that someone, namely you or another person, must be to blame for things having gone wrong. Lastly you're assuming that things need to be remedied with immediate effect.

I remember, in the early stages of our relationship, whenever my partner was in a bad mood I'd automatically ask him "*what did I do wrong?*"

Just by asking the question I was assuming that things were wrong and to add to it all that I was the cause of it. It's funny now because it seems rather arrogant to have assumed myself the cause of someone else's troubles. Assuming I caused all his troubles, that would make me the one in control of his *okayness*, would it not? And yet I'm not really in control of anything really barring my response to life.

I understand that in recent times we are taught that we create our reality with our thoughts and our beliefs and certainly I do not deny that but can we say that we're 100% conscious of what we're creating? Can we say we're in control of our reality? We're in control of our perceptions and responses and even then only to the degree to which we're conscious of them.

Can you say you were 100% aware of creating your own retrenchment? Can you say you were 100% aware that you created a situation in which your partner left you? Can you say that you were 100% aware that you prevented yourself from losing weight? Of course not!

This brings me to my intention in writing this book. If we are going to engage in trying to understand what we're creating through our conscious and subconscious mind at any point in time then we're going to have to do it from a sense of 'I'm OKAY, Life's OKAY' or at least the declaration that such a thing is possible. You see you cannot be open to learning about your subconscious blocks if you're still trying to get everything right. It's not that you won't be able to uncover the beliefs; you

will but unless you surrender your idea of right and wrong it will be immensely challenging to shift them.

One of my favourite authors Geneen Roth says you cannot separate your approach to something from the outcome of that thing. What she means by this, is to say you cannot hope to expect an enlightening result if you're trying to get something right or prevent yourself from getting it wrong because this is the antithesis of enlightenment. This is the path we take when we're trying to prevent pain we think might result. Right and wrong are essentially judgements of what merely is.

So perhaps you realise that your finances present a major problem for you in your life. As a result you work through a facilitator to find out what those beliefs are. Perhaps you uncover a series of debilitating beliefs that have contributed to your situation; for example 'only evil people are wealthy'. You realise that you've possibly prevented yourself from earning money in the hope of avoiding evil.

Perhaps your challenge doesn't lie in finances but in relationships. Perhaps you decide to see a facilitator and uncover a deep fear of intimacy that has prevented you from having a committed relationship.

Perhaps your challenge lies in your career or your weight or reoccurring illness or in family. No matter what the context is, we all face challenges of some kind and yes there's no doubt we hold the limiting beliefs that prevent us from unlocking our 'magic' as I like to term our potential for living.

It's great if we realise the limiting beliefs but what happens next?

Well if we've been trying to get things right our whole lives, we will quickly embark on trying to 'fix' the situation so that it 'rights' itself. This approach is unsustainable as it inevitably swings the pendulum to the opposite extreme. I know because I spent a good many years adopting such an approach.

When we approach the situation from a place of radical self acceptance, we firstly realise that nothing is ever wrong and as such there's nothing to fix. Instead we uncover the belief and become aware of specific behaviour that was triggered by the belief. Knowing that there's nothing to fix because nothing is ever truly broken or wrong, the awareness shifts the belief which in turn gives rise to a shift in context and we find ourselves on a different trajectory.

When we begin to understand that "I'm OKAY, Life's OKAY" then there isn't anything that needs to change. First of all whatever happened in the past served a purpose for our growth even though we might not realise it at the time. Secondly that a subconscious belief brought into awareness will itself create a shift without too much additional impetus needed from us.

Okay so I realise I've presented a rather interesting concept but what exactly does I'm OKAY, Life's OKAY mean? Fundamentally it means radical self acceptance. Radical self acceptance is acceptance based on the fact that;

1. You're human and allowed to make mistakes.

2. You accept yourself no matter what and even when you can't accept yourself.
3. Life will not go according to plan but it always works out.

So what do the three aspects of radical self acceptance mean?

1. You're human and allowed to make mistakes

If you've read my book "Carbs, curves and everything in between" then you'll know about my theory on Perfection Deficit Disorder (PDD). Just in case you don't, PDD is the desire to be perfect with the inability to do so based on the fact that you're human.

What I've realised and will talk about later in this book is that it's all ONE thing. Success and failure are different sides of the same coin. Divinity and Humanity are no different. You can only be successful to the degree to which you allow yourself to fail. You can only embody Divinity to the degree to which you allow yourself to be human and yes that means making mistakes. You can only shine to the degree to which you have embraced your own seeming darkness. So in embracing radical self acceptance, you are actually embracing your Self in every sense of the word.

2. You accept yourself no matter what and even when you can't accept yourself

Just what it says; you accept yourself. As you will know if you've read my other books I have dedicated my life to

becoming 'better'. I laugh as I write this now as I'm not quite sure as to what 'better' means but you get the idea.

Recently just before writing this book I dedicated 21 days to prayer and to developing trust. As if just 21 days is all it takes to develop trust but no matter. At the end of the period I sat down and declared that I would trust my path no matter what; the next day all my data was erased from my computer. I was beside myself. I called a friend in tears and just sobbed. I felt angry, I wondered why, I wondered what it meant and yes I even wondered what I had done wrong. The day afterwards I felt such a sense of shame.

"After all" I told one of my dear friends

"I promised the universe I would trust"

"Yes Lisa but you didn't promise you wouldn't cry through it all and for goodness sakes you're allowed to be human"

It dawned on me how self critical I was being. I realised I wasn't accepting myself because firstly I'd assumed that the data loss was because of something I'd done wrong and secondly I didn't allow myself to be human. See point #1.

I'd expected to get 'trust' right first time round as if it were part of some test that ultimately determined the rest of my life and possibly even future ones.

I realised I had to accept myself for not accepting myself in the form of my behaviour. I had to stop judging the judge in me.

It's the only way it ever stops you know; the suffering I mean. It's the only way I know how. Accept yourself no matter what even when you can't accept yourself just accept that at that moment you're not accepting yourself.

3. Life will NOT go according to plan but it always works out.

The grand fact of the matter is that life will NOT go according to plan because it is not designed to. Imagine how boring life would be if life went according to plan? There'd be no reason to do anything. We'd never be sparked into action. I bet if you look back over your life, the greatest turning points were taken and presented themselves at the most chaotic and challenging of times?

Life is a grand adventure, the cause and effect of which can never be fully known irrespective of how much 'manifesting' work you've done or how many times you've watched and read 'The Secret'.

The reason that life won't go according to plan is because no man is an island. If a butterfly flaps its wings in Japan, it has an effect on you and I'm not exaggerating. We're all in this thing together. When people die, it affects the planet as a whole just as much as when people are born. I'd like to take this from an esoteric concept to a more practical one. We all share the same universal fears, the same hopes, the same desires; they may come about differently but at the core they are the same. It's the reason that books offer themselves and appeal to a collective. In this manner everything each and every person is doing has an effect

on the whole. If everyone is having an effect on the whole how can we be responsible for it going according to plan according to our small perspective?

Perhaps you do not agree with this worldview and may have your own theories. No matter the worldview we all realise life does not go according to plan.

Life goes according to cause and effect, life goes according to our soul's specific reason for incarnation, life goes according to what is most needed for our sense of wholeness but never according to plan. Life never goes according to plan but it always works out.

So that's what I mean when I talk about 'radical self acceptance'. It's radical because it's acceptance that goes far beyond what can be seen by the eye into the unseen. It is a brave and courageous act that moves past our desperate desire for validation, measurement, understanding and goal orientation to a declaration of acknowledgement and acceptance of everything despite life's uncertainty and vulnerability. It's a declaration that we are more than our circumstances, more than our bodies, more than context despite what is seen, believed, heard, proved or experienced.

Whilst as a coach I believe it's essential to uncover our deep seated beliefs; those that prevent us from living 'Magic' in the world. I simultaneously believe that 'Magic' is only unlocked through radical self acceptance.

Some of you reading this book might think it's a onetime deal; that you declare you're okay and life's okay and get on with it. I

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