



WELCOME TO MY
BRILLIANTLY
MESSY
TRIBE

LET'S GET MESSY

Welcome to your very own guide to *Your Messy Brilliance: 7 Tools for the Perfectly Imperfect Woman*! I'm so glad you decided to join me on this journey.

I am all about getting the word out that perfection isn't real, and that it's time to unapologetically become our brilliantly messy selves. I want you to know you're not alone in your desire for a life that feels real, messy, and 100% YOU.

This process doesn't come naturally to many of us, which is why I wrote *Your Messy Brilliance*: as a compassionate support that teaches women to embrace their perfectly imperfect selves.

This special in-depth guide to the book was created so that you can breathe a giant sigh of relief and put down the dead weight of perfectionism, once and for all. In it, you'll find chapter summaries and key takeaways, discussion questions that'll help you integrate the concepts and tools of the book in a deeper way, a simple glossary of terms you'll find throughout the book, and fun tips for starting your own mini-tribe of messily brilliant women!

Are you ready to embrace your messy brilliance, along with a few good friends? What are you waiting for? Let's dive in together!

Big love,

Kelly McNeilis



INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO YOUR *MESSY* BRILLIANCE

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This is where I introduce you to the concept of **messy brilliance**. Your messy brilliance lives in the parts of you that you'd rather push down and keep hidden. It's the secret that gets buried deep in the closet, never reaching the light of day. But only by embracing these hidden parts will you be able to step into the joy you have always longed for. Only then will you be able to make life happen, on your terms. The Introduction also gives you insight into my own personal story and journey through messiness, as well as why I wrote this book. You will get the lowdown on each of the chapters of this book, as well as how to use the seven tools that I discovered on my journey through my own messy brilliance. Each tool has its own section in the book, as well as individual exercises to take you deeper.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- What is your personal definition of messiness? How have you typically responded to messiness in your life?
- Could you relate to my story of how I found my own brilliance by wading through the mess? Why or why not? Have there been similar situations in your own life?
- Which tool—Curiosity, Awareness, Acceptance, Intuition, Choice, and Manifestation—do you resonate with most, and which do you feel the most challenged by?
- What is your personal relationship to intention-setting? How has it helped you to access your brilliance?



CHAPTER 1: THE TRUTH IS...

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter answers the question that's on everyone's mind: Why should I embrace my mess? I explore my own feelings and personal stories about my messiness. I also share my journey of being a recovering perfectionist, as well as the power of owning one's messiness and complexity as foundations for your brilliance. This chapter makes the important distinction between messiness and "drama," and encourages you to get to the core of your messiness by getting curious and asking yourself some important and effective questions.

TOOL 1 SUMMARY: CURIOSITY

The first of our tools, and in some ways the most important, is Curiosity. This is where your journey began many years ago when you first discovered your childlike capacity for wonder—and it's where you will pick up and continue. At its core, curiosity is about seeking the novelty, meaning, and beauty in experiences both familiar and unfamiliar. Curiosity changes our relationship with our surroundings. It helps us connect with the present moment. The truth is, curiosity is just about the most vital—and vitalizing—quality we can cultivate.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- What does the word *truth* mean to you? What determines the way you look at truth (e.g., spirituality, science, religion, the values with which you were raised, personal experience, etc.)?
- How have your early childhood experiences affected your ability to claim messiness?
- When you think of embracing your entire self, including your imperfections, how does it make you feel?
- How do you know when you're embracing your messiness vs. just spinning in your life's drama?

CHAPTER 2: OWN YOUR STORY

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter shows you that your life and world are made up of stories, because we are all meaning-making beings. Stories are the things we constantly tell ourselves that ultimately become our reality, and they are always subjective. I offer the vital distinction between storytelling and truth-telling; while the former has us recycling our experiences and spinning in the same patterns without self-awareness, the latter lets us recognize the value, lessons, and complexity of our experiences while simultaneously helping us separate ourselves from them.

The chapter also explores the importance of understanding the masks we wear and the roles we have chosen as coping mechanisms for dealing with our pain and unhealed wounds. I encourage you to accept your darkness—that part of each of us that most of us run away from because it feels too scary or intense to face. I demonstrate how moving through shame and embracing our secrets can free us from the harmful lies we tell ourselves, individually and collectively. I also investigate the importance of self-compassion and discernment in shining a light on our stories.

TOOL 2 SUMMARY: AWARENESS

The second tool, Awareness, gives you a clear vision of the life you would like to have. It is connected to the felt experience of being present. Awareness leads you to make keen observations about your surroundings—even the parts that are seemingly hidden or too subtle for immediate perception. Awareness allows each of us to step back, gain perspective, and examine the full gamut of our memories, beliefs, and life histories in order to get clear about what we truly want for ourselves. Once you are operating from awareness, putting on your masks and roles will never look the same again!

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- What is a personal experience in your life that has deeply shaped you?
- What kinds of masks have you worn over your lifetime? How have they either served or limited you?
- When you think about your own darkness, what are the qualities that come to mind? How do you feel about the possibility that they are part of your brilliance?
- What are the major secrets you've kept, and why? How might sharing the hidden parts of yourself empower you and help you to create new stories for your life?

CHAPTER 3: CONSCIOUSLY CULTIVATE IMPERFECTION

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explores the limitations of perfection, despite the fact that it's an ideal that is constantly chased after in our world. I share with you the gifts of fucking up, and how consciously accepting ourselves—even when it's really hard—and embracing our perceived imperfections can transform us as women. I also introduce the concepts of holding steady, unwavering intentions for your life, identifying your true (rather than inherited) values, and standing in your integrity. I detail my own personal struggle with body shame and investigate how to break through the myth of the ideal body to embrace who you really are. Finally, I show you how releasing your grip on perfectionism through the feminine superpower of surrender can open you up to a whole new sense of appreciation for yourself and your messy brilliance.

TOOL 3 SUMMARY: ACCEPTANCE

The third tool, Acceptance, allows you to simply stay open to what is, without judging it. Acceptance absolutely depends on our trust that, even if we find ourselves flailing in the ocean, there is a lifeline—and the path of least resistance is the most effective way for us to find it. Acceptance is another feminine superpower that will lead you to moments of genius, inspiration, creativity, and discovery. It is the tool that makes surrender possible.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- What would a “perfect” life look like to you? In what ways are idealized images involved in this vision?
- Think about the “shoulds” that dictate everything from your body image to relationships. What are they?
- What are some of the major “fuck-ups” of your life? Can you see the gifts in these experiences?
- What is your relationship to surrender? Is it easy or difficult? Freeing or terrifying? Or somewhere in between?

CHAPTER 4: EMBRACE YOUR POWER

CHAPTER SUMMARY

What is true power? This chapter asks that question and makes the bold assertion that it's something that lives inside our bodies at all times, even though we are not often aware of it. Our global culture has collectively moved into the denial of our individual power. Even in freedom-loving countries like the United States, we are conditioned to relinquish our power and to easily succumb to being controlled by others. We are often told that we are powerless, but this is because we are looking at the wrong definitions of power—ones that are often based in a hyper-masculine way of approaching the world. I explore the idea of feminine power, which is all about flow, connection, collaboration, and acting from our intuition rather than forcing the right answers. I show you how holding healthy boundaries, trusting yourself, and connecting to the infinite wisdom of what I call the *feminine thread* can bring you closer to your true power.

TOOL 4 SUMMARY: INTUITION

Our fourth tool, Intuition, is all about the inner knowing that every single one of us has when we tap into our true power. "Psychic sight" is not just for the mystics—it's something we all have access to. It is the sixth sense that each of us is born with, and that we all need to become reacquainted with. Attuning ourselves to the incredible wealth of information that is often hidden in plain sight requires us to not limit ourselves to what we've always perceived as the upper limit of possibility.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- Are you connected to your feminine side? Why or why not? What are the ways in which you have rejected or embraced your feminine power?
- What is your relationship to your body? How does it feel to consider that your feminine wisdom and power can be accessed through your body?
- Think about your closest relationships; now, consider the kinds of boundaries you are able to put in place for each of them. Note whether or not you feel depleted or energized by each of these relationships.
- How deeply do you trust yourself and your intuition? What are the tangible results of trusting yourself?

CHAPTER 5: MAKE A POWERFUL CHOICE

CHAPTER SUMMARY

When tragedy or fortune strikes, we have the choice to decide how we are going to react. This chapter integrates all the tools and knowledge you picked up from the first half of the book and encourages you to take powerful action by making powerful choices. Powerlessness is not real in the presence of choice. Even if the events that unfold around us are completely out of our control, we almost always have an opportunity to choose how we respond to desperate situations. It doesn't matter what has happened to us in our past. It doesn't matter if we were powerless over those things, or even if we made poor choices that led to those things. What matters is right now, today, and what we decide to do with our stories.

I guide you through understanding and identifying victim archetypes that keep you stuck in limiting stories and beliefs about who you are and what's possible. I show you how choosing victimhood keeps you from fully stepping into and embracing your messy brilliance. I also emphasize the importance of self-responsibility, exercising personal integrity, choosing to forgive (especially when it comes to forgiving yourself), and becoming your own savior rather than depending on others to come along and give you the answers you are seeking. I show you the beauty of making the choices that work for you, an ability that only emerges from the exploration of the pain and messiness of screwing up and learning from your mistakes.

TOOL 5 SUMMARY: CHOICE

Choice is the fifth tool—and it's the primary differentiator between people who are making life happen, and people who are simply allowing life to happen to them. We make simple and complex choices every day—from what we decide to put in our mouths, to whom we associate with, to where we live, to how we show up in the world. The awesome thing is, it's never too late to exercise conscious choice.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- Think about some of the most painful drawbacks, challenges, and circumstances of your life. How have your choices in how you responded impacted your sense of personal power?
- In what ways are you a victim? Which victim archetypes ring true for you?
- How does victimhood keep you from expressing your messy brilliance and being in integrity with who you are?
- How have you given your power away or expected to be saved by others? What would it mean to see yourself as the ultimate authority in your own life?

CHAPTER 6: EMBODY LIMITLESS POSSIBILITY

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I show you the true meaning of limitless possibility: opening to your authentic joy. The truth is, limitless possibility can't really have room to grow and stretch its wings if we're stuck on someone else's skewed idea of what it means—or even on our own idea of how it is supposed to look.

A master manifestor knows her innate potential—but not because she has spent all her time reciting positive affirmations, believing this will somehow instigate change. Becoming a manifestor is all about moving into your own muck and magnificence simultaneously, with as much self-acceptance and as little shame as possible. This chapter details a comprehensive six-step process for becoming a master manifestor: 1) Take a look at your current reality; 2) Ask effective questions; 3) Acknowledge your fears and confusion; 4) Unfight, unflight, and unfreeze your darkness; 5) Discover your joy by honoring your needs; and 6) Create the life you want.

TOOL 6 SUMMARY: MANIFESTATION

Manifestation, as it is detailed in the six-step process within Chapter 6, is our sixth tool! Manifestation is not a magical process of getting what you want; it challenges you to embrace all aspects of yourself so that you can live in your authentic joy. In order to embody limitless possibility, you must know in your bones that you are able to create what you want! The fact is, your life is miraculous, and you are a born manifestor. Think about it: Humans are manifesting at every single moment of the day. From skyscrapers to speedy transportation systems, from cures for terminal illnesses to magnificent and moving works of art, from technology that can connect us to what's happening across the globe at the click of a button to information funneled down to us from the farthest reaches of the universe, we have always found ingenious ways to manifest new possibilities.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- Using your joy as a compass, what kinds of possibilities can you envision for your life?
- How do you feel about the concept of manifestation? Does it resonate with you?
- What are your obstacles to embodying limitless possibility?
- How can the qualities of a master manifestor that you learned about in this chapter help you live a life aligned with your joy and dreams?

CHAPTER 7: MAKE LIFE HAPPEN

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I overturn conventional definitions of destiny. By actively referring back to the tools to question your personal understanding of destiny, you will come to a single incontrovertible truth: *At any given point, you have a choice as to how to define your destiny.* I show you how making life happen depends on taking conscious action and noticing where you might be sabotaging yourself with ineffective action. I also offer you the key to incorporating meaningful conscious action in your daily life: that is, integrating your feminine (the part of you that is infinitely wise, curious, and knows exactly who she is and what she wants) with your masculine (the part of you that can boldly manifest those desires in the world). Additionally, I show you how you can tap into authentic wellness instead of someone else's prescriptions for living a healthy life. I also share how you can sustain transformation through repetition, intention, and embodiment. Finally, we look at what it means to own your true genius, find your tribe, and live out your legacy.

TOOL 7 SUMMARY: THE INFINITE ROADMAP

The final tool of the book is your Infinite Roadmap, which purposely contradicts the idea that you have to use a roadmap to get to a final destination. Remember, your destiny, just like your roadmap, is something that is connected to walking the path and living the journey—a journey that has no end and that you will take over and over again, as long as you live. Your Infinite Roadmap is each of the tools in constant action in your life. Creating your roadmap requires you to take conscious and consistent action toward the expression of your power and genius. To create it, review and revisit all of the tools in this book and customize them in a variety of different ways. Engage with Curiosity, Awareness, Acceptance, Intuition, Choice, and Manifestation to actively consider the feelings you want to engage with on a daily basis and the joy that you want to express in the world.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- How do self-sabotage, forcefulness, and non-action show up in your life? How can integrating your inner feminine and masculine change that?
- What aspects of authentic wellness (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, environmental, and relational) do you want to spend more time and energy cultivating?
- What would you say is your unique genius, and how does your tribe help amplify that?
- What kind of conscious action can you take to apply the tools to your life so that you are living your legacy on a daily basis?

CONCLUSION: TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE GLOBAL SISTERHOOD

SUMMARY

As women, we are unequivocally powerful, but in order to understand this, we must acknowledge a paradox that can often be hard to wrap our brains around: Each of us is unique and special, and at the same time, each of us is one small aspect of a messy and beautiful whole.

In this final section of the book, I encourage you to: Shine your light. Cultivate compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance of those who also carry the load and are contributing to the legacy of a global sisterhood—and don't forget to extend those same graces to yourself. Choose to see the beauty in it all.

QUESTIONS FOR DIVING DEEPER

- What is your relationship to sisterhood? How can you feel more connected to the feminine and other women in general?
- How does the recognition of our interconnectedness make you feel?
- What is your definition of healing? When have you experienced your own wholeness?
- How do you think integrating all parts of yourself will impact the world for the better?



A MESSY GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AUTHENTIC WELLNESS:

A holistic concept that takes into account six different areas in your life—physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, environmental, and relational—and ensures the presence of joy, empowerment, balance, and a deep sense of attunement to the body's innate wisdom.

CONSCIOUS ACTION:

The natural outcome of moving into the present moment and asking yourself: What is the most effective action I can take right now? It brings us back into a state of congruency between our inner and outer selves, and lets ourselves cut through the b.s. in such a way that even making difficult decisions becomes easier, and the lenses of our reality are wiped clean.

DARKNESS:

The entire terrain of self-loathing, shame, rage, perversion, and ugliness that most of us run away from, but that is intrinsically connected to our messy brilliance.

DESTINY:

The outcome of making life happen on your own terms (as opposed to a passively received fate or any other dictionary definitions).

GENIUS:

That unstoppable force within you that might express itself as an artistic talent, a soothing bedside manner, or the ability to send everyone who meets you into fits of uncontrollable laughter. Your genius is a force of nature all your own that desperately wants to be birthed into the world, and to be fully engaged with it.

FEMININE THREAD:

A single thread, simultaneously delicate and resilient, that weaves in and out of our individual and collective stories—creating unity and coherence, connection and meaning.

IDEALIZED IMAGE:

A picture, idea, or fantasy that is connected to one's conditioned, cultural beliefs about perfection (e.g., meeting Mr. Right and living happily ever after, having the beautiful house with a white picket fence, eternal youthfulness, etc.). While many of us reach for the idealized image, it is often disconnected from our authentic joy.

LEGACY:

Your gift to the world and to yourself—a service that you offer to other people from the depths of your spirit. From our beliefs to our belongings, we are all in possession of a number of legacies that we inherited from distant ancestors. Living your legacy is all about stepping into what you are most passionate about and drawing from that which is uniquely yours.

MESS/MESSINESS:

The brilliant and marvelous totality of who you are: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

MESSY BRILLIANCE:

The polished gem of your truth and beauty, which you discover only by diving into your mess and your "darkness."

POWER:

The experience of timelessness, full absorption in the moment, perfect joy and awe, and connection to the very fabric of the universe. This is not something that can be given to us or taken away by others; it is something that is our birthright. It lives within us at all times. It is irrevocable, undeniable, ours.

10 EASY WAYS TO START YOUR OWN BRILLIANTLY MESSY TRIBE

Sharing our community and the messy brilliance movement is important, because the name of the game isn't just self-improvement. It's about lifting each other up so that we can finally see how awesome we already are. It's recognizing that we don't need to have that job, lose those five pounds, or find that one special love to live the life that we yearn for. We already have the tools we need and the answers we seek; they're just hidden beneath the weight of all that stuff people have been telling us we need to "fix."

The best way for us to put our knowledge and the principles in this book to use is with a community of other women. We learn and grow best when we are doing it in a supportive tribe.

Here are some simple ideas for how you can build your own **Brilliantly Messy Tribe** of powerful women.

- Share the book with three people: a close friend, a family member, and someone you don't really know. Ask for their insight, and share yours.
- Get a group of friends together over for happy hour or tea and have a conversation about what it means to embrace your perfectly imperfect self.
- Gather at least three of your close girlfriends, and take an afternoon to write individual inventories of your lives. Share with each other: What's working? What isn't? How will you commit to changing the things you don't like, and incorporating more of what brings you joy?
- Go for an unstructured walk in your neighborhood with a group of friends. That is, don't set any goals for what to do, or time limits. Let your sense of childlike wonder and curiosity guide you.
- Form a seven-week women's circle (virtual or in person) where you can each take turns answering the discussion questions in this guide and sharing your own messy stories.
- Do the exercises in each Tool section of the book with a group of friends.
- Set up an ongoing "accountability" circle, where the participants can all share their deepest dreams and desire with each other and offer support around fulfilling them.
- Invite a group of close friends (and acquaintances you'd like to know better) for a dinner party of vulnerable secret-sharing.
- Screw structure! Get a group of women together to bake, finger paint, dance up a storm, or do pretty much any activity that involves getting messy!

Check our Facebook group for more ideas.

Thanks for joining my brilliantly messy tribe! If you have any questions please email me at info@womenforone.com.