



Book # 121
Event # 227

Big Magic by Elizabeth Gilbert Reviewed by Marisa Ortiz



About the Author: American writer best known for her 2006 memoir “Eat, Pray, Love- One Woman's Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia” a chronicle of her year of "spiritual and personal exploration" spent traveling abroad, made into a film by the same name in 2010. She was the first unpublished short story writer to debut in *Esquire*, journalist for SPIN, GQ, The New York Times Magazine, Allure, Real Simple and Travel + Leisure. She appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show in 2007 and was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine, and Oprah's SuperSoul 100 list of visionaries and influential leaders.

About the Book. Published in 2015 as a sequel to the sequel of “Eat, Pray, Love”; this self-help book provides instructions on how to live a life as creative as the author’s, digging deep into her own generative process to share her wisdom and unique perspective on creativity.

With no introduction and divided into 6 parts including the 5 essential ingredients for creativity: **1. Courage, 2. Enchantment, 3. Permission, 4. Persistence, and 5. Trust.** Gilbert ends her book with a short story as part **6** called **Divinity** and a conclusion.

Written in a highly conversational tone, with much lightheartedness and commitment, Big Magic is the perfect book for anyone who enjoys creating as a hobby, as a craft, art or vocation and wants the tools to live a more creative life. Based on her experience and full of hilarious inspiring stories, this book is sure to help any artist wanting to create better or more without the martyrdom associated with being at artist and with devotion to our human creativity, our big magic.

The Book's ONE THING

Creativity is a paradox between sacredness, and unimportance, between fear and courage, between art as a crushing chore and as a wonderful privilege. Only when we are at our most playful can divinity finally get serious with us. Make space for all these paradoxes to be equally true inside your soul, and you can make anything. The treasures that are hidden inside you are hoping you will say yes.

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Q: What is creativity?

A: The relationship between human being and the mysteries of inspiration.

Courage

Hidden Treasures

We must live our most creative lives as a means of fighting back against the ruthless furnace of this world. Without bravery, we would never be able to realize the vaulting scope of our own capacities. (6)

Creative Living, Defined.

Do you have the courage to bring forth the treasures that are hidden within you?

This is one of the oldest and most generous tricks the universe plays on us human beings, both for its own amusement and for ours: the Universe buries strange jewels deep within us all, and then stands back to see if we can find them.

The hunt to uncover those jewels – that’s creative living. The courage to go on that hunt in the first place – that’s what separates a mundane existence from a more enchanted one. The often-surprising results of that hunt- that’s what I call Big Magic. (8)

An Amplified Existence

Not necessarily talking about pursuing a life that is professional or exclusively devoted to the arts. Living a life that is driven more strongly by curiosity than by fear. (11)

A creative is an amplified life. It’s a bigger life, a happier life, an expanded life. Living in this manner- continually and stubbornly bringing forth the jewels that are hidden within you – is *a fine art*, in and of itself. Creative living is where Big Magic will always abide (12)

Scary, Scary, Scary

Creative living is a path for the brave. We all know this. We all know that when courage dies, creativity dies with it. (13)

Defending your Weaknesses

Argue for your limitations and you get to keep them. (18)

Fear is Boring

Because it was the same thing every day. Because it was identical to everyone else’s fear. You don’t get any special credit for knowing how to be afraid of the unknown. Fear is a deeply ancient instinct, in other words, and an evolutionarily vital one... but it ain’t especially smart. (20)

The Fear You Need and the Fear You Don’t Need

You don’t need your fear in the realm of creative expression...when it comes to creativity, of course, doesn’t mean your fear won’t show up. Especially when you’re trying to be inventive or innovative. Your fear will always be triggered by your creativity, because creativity asks you to enter into realms of uncertain outcome, and fear hates uncertain outcome. (23)

The Road Trip

I allow my fear to live and breathe and stretch out its legs comfortably. Creativity will be doing its job, which is to remain stimulating and inspiring. (25)

Why It’s Worth It

You have treasures hidden within you – extraordinary treasures – and so do I, and so does everyone around us. And bringing those treasures to light takes work and faith and focus and courage and hours of devotion, and the clock is ticking, and the world is spinning, and we simply do not have time anymore to think so small. (27)



Enchantment

An Idea Arrives

Such an intense emotional and physiological reaction doesn’t strike me often, but it happens

enough (and is consistent enough with symptoms reported by people all over the world, all throughout history) that I believe I can confidentially call it by its name: inspiration. (33)

How Ideas Work

The idea will organize coincidences and portents to tumble across your path, to keep your interest keen. You will start to notice all sorts of signs pointing you toward the idea. Everything you see and touch and do will remind you of the idea. (36)



What Happens When You Say No

Not always a dishonorable choice...you don't want word getting around the universe that you're difficult to work with. Whatever your response, though, do be sympathetic to the poor idea. All it wants is to be realized. (38)

What Happens When You Say Yes

The stereotype of the Tormented Artist "*I shall destroy myself and everyone around me in an effort to bring forth my inspiration, and my martyrdom shall be the badge of my creative legitimacy.*" (40)

A Different Way

A different way is to cooperate fully, humbly, and joyfully with inspiration. You can receive your ideas with respect and curiosity, not with drama or dread. You can clear out whatever obstacles are preventing you from living your most creative life, with the simple understanding that whatever is bad for you is probably also bad for your work. (41)

An Idea Grows

All the good ideas feel daunting at first, so I proceeded. I agreed to enter into a contract with the idea. I promised the idea that I would never fight against it and never abandon it, but would

only cooperate with it to the utmost of my ability, until our work together was done, (42)

An Idea Gets Sidetracked

Real-life drama derailed me from my pursuit of invented drama. (44)

An Idea Goes Away

Keep your eyes open. Listen. Follow your curiosity. Ask questions. Sniff around. Remain open. Trust in the miraculous truth that new and marvelous ideas are looking for human collaborators every single day. Ideas of every kind are constantly galloping toward us, constantly passing through us, constantly trying to get our attention. (49)

Wizardry - Ann Patchett and the Amazon jungle story.

WTF?

The idea might have been officially transmitted on the day we met. We think it was exchanged in the kiss. And that, my friends, is Big Magic. (55)

A Little Perspective

People draw hateful conclusions like this all the time. Such thinking comes from a wretched allegiance to the notion of scarcity- from the belief that the world is a place of dearth, and that there will never be enough of anything to go around. (56)

Ownership

If you are not ready or available, it (inspiration) may indeed choose to leave you and to search for a different human collaborator. (58)

Multiple Discovery

A term used in the scientific community whenever two or more scientists in different parts of the world come up with the same idea at the same time. (61)



The Tiger's Tail

Sometimes... she would nearly miss the poem, but not quite. She would just barely catch it "by the tail." Like grabbing a tiger. (67)



Hard Labor vs. Fairy Dust

It's the most magnificent sensation imaginable when it arrives. I don't think there is a more perfect happiness to be

found in life that this state, except perhaps falling in love. Eudaimonia= Greek for highest degree of human happiness. (67)

Pinned Beneath the Boulder

The distinction of having and being a genius. When artists are burdened with the label of "genius", I think they lose the ability to take themselves lightly, or to create freely. (69)

Let it Come and Go

I am really giving this creative endeavor my whole-hearted effort. ...In order to live a fully creative life: work steadily, always thank the process...I thank creativity for allowing me to engage with it at all. (75)

A Dazzled Heart

And the sense that I live in a most remarkable world, thick of mysteries. "Something unknown is doing we don't know what." (78)

Permission

Remove the Suggestion Box

It also never occurred to me to go ask an authority figure for permission to become a writer. (85)

Your Permission Slip

Creativity is the hallmark of our species. We have the senses; the curiosity, the opposable thumbs, the rhythms, the language, the excitement and the innate connection to divinity for it. (89)

Decorate Yourself

Creating delightful things out of my existence, because that's what brings me awake and that's what brings me alive. (91)

Entitlement

...Good kind of arrogance- this simple entitlement to exist, and therefore to express yourself. (93)

Originality vs. Authenticity

Attempts at originality can often feel forced and precious, but authenticity has quiet resonance that never fails to stir me. Just say what you want to say, then, and say it with all your heart. If it's authentic enough, it will feel original. (98)

Motives

Your own reasons to create are reason enough. Merely by pursuing what you love, you may inadvertently end up helping us plenty. Do whatever brings you to life, then. Follow your own fascinations, obsessions, and compulsions. Trust them. Create whatever causes a revolution in your heart. The rest of it will take care of itself. (101)

Schooling

What the schools get from the exchange is clear: your money. What the students get out of the exchange depends on their devotion to learning, the seriousness of the program, and the quality of the teachers. (102)

Try This Instead

Try to push yourself deeper into the world, to explore more bravely. If you are older, trust that the world has been educating you all along. You already know so much more than you think you know. You are not finished; you are merely ready. (108)



Your Teachers

Eventually the teachers won't be there anymore. The hours that you will then put into practice, study, auditions, and creation will be entirely up to you." (110)

The Fat Kids

A few friends who also wanted to be writers, and we started our own workshop. (114)

Werner Herzog Chimes In

"Quit complaining. It's not the world's fault that you wanted to be an artist. It's not the world's job to enjoy the films you make, and it's certainly not the world's obligation to pay for your dreams. Nobody wants to hear it. Steal a camera if you must but stop whining and get back to work." (115)

A Trick

Inspiration will be grateful to hear those words coming out of your mouth, because inspiration – like all of us – appreciates being appreciated. Inspiration will overhear your pleasure, and it will send ideas to your door as a reward for your enthusiasm and your loyalty. (119)

Pigeonholing

Let people have their opinions, let people be in love with their opinions, just as you and I are in love with ours. "It ain't what they call you; it's what you answer to." W.C. Fields (121)

Fun House Mirrors



I certainly did not feel, as I was writing *Eat, Pray Love* that I was producing the greatest or most important work of my life. (122)

We Were Just a Band -John Lennon. I still perceive that human artistic expression is blessedly, refreshingly nonessential. (126)

Radiation Canaries

Pure creativity is something better than a necessity; it's a gift. It's the frosting. Our creativity is a wild and unexpected bonus from the universe. (128)

High Stakes vs. Low Stakes

There's probably never going to be any such thing in your life or mine as "an arts emergency" That being said, why not make art. (130)

Tom Waits Chimes In

There was anguish, there was torment, there was drinking, there were dark night of the soul. He was lost in the cult of artistic suffering, but he called that suffering by another name: dedication.

Music is nothing more than decoration for the imagination. That's all it is. That realization, Waits said, seemed to open things up for him Songwriting became less painful after that. (133)

The Central Paradox

My creative expression must be the most important thing in the world to me (if I am to live artistically), and it also must not matter at all (if I am to live sanely)." (135)

Persistence

Taking Vows

When I was like sixteen years old, I took vows to become a writer. (139)

Learning It's a simple and generous rule of life that whatever you practice, you will improve at. (143)

A Caveat

...your education isn't over when they say it's over; your education is over when you say it's over. You can start whenever you decide to start. (146)

The Empty Bucket

The aspiring poet is constantly lowering a bucket only halfway down a well, coming up time and again with nothing but empty air.

After many years of practice...the chain draws unexpectedly tight and you have dipped into waters that will continue to entice you back. You'll have broken the skin on the pool of yourself. (148)

The Shit Sandwich

Because if you love and want something enough – whatever it is – then you don't really mind eating the shit sandwich that comes with it. (150)

Your Day Job

There is no dishonor in having a job. What is dishonorable is scaring away your creativity by demanding that it pay for your entire existence. (155)

Paint Your Ox



Even the most successful creative people I know complain that they never seem to get all the hours they need in order to engage in dreamy, pressure-free, creative exploration. (159)

Have an Affair Don't think of it all as burdensome, think of it as sexy. (161)

Tristram Shandy Chimes In

British 18th century novel written by Laurence Sterne. Dress for the novel you want to write. Seduce Big Magic and it will always come back to you – the same way a raven is captivated by a shiny, spinning thing. (164)

Fear in High Heels

Perfectionism is just a high-end, haute-couture version of fear – in fancy shoes and a mink coat, pretending to be elegant when actually it's just terrified. Particularly evil lure for women who hold themselves to an even higher standard of performance than do men. Putting forth work that is far from [perfect rarely stops men](#) from participating in the global cultural conversation. (168)

At some point, you really just have to finish your work and release it as is – if only so that you can go on to make other things with a glad and determined heart. Which is the entire point. Or should be. (169)

Marcus Aurelius Chimes In

“Do what nature demands. Get a move on – if you have it in you- and don't worry whether anyone will give you credit for it. And don't go expecting Plato's Republic; be satisfied with even the smallest progress and treat the outcome of it all as unimportant. (171)

Nobody's Thinking About You

You are free, because everyone is too busy fussing over themselves to worry all that much about you. (175)

Done is Better than Good

A good-enough novel violently written now is better than a perfect novel meticulously written never. (177)



In Praise of Crooked Houses

I felt that my novel was an interesting finished product – maybe even more interesting for its slightly working angles-so I let it go. (180)

Success

Do what you love to do and do it with both seriousness and lightness. At least then you will know that you have tried and that- whatever the outcome – you have traveled a noble path. (184)



Career vs. Vocation

Creative living can be an amazing vocation, if you have the love, courage and persistence to see it that way. I suggest that this may be the only sanity-preserving way to approach creativity. (186)

Elk Talk

Name of a story the author wrote and eventually got published in Story magazine (192)

The Beautiful Beast

Big Magic – proof that you must never surrender, that no doesn't always mean no, and that miraculous turns of fate can happen to those who persist in showing up. (193)

Lastly This

Give up if you must, and after a while without creating, if you didn't find anything else that takes its place in your life, then persevere. (198)

Trust

Does It Love You?

Our ancestors always operated with a sense of being in a reciprocal emotional relationship with their physical surrounding. (202)

Worst Girlfriend Ever

Writing torments them and hides from them It punishes them, destroys them, kicks their asses ten ways to Sunday. (204)

Addicted to Suffering

Suffice it to say that the modern language of creativity is steeped in pain, desolation, and dysfunction. Numberless artists toil away in total emotional and physical solitude – dissociated not only from other humans, but also from the source of creativity itself. (206)

A Cautionary Tale

To Suggest that nobody ever made valuable art unless they were in active emotional distress is not only untrue, it's also kind of sick. (207)

The Teaching of Pain

... because they don't want to lose their suffering, which they have somehow conflated and confused with their creativity. (212)

Our Better Angels

If the art legitimates cruelty, I think the art is not worth having. (214)

Choose What to Trust

If the only thing an idea wants is to be made manifest, then why would that idea deliberately harm you, when you are the one who might be able to bring it forth? (217)

Stubborn Gladness Inspiration is always trying to work with me. (220)

Choose Your Delusion

The work wants to be made, and it wants to be made through you. (221)

The Martyr vs. the Trickster

Martyr energy is dark, solemn, macho, hierarchical, fundamentalist, austere, unforgiving,



and profoundly rigid. Trickster energy is light, sly, transgender, transgressive, animist, seditious, primal, and endlessly shapeshifting. (222)

Trickster Trust

He trusts himself, obviously, he trusts his own cunning his own right to be here, his own ability to land on his feet in any situation. (224)

A Good Trickster Move

A lighthearted process does not necessarily need to result in a lighthearted product. (228)

Lighten Up.

What is sacred is the time that you spend working on the project, and what that time does to expand your imagination, and what that expanded imagination does to transform your life. (232)

It Ain't Your Baby

Be careful with your dignity, is what I am saying, It is not always your friend. (235)

Passion and Curiosity

How do you find the inspiration to work when your passion has flagged? This is where curiosity comes in. (237)

Devotion to Inquisitiveness

Curiosity is the truth and the way of creative living. Curiosity is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end. (237)

The Scavenger Hunt

It only worked because I said yes to every single tiny clue of curiosity that I had noticed around me. It's Big Magic at a quieter scale, and on a slower scale, but make no mistake about it, it's still big magic. (245)

That's Interesting Don't rush through the experiences and circumstances that have the most capacity to transform you. (247)

Hungry Ghosts Creativity is still the most effective way for me to access wonder, I choose it... to block out all the external (and internal) noise and distractions, and to come home again and again to creativity. Because without that source of wonder, I know that I am doomed. I will forever wander the works in a state of bottomless dissatisfaction. (251)

Do Something Else

Einstein called it 'combinatory play' the act of opening up one mental channel by dabbling in another. (253)

Paint Your Bicycle

The failure had departed; the creator had returned. By doing something else, and by doing it with all his heart, he had tricked his way out of the hell of inertia and straight back into the Big Magic (257)

Fierce Trust

What do you love doing so much that the words failure and success essentially become irrelevant? What do you love even more than your own ego? How fierce is your trust in that love? (259)

Walk Proudly

The ballroom is often more welcoming and supportive than you could ever imagine. Somebody might even think you're brilliant and marvelous. You might end up dancing with royalty. (264)

Divinity

Accidental Grace



A Retrospective of our last ten books



Reading Magic	Reading with a family whether family by blood, profession, or interests, leads to delight and food for thought, which presents a lot of goodness and positive growth for the entire community. Read continually... experience books, learn from books, share books!
The Power of TED	Shift happens when we break out of the default mode of victim and adopt the creator mode of being.
The Memo	Women of color and underrepresented groups are sometimes at a disadvantage in the workplace especially when it comes to securing high level positions. Become aware of your unconscious bias.
Made To Stick	Sticky messages of all kinds, whether true or false, draw their power from the same six principles: 1. Simplicity 2. Unexpectedness 3. Concreteness 4. Credibility 5. Emotions 6. Stories. "As we pored over hundreds of sticky ideas, we saw, over and over, the same six principles at work" From Made to Stick
Occasional Magic	"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all." Aristotle
The Surrender Experiment	Surrender is about peaceful acceptance, listening and being open to what life is putting in front of you. Surrender is not passive.
Work is Love Made Visible	Leaders should focus on who they are, not just on what they do. Recognize your purpose in life!
Think and Grow Rich	"All achievement, all earned riches, have their beginning in an idea!" It is what you APPLY in life that will CHANGE your life.
7 Essential Traits of Coaches	Integrate more Coaching Traits and Best Practices in Developing Your Unique Leadership Coaching Style.
Talent is Never Enough	If you want your life to be a magnificent story, then realize that you are its author. Every day you have the chance to write a new page in that story. I want to encourage you to fill those pages with responsibility to others and yourself. If you do, in the end you will not be disappointed." John Maxwell



Let's Pan for Some Gold

What thought, or idea had the biggest impact on you today?

What is your ONE THING? What one specific action you will take TODAY from what was discussed?



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Calendar of Events

San Antonio	San Antonio	Corpus	Houston	San Antonio	West Side
"1st Friday"	Wine & Cheese	2nd Tuesday	4th Thursday	"4th Friday"	3rd Wednesday
7:30AM	5:30 PM	5:30 PM	11:30AM	8:00 AM	12:00 Noon
Wittigs	Haworth Smartworld	Wittigs Haworth	Wittigs Haworth	Alpha Home	American Sunrise Good Samaritan
3-Apr	8-Apr	14-Apr	23-Apr	24-Apr	15-Apr
Marisa Ortiz Big Magic	Robert Schmidt A Republic. If You Can Keep It	Robert Schmidt A Republic. If You Can Keep It	Pat Whitty Man's Search for Meaning	Pat Whitty Man's Search for Meaning	Robert Schmidt The Alchemist
1-May	13-May	12-May	21-May	22-May	20-May
Pat Whitty Emotional Equations	Malcolm Coon Sapiens	Malcolm Coon Sapiens	Judith Cutright The Obstacle is the Way	Judith Cutright The Obstacle is the Way	Catherine Lester Power of Moments
5-Jun	10-Jun	9-Jun	25-Jun	26-Jun	17-Jun
Pat Whitty The War of Art	John Rugh Education of Millionaires	John Rugh Education of Millionaires	Robert Schmidt Talking to Strangers	Robert Schmidt Talking to Strangers	Marisa Ortiz The Four Agreements