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# FOREWORD

BY SARK

I deeply know the pain of living with big inner lies and negative self-talk. I now know the profound liberation and power of living differently.

We are all conditioned to believe these kinds of lies from an early age, and most of us continue this way for a lifetime. Amy's beautiful book shines a big, bold light on the big fat lies we tell ourselves and shows us how to change our inner dialogue, empower our Inner Wisdom, and wake up our Inner Superstar.

Take a tour through the fifty-nine lies in this book, and you'll recognize yourself, or perhaps your best friend, sister, mother, or daughter. Read and absorb the "truths" and let them illuminate and change you. Explore and

practice with the “challenges” and allow them to transform you. Use the “affirmations” to support your new beliefs.

In my more than twenty years of writing transformative books and teaching life-changing workshops, I have never encountered anything more detrimental than believing the kind of lies we tell ourselves, then living out the results of thinking that way. Lack of self-love and self-worth is a profound epidemic passed on through the generations, unless people are shown how to live differently.

This book does just that. In practical and accessible language, it shows you how to think and live differently. And Amy doesn't just expose the lies — she reveals the masks they might be wearing. Trust me: these will feel familiar to you too. She also provides real-life examples, both from her own life and from the lives of people remarkably like you.

Good news! You are definitely not the only one, and in fact, you are in excellent company. I would also like to note that Amy Ahlers walks her talk or “runs her buns” with the processes in this book. I know this because we are both personally and professionally connected, and I've witnessed her practicing and experienced her first-

rate coaching. I can also tell you that she's an outstanding mom to her daughter, Annabella.

This book provides true solutions and spiritual nourishment and shows you how to use the power of your Inner Wisdom and your awakened Inner Superstar. You'll also learn an extremely effective three-step process to use anytime to disengage from your Inner Critics and to empower yourself to make significant changes and see the growth in your life.

This book, including the wonderful list of resources at the back, will supercharge your life!

**SUSAN ARIEL RAINBOW KENNEDY AKA SARK**

Author and artist,

*Glad No Matter What: Transforming Loss and  
Change into Gift and Opportunity*

**PLANETSARK.COM**





## INTRODUCTION

**T**he most important relationship in your life is your relationship with you. And most of us are not doing so hot. We are incredibly, intensely hard on ourselves. And that stinks.

We think that if we were just accomplished enough, thin enough, beautiful enough, rich enough, we could then magically shift our internal dialogue into an empowering, nurturing, loving one. But after more than a decade of coaching women from every conceivable walk of life, I finally got it: women are really hard on themselves DESPITE their external circumstances. We all engage in beating ourselves up both for the big things and for the tiniest imperfections. And it isn't helping us to become more successful or to feel more fulfilled or even to get more done.

And who can blame us for being so hard on ourselves? We have a lot on our plates: careers, romance, kids, health... the list

**THE MOST IMPORTANT  
RELATIONSHIP IN  
YOUR LIFE IS YOUR  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH YOU**

goes on and on. We're supposed to bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan, have incredible sex with our partners (never letting him forget he's a man — that is, assuming he is a man), get the laundry and housework done, have healthy, accomplished kids and a tight ass and perky boobs to boot. We begin to feel like we're supposed to enjoy being pulled in a million directions at the same time. And that we're supposed to be as flexible as Gumby on muscle relaxers. But we're only human. How about we give ourselves a break?

### The Cost of Our Lies

The National Science Foundation has discovered that the average person thinks as many as sixty thousand thoughts a day and that the vast majority of them are negative and critical. In other words, we're telling ourselves Big Fat Lies over and over again until we become addicted to them. This internal battle eats away at self-love, self-worth, and self-esteem, leading to depression, dissatisfaction, decreased productivity, and heart-stopping stress.

We're paying a high price for these Lies. Here are some facts for those of you who are statistic junkies:

- We're stressed out, and the National Institute of Health reports that 70 percent of all disease is stress related.
- We're worried. *Time* magazine has proclaimed that women are more powerful, but less happy, than they've ever been.
- Even when we're doing well, we don't *feel* as if we're doing well. According to Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers in "The Paradox of Declining Female Happiness," "By many objective measures the lives of women in the United States have improved over the past thirty-five years, yet we show that measures of subjective well-being

indicate that women’s happiness has declined both absolutely and relative to men.”

- And all this self-loathing is seriously affecting our mental health. The National Institutes of Mental Health report that nearly *twice as many American women* as men are affected by depression and that between five and ten million women and girls suffer from eating disorders.

How depressing is THAT? I mean, it wasn’t so long ago that women were banding together to win the right to vote, and now here we are powerful and free...and totally miserable. It’s time for us to fling open our windows and yell, “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore!” (Thank you, Paddy Chayefsky.) I know it and you know it; we are ready to get our happiness on — and not just by popping a pill. It is high time we went easy on ourselves, just for the sheer joy of it. Are you ready? Let me show you how.

**DON’T BELIEVE  
EVERYTHING  
YOU THINK**

## The Inner Critic

Allow me to introduce you to your Inner Critic, or Inner Mean Girl, a term coined by my colleague Christine Arylo and me. Your Inner Mean Girl is negative. She’s catty. She’s judgmental.

She compares your worst to everyone else’s best. In her eyes, you lose every time.

She spews cruel words at you and makes you feel like you’re in seventh grade again — and *not* in the popular group. Your Inner Mean Girl’s favorite thing to do is to make you feel small, inadequate, and unworthy. She’s always finding evidence to prove her theory: *you are not enough*.

Well, I’ve got news for you: Your Inner Critic is a Big Fat Liar! She tells you Big Fat Lies to try to maintain the status quo

and keep you in your comfort zones. Even if your comfort zones aren't all that comfortable. She will tell you over and over that "you're not enough," "it's too late," and "you're a failure."

All Lies.

Once you realize that your Inner Critic is a liar, see if you can't catch her in the act. (Hint: Whenever you're feeling bad about yourself, she's right there with a megaphone.) Notice how she loves to speak in absolutes. She uses words like *never*, *always*, *forever*, *all*, *everybody*, *must*, *nothing*, and *no one* to punish you and make you feel like a lost cause. She sees things only in black and white, leaving no room for being human.

Think you're alone? Think only obviously insecure women believe these Lies or let their Inner Critics run the show? Think again! When we hear powerhouses such as Elizabeth Gilbert, bestselling author of *Eat, Pray, Love*, declare, "Despite having written five books, I worry that I have not written the right *kinds* of books" or Oprah admitting to the world that her focus on her weight has robbed her of joy: "I'm mad at myself. I'm embarrassed. I can't believe that after all these years, all the things I know how to do, I'm still talking about my weight," we realize that the Inner Mean Girl, and her Big Fat Lies, is omnipresent among even the most successful women. In other words, this is *not* a personal failure.

### **Get to Know Your Inner Critic's Big Fat Lies**

I've been speaking, teaching, and leading courses alongside Inner Mean Girl Reform School cocreator, Christine Arylo, about the Inner Mean Girl and her Big Fat Lies. (And I've created a free reader's tool kit at [www.BigFatLiesTheBook.com](http://www.BigFatLiesTheBook.com), where you'll receive a complimentary Inner Mean Girl Transformation Kit. Please go there right now to get yours!) After coaching thousands of women, I have learned the Inner Mean Girl can show up in

many different forms. For some of you, she might feel more like an Inner Sad Girl or an Inner Rageaholic or an Inner Pollyanna. However she shows up for you, I want to help you get to know your Inner Mean Girl so that you can banish her once and for all!

Begin by considering the following:

- Identify your Inner Critic's Top 10 List of places, situations, and environments where she likes to show up and criticize. Is it at work? Social events? In bed? Whenever you look in the mirror? Once you know what circumstances are likely to trigger the Inner Critic, you can be better prepared to deal with her.
- Next, draw a picture of your Inner Critic. Is she fat with big glasses? Perfectly pressed in pink? A slob with a cigarette in one hand and a martini in the other? Don't worry if you think you can't draw. No one will ever see this but you, so go for it! And if you really don't want to draw, you can find an image in a magazine or on the Internet that captures your Inner Mean Girl. It is helpful to have a mental image of the voice that tortures you.
- Get to know your Inner Mean Girl on a deeper level. Notice what makes her louder, and notice what diminishes her power. What happens if you just yell "Shut up!" at her? What if you just look her calmly in the eye and reassure her that everything is going to be all right? Maybe she needs a compliment every now and then. After all, Inner Critics need love too.
- What are your Inner Critic's favorite Big Fat Lies? What does she say to you over and over? (Hint: Use the table of contents of this book if you need some examples.) Your Inner Mean Girl will collect evidence to make her case. She'll do everything she can to back up her favorite punishing, disappointing, sad stories about you and your worth.

## **BIG FAT LIES WOMEN TELL THEMSELVES**

### Signs That You Are Letting Your Inner Critic Run the Show

The presence of any of these painful emotions is a clear sign that you have fallen for your Inner Mean Girl's Big Fat Lies:

- fear
- hopelessness
- insecurity/unworthiness
- depression
- guilt
- regret
- anger
- blame
- boredom
- pessimism
- frustration
- impatience
- disappointment
- jealousy

Are you getting how crazy-making it is to believe her Lies? Now that you've become aware of your Inner Critic and the stories she tells, it's time to tune in to that other voice inside you — the voice of your Inner Wisdom.

### **Get to Know Your Inner Wisdom**

I've got some great news for you: as loud and nasty as the voice of your Inner Critic can be, another voice inside you is even more powerful: the voice of your Truth, which I like to call your Inner Wisdom. Take a moment right now and tune in to your Inner Wisdom. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and invite her in. Feel her deep inside you, beckoning you to wake up to your magnificence.

Recall a time when your Inner Wisdom was 100 percent present. A time when you just knew something was right for you or that a certain someone was bad news. Maybe you followed your Inner Wisdom's voice, and sure enough, your intuition was right on. Or perhaps you went against your gut instinct and regretted it later, exclaiming to your best friend, "I *knew* I shouldn't have gone on that date!" or "I could just feel this wasn't the right job for me, and I took it anyway." Maybe your Inner Wisdom shows up when you are cooking, painting, hiking, taking a long bath, or writing — you know, the times when you just feel divinely guided. (Want some help accessing your Inner Wisdom? I've created an MP3 of a guided visualization just for you. Go to [www.BigFatLiesTheBook.com](http://www.BigFatLiesTheBook.com) to grab that, as well as a whole tool kit of other fun extras.)

Allow your Inner Wisdom to bubble up. Let's really connect with her so you can get to know her better. Begin with the following:

- Notice how your Inner Wisdom communicates with you. Does she whisper in your ear? Do you feel her in your body? Do you see images before your eyes? Or perhaps you just *know* when she's there? Become aware of how she connects with you.
- Draw a picture of your Inner Wisdom. What is her essence? Feel free to grab paints, crayons, or pencils to sketch away. Or maybe get an image off the Internet or do a collage. Let's get her really present.
- Allow your Inner Wisdom to respond to your Inner Critic's Biggest Fattest Lies. If you ask and remain open, you'll be able to know/hear/see/feel her responses. By the way, your Inner Wisdom can also tell you some hard truths, but she does it from love and compassion, as opposed to shame and judgment.

Great job! Doesn't it feel downright yummy to lean into your Inner Wisdom? You know you are focusing on your Inner Wisdom's truth when you feel:

- joy
- laughter
- happiness
- optimism
- a sense of fun and adventure
- inspiration
- freedom
- empowerment
- enthusiasm
- passion
- hope
- groundedness
- knowing

I highly recommend creating space each day to connect with your Inner Wisdom. You may feel her most strongly when you are in prayer or meditation, which can include anything from sitting in silence to listening to a chant to reading from a meditation book. You might also want to make a habit of checking in with her before any new decision or endeavor. Maybe you can keep an image or icon of her near your work station, next to your bed, or even in your car. Some women invoke their Inner Wisdom as they put on lotion each morning, so they can get dressed feeling blessed by their true selves. Others take a moment before making an important phone call or sending an email. I have a mindfulness bell that I keep running in the background on my computer that rings every seventy-five minutes when I'm working to remind me to connect to my Inner Wisdom, breathe, and stretch! Whatever way *feels* right to you to bring your Inner Wisdom into the daily warp and weft of your life *is* right. Keep exploring — there's no end to the gifts your



Inner Wisdom wants to share with you. You'll be amazed at how wise she is!

## **Waking Up Your Inner Superstar**

As you connect more and more to your Inner Wisdom, you'll begin to feel your light shining brighter. Remember the song that goes "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine"? That's exactly what you're doing: remembering how to let your light shine. When you wake up your Inner Superstar, your radiance and light will shine more brightly than it ever has before.

I want you to feel so connected to your Inner Wisdom, to your source energy, to God, to the universe, to the Divine, to the light inside you that you cannot help but become your Inner Superstar. When you fully wake up to your Inner Superstar, you make heads turn as you walk into a room because you are so deeply and fully being *you*. You are in the flow. You become a magnet for everything your heart desires because you are like a beacon of happiness, love, and success.

We've all had moments of feeling this connection to our Inner Superstar, and I'm here to tell you that you can *live* from this place, that it can become your new comfort zone. You can feel like shining bright is your new home. When you disarm your Inner Critic and your Inner Mean Girl, you become so aligned with the truth of who you really are that your light becomes undeniable. That is what this book is about, unleashing your Inner Superstar and waking her up in your life. I'll give you the tools to rouse her and keep her awake so you can always be in tune with your grace and inner beauty. It's time to shine!

Here's the Truth That I Know about You...

You are brilliant...and when you're not, it is because you are disconnected from your Inner Superstar. You are loving and ready to be loved...and when you're not, it is because you are

disconnected from your Inner Superstar. You are kind...and when you're not, it is because you are disconnected from your Inner Superstar.

**FIND THE TRUTH  
OF HOW POWERFUL  
YOU ARE**

When you're disconnected from your Inner Superstar, you are disconnected from your Truth, from your Inner Wisdom, from the part of you that is deeply and fully connected to your source energy. In other words, you've unplugged yourself from the Divine or however you refer to a higher power. Perhaps the universe? Collective consciousness? Life force? God? Jesus? Buddha? It's time for you to unleash your Inner Wisdom and let your Inner Superstar lead.

**The Choice Is Yours**

As you dive into this book and begin to change the way you think and act, you may be tempted to go back to life as usual. It's called homeostasis: our minds, bodies, and spirits tend to go back to what we know. We slip back to our to-do lists, our everyday existence. We go back to the life we know and our habits. We ignore our opportunities for transformation. At each moment, you are at a choice point:

*You can choose a perspective that makes you feel bad and thus more prone to believing your Inner Critic and her Big Fat Lies.*

or

*You can choose a perspective that makes you feel good, thus bringing you to the path of Truth and aligning you with your Inner Wisdom. This path will lead you to more happiness and success in all areas of your life. It will allow you to fully wake up your Inner Superstar.*

The choice is yours.

So now consider me your coach and your personal wake-up call. I am conspiring with your Inner Wisdom and your Inner Superstar to help you realize how truly fabulous you are. I invite you to stop the Lies that run rampant in your life so that you can live your dreams and experience more joy. I invite you to take your power back from your Inner Mean Girl and to shine bright!

### **The Wake-Up Call Three-Step Process**

You may be thinking, “Amy, how do I do that? How do I choose to wake up my Inner Superstar?” This book is filled with transformational tools to help you whenever specific Big Fat Lies come up. And I have a powerful process that I’ve developed over the last eleven years that is the foundational go-to tool at any time. Whenever you feel any painful emotions or the presence of your Inner Mean Girl, take yourself through this three-step process:

- **STEP ONE:** Ask yourself, “What is my Inner Mean Girl saying?” Really articulate that voice. ’Fess up to the ugly, sad words that are clanging around in your head. Often just hearing the words aloud will wake you up and shake you out of your emotional slump. Bring the Big Fat Lies out of the darkness and into the light so they can be healed.
- **STEP TWO:** Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and ask yourself, “What does my Inner Wisdom know?” And then let her speak — not platitudes or forced optimism but rather the Truth about who you are and what your soul’s purpose might be in this moment.
- **STEP THREE:** Finally, let your Inner Wisdom’s Truth take root by repeating it back (aloud if possible), accompanied

by a physical gesture to really lock in the message. This is a potent neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) technique to bring your physical body into alignment with your Truth. My Inner Wisdom has me tap my heart, my client Jeanine waves her hand like a butterfly floating away from her, and my friend Alison touches her belly. Attaching a physical gesture not only deepens the learning, but it also gives you a movement to engage in whenever you are feeling angry, upset, or sad. Your Inner Wisdom's gesture will remind your body to calm down, even without words.

For example, let's say that you are overweight and are beating yourself up about it. You could begin to believe your Inner Mean Girl and buy into her Lies, such as "I am fat and I'll never get this under control" or "I'm worthless." Or, you could choose to believe your Inner Wisdom's Truth, one filled with self-compassion and desire: "I've had a lot on my plate and I've let my weight slip, and I believe in my power to get back on track" and "I am ready and committed to carving out time for self-care." Shift your focus to your Inner Wisdom; it will always bring you in line with your Truth and compassion, and you will always feel better. As you practice this process more and more, you'll find that you are stirring your Inner Superstar to life.

### **Why Do We Lie?**

As you read this, you may find yourself asking, "Why the Lies? Why are women so hard on themselves? Why do we let our Inner Critics have all the power?" Through my personal experience and my work as a coach, I've found it's because human beings feel more comfortable "playing small." We cling to comfort, thus continuing to hold our own power hostage.

We feel terrified that we might be put in our place and as a result stay in the jail cell we know and understand. Our power as women is deep and vast and in many ways more mysterious than the “he-man” masculine form of power we’ve been indoctrinated with since we were little girls. As we learn to love and embrace our Inner Wisdom and Inner Superstar, we will become more comfortable with our own magnificence and authority. And as we shine ever brighter, we will witness others learning to shine. What a beautiful world it would be if we all stood tall and proud and compassionate and vital and wise and loving, confident in ourselves and in one another. We can relish our strength and the awesome responsibility it carries to be in service to ourselves, one another, and the world, instead of hiding from it.

**STOP LYING!  
CHOOSE THE TRUTH.  
FEEL GREAT**

Take a minute to imagine feeling powerful and happy. Imagine a world in which every woman feels powerful and happy. Is it scary or uncomfortable? If so, that discomfort may be the very reason you tell yourself these Lies.

As you work your way through this program and unravel your Inner Mean Girl’s Lies, it is essential to look for the payoff of each of your Lies. After all, there is always some sort of payoff — otherwise, we wouldn’t be telling ourselves Big Fat Lies! Common payoffs include:

- Getting to be right — “I knew it wouldn’t work!”
- Taking yourself out of the game before someone else can — “I failed the exam because I didn’t study.”
- Feeling included in a group — “We *all* complain about our marriages!”
- Not having to claim your power — “I can’t do anything about it.”

## BIG FAT LIES WOMEN TELL THEMSELVES

- Maintaining comfort and familiarity — “I better not rock the boat.”
- Getting attention — “I need help!”
- Feeling justified — “I’m upset, so it’s okay to have a cookie.”
- Clinging to anger and blame — “I’ll never forgive that person.”

Understanding the payoff of your Lies can help you unravel the web of self-deception and get your power back. Notice which of the payoffs above most resonate with you, pay attention to when that feeling comes up, and ask yourself, “What is the Truth?” or “What does my Inner Wisdom know?”

### Operation Manual

The structure of *Big Fat Lies Women Tell Themselves* is simple and accessible. Each Lie is accompanied by:

- **THE TRUTH:** a wake-up call and real-life example to inspire you to break through your negative thinking with positive, empowering thoughts and perspectives.
- **CHALLENGE:** a practical coaching exercise that allows you to put the Truth into action. I highly encourage you to complete the exercises outlined in the challenges. Write, doodle, and draw your way to your Inner Wisdom. I’ve created some handy-dandy worksheets and affirmations for you to download and print out at [www.BigFatLiesTheBook.com](http://www.BigFatLiesTheBook.com) if you prefer to write your work separately. Why not create a Big Fat Lies folder or binder?
- **AFFIRMATION:** a mantra you can repeat aloud to cement your new learning. In my online tool kit you’ll also find

printable affirmations to put on your mirror or dashboard. This will be an easy reminder of the Truth about how fabulous you are!

- Finally, you'll find an inspiring quotation to motivate and encourage you.

Consider this book a joyous, straight-talking Cracker Jack box of treats with the best possible prize inside: a better life. *Big Fat Lies* is an easy-to-follow path to personal transformation. After all, we're a culture of fast food, fast talk, fast Internet, fast planes, trains, and automobiles. How about some *fast self-help*?

You may choose to use this book in several different ways:

- Read the entire book, marking the Lies that you wish to work on and come back to.
- Each week read and put into practice one section of *Big Fat Lies*.
- Use the book as a regular meditation tool-for-truth. Simply pick up the book whenever you think of it, flip to a Lie/Truth, and notice how a seemingly random flip of the pages can take you closer to your Truth.

## **You Are Doing Affirmations All the Time**

Let's *talk* affirmations! Here's the truth: we are doing affirmations all the time...whether or not we know it. It's just that we're usually doing negative affirmations that we've *unconsciously* programmed. In other words, we are usually affirming Big Fat Lies. After all, beliefs are just thoughts you've had over and over. So throughout this book, I invite you to create positive affirmations and to change your thought patterns. I promise you that if you do the work and affirm your truths daily, you'll change the way you think. And that, my dear one, is life changing!

## **Are You Ready?**

Finally, since I consider you a new girlfriend, get ready to hear stories from my own life, my friends' lives, my colleagues' lives, and my clients' lives (all identifying characteristics and names of clients have been changed to protect their privacy, of course). I've learned so much from so many people, and you're just going to love getting to know some of the inspiring people I've been fortunate enough to encounter on my life path.

Whatever way you choose to use this book, I hope that you find it enlightening and useful. I recognize that *you* are the expert on your own life. You are the only one living *your* life and the only one who knows the truth of your relationship with yourself, so allow these words to wash over you and inspire you so you can wake you up to your Inner Superstar.

And now, on to the Big Fat Lies...