

Goodbye, Good Girl!

Introduction

No one is born wanting to be a good girl.

Everyone is born wanting to be themselves, freely, and joyfully.

Over a very short of time, as women we learn to be this weird thing: a Good Girl. And being a Good Girl becomes more than a behavior. It becomes a worldview, an identity that predetermines what we feel we can and can't do; who we can and can't be. It tends to block empowered self-determination. And it hides in plain view and it colors every decision and outlook, expectation and response.

Within all of the Good Girl behaviors and outlooks live all of those beliefs and emotions you may have been spending years - and thousands of workshop dollars - trying to change.

What are these "Good Girl rules"?

Girls are told to be good in a huge number of ways: "behave", "don't make waves", "you are lovable when you are invisible". We eventually come to realize how stultifying those rules are. So we look for ways to do the opposite of what we have been told. We make these enormous efforts of chipping away, brick by brick, at each belief, behavior, issue, attitude. It's exhausting! We try workshops, therapy, coaching, spiritual practices. And most often we find that we are still, somehow, behind a wall of just another set of rules. Freer, perhaps, but still a sense of being held back.

How ironic! What you were trying all along to uncover was your freely authentic self – the self that could live in a flow of being free, rather than in a constant set of suffered challenges.

How far does the Good Girl go? It goes throughout all aspects of our human existence, and our spiritual understandings.

I have written Goodbye, Good Girl because I want to share a perspective that can incite mass freedom of self-expression, self-definition, and potentially an outbreak of joy, and the empowerment of claiming true personal and spiritual identity.



I wanted to stop trying to “fix” myself, brick by brick, belief by belief, attitude by attitude, wounding by wounding. I wanted what actors call “the through-line” of all of that: the one common aspect that, if I could look at things through that lens, would change things more naturally, quickly, and give me more mastery through joy instead of endless striving.

After all, it makes far more sense to loosen the one weight-bearing brick that brings the entire structure tumbling down.

As a matter of fact, that is the idea behind meditation; that when we observe the Truth in its wholeness, the Truth sets us free by virtue of exposing the unreality of what we are seeing, and we can’t help but let it go!

Goodbye, Good Girl poses this perspective: that every fear-based decision we make is born of what I am calling Good Girl rules; and that when the facets of the Good Girl landscape in which we have lived for so long become exposed for the unreality they are, we get back our mastery, our choice, and our courage. At that point we stand blinking in the light of a new identity, one that we dare to define and allow to endlessly unfold.

Goodbye Good Girl is your invitation to court and practice freedom in your life, right now. It is an invitation to you to regard your life as an opportunity to become your own authority, to creatively, discriminately and joyfully choose freedom in your personal, professional, spiritual efforts. It is an invitation to a dance with your life, with your own music and your own rhythms.

My hope is that in reading this book you will feel relief:

The relief of knowing you are not alone in feeling that inexpressible need to break free.

- The relief of knowing the true nature of what you are breaking free from, and that it is absolutely do-able.
- The relief of knowing that you are allowed to feel every single one of your feelings – even anger – and that those feelings don’t mean you’re unspiritual.
- The relief of knowing that you are supposed to break the rules that don’t work for you, and understand instead the principles and truths that work with you.
- The relief of knowing that you don’t have to constantly be “on”; that you are enough as you are.



- The relief of knowing that perfection is not the goal; greater flexibility, freedom and relief, are.

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This book will first walk you through the various areas of the Good Girl's domain; her persona, her behaviors, her mindset, her self-image, so that you understand the terrain that you are leaving, and why you would choose to do so, happily.

Next, you will be shown what it means to actually let the Good Girl go, not just ideologically, but actually and in real time.

Then you will be invited to look at life from a new terrain, one that is built on practicality, personal freedom, and being your own authority in your life in all aspects.

And finally, Goodbye Good Girl will give you methods of self-awareness and action to embrace new behaviors, choices, goals and identity that are built on embracing freedom from your own unique perspective and place in life at any given time.

When you drop the Good Girl, you get a helluva prize: ground beneath your feet, wind in your sails, and the freedom, courage and wisdom to know how and when to walk, run, sail or fly!

Goodbye, Good Girl. Hello, life on your terms.



Chapter One – Breaking the Good Girl Code (Put Your Fierce Girl Pants On!)

“...The Code is more what you'd call *guidelines* than actual rules.”

Pirates of the Caribbean

You understand what it means to be expected to be a “good girl”, but you don’t tend to define it. And when you avoid exploring the rules you live by, you court the danger of being constantly at the mercy of something you don’t understand. You are at its mercy because you don’t see the hand that sits heavy on your metaphorical neck. So let’s define it, take a look at it, dismantle what it does to our psyche and expectations.

It is about any or all of the following:

- Perfectionism
- Waiting for permission or approval
- Trying to “measure up”
- Self-repression instead of self-expression
- Fear of judgment of others
- Lack of confidence in self and life
- Avoidance of risk
- Looking outside of self to understand self

These types of externally-applied rules result in these kinds of behaviors:

- Have you ever spent hours, days or even weeks trying to find the “right” words to say, instead of simply speaking up for yourself the best you can, and letting the chips fall where they may?
- Do you have a chronic habit of putting others first, even during those times you know you should be putting yourself first?
- Do you find yourself looking for permission in pursuing your dreams?
- Have you ever found that you follow the social or spiritual rules you think ought to work, even when you know that they don’t?



- Have you spent untold hours, weeks, months, years negatively judging yourself according to the standards of the day: appearance, wealth, intelligence?
- Have you felt deeply frustrated because you know that there is so much more to you, but you don't know how to set it free?
- Have you ever found yourself in a situation that was up to you to correct, and you knew what you wanted to say or do, but you hesitated. You heard the voice in your head saying, "Can I really do that? Can I really say that?" And you didn't speak. You didn't act.
- Have you ever been on the spiritual or religious path and become far better at relentlessly beating yourself up for not being as perfect as the guru or teachings you follow, instead of growing into the simple happiness of being yourself?
- Are you the kind of person whose behaviors are chronically not understood by others, and yet the idea of speaking up for yourself to explain - and demand explanations - is unthinkable?
- Do you ever desperately want some kind of attention or response for which you never ask, and both resent it like crazy when nobody gives it to you, and then punish yourself for spiritually failing to be less resentful?

The Good Girl identity is the mental/emotional framework of the uncertain child.

Good Girl beliefs, outlooks, mindsets and expectations are recognized and unrecognized rules and regulations, unquestioned thought pathways that define our actions and reactions whether we want them to or not. The Good Girl is so deeply and shamefully programmed to look for permission, she finds it difficult if not impossible to take empowered ownership of her liberated voice, her perspective, her healing, her empowered identity and her life.

Our Good Girl behaviors are linked to the seeking of approval and permission before taking action. It is the stance of the victim – the one who believes "I am weak", "I can't", "I don't know how...and I can't learn how on my own". It is based on a core sense of self as insignificant, less-than, ill- or unequipped, undeserving. Under the yoke of the Good Girl identity, we also have trouble believing that we are truly supported by life.



We yearn to be free of some of the Good Girl's more obvious symptoms: caring far too much about what other people think, having healthy boundaries in our relationships, speaking up for ourselves. But it runs far deeper than we know, and choosing to say goodbye to its hold is actually the definition of the spiritual journey, as we choose to abandon weak for strong, unconscious for aware, victim for co-creator. The symptoms thread themselves through every aspect of our lives: interpersonal, financial, spiritual, career, behaviors, beliefs, expectations, and when we understand not only what it is to be our own woman, but that we can in fact have the experience of living our empowered identity each and every day, rather than living in endless striving for that identity, we live in the transformation we have unsuccessfully sought for such a long time.

Then, we are free.

At that point, the game we believed must be played as-is, is revealed as penetrable, breakable. Our allegiance to self-denial and suffering begins to lose its dominion. We begin to see that we are in charge – and not only *that* we are, but *the ways* in which we are.

We must:

- (1) See what this world, this game is – what rules make it up – and how we are living limited choices within it, so that we can choose differently.
- (2) Understand how to take a step, just one step, outside that world of Good Girl rules; and
- (3) Understand how to view the transformation in that one step we have taken.

All three of those transformational steps just from changing our unquestioning allegiance to a particular worldview. When we really have that realization that we can in fact change the game, we get that transformative kick that puts us on a successful, enjoyable life path.

Or we can continue to use the Good Girl approach of “fixing” ourselves, instead of entirely smashing the “good enough” “good girl” worldview itself.

Doesn't it make sense to question the desirability of playing a losing game, rather than to try and be the best game-player in it? Interestingly, the game of being “the best” – the best you, the best at your profession, the best at fitting in, the best at measuring up, etc. - has very few types! At the top of the hierarchy is the Victim, the Teacher, the Winner, and the Confused.



The Victim – I just can't win
The Teacher – I have all the answers
The Winner – I have mastered all of the answers
The Confused – I followed all of the rules and still failed

Looking at it logically, you have no choice but to see that any kind of player in a game that can only be lost, cannot win. So, even the winner loses. What that means is: the one thing that is not gained from following rules that don't come from one's authentic self, is fulfillment. Money can be won, relationships can be won, and still the game is rigged. It is not possible to both follow rules and to flow through the challenges, rewards, heartache and bliss of a full life.

This crazy game of rules has always been, and continues to be, played unsuccessfully and with tremendous pain and suffering in corporations, in families, in relationships, in spiritual environments and inside our own minds and emotions.

How much more exciting, freeing and powerful it is to consider changing the game!

Living outside the "Good Girl" world places us amongst all of our possibilities, empowerment, exploration, joy, and the option to learn to ever increase our ability to call those elements, and so many, many more forward, each and every day of our magnificent lives.

To stay within the "Good Girl" world burdens us with the behaviors, expectations, assumptions, and beliefs that promote all of the unquestioning obedience, and self-punishments that hamstring even our best efforts to live a life of joyous exploration, co-creation and success.

Many of us see the choice clearly! And because we see it, we look for that life of fulfillment and balance, one that is fueled by love and inspiration, rooted in service to others. Yet, how many seem to make it "there"? Somehow, we mostly feel we are always getting there and getting there and getting there...and yet never there!

Why? Because we don't actually know how! We have tried to claim our healing by using the very tools that put us into discomfort in the first place!

The tools we have been using can "fix" us; but can they truly free us? The tools that have come into existence so recently in our planetary history – Abraham Hicks, Emotional Freedom Technique, New Thought Ancient Wisdom, to name just a few - give us the potential of true freedom; the potential to have a firm and operating hold on our strengths, claiming and



growing their reality, and to truly have dominion over our own lives. Here. Now. So they say.
And yet still we struggle!

What is it, then, that stops us from living freely? What stops *you*?

If you have done any personal or spiritual growth work in your life, you can probably come up with a long list of reasons, feelings of limitation, beliefs, life events - of physical, financial, emotional, mental or spiritual reasonings, or holdbacks, which explain “why” you are not living as freely as you yearn to do.

And so we set about fixing the perceived problem(s), don’t we.

And sometimes we get some benefit, and sometimes we don’t.

What we need to do is to know, claim, recognize, expect our freedom, our natural worth, qualities and possibilities, right now and always right now. And we need to let that flow take us with it into our joy, our strengths, our creativity, our visions of what we are, as it is said, “here to do”.

What stops us most often is this Good Girl idea that there is some permission that is needed, some steps that need to be followed. And that is exactly what we need to challenge, rather than fighting with the ghosts of woundings and negative beliefs. Oh they’re real – we feel them and respond to them, you bet! – but they are not the Truth. And the Truth is so much stronger than “reality”. The Truth of our innate and cell-borne spiritual qualities is Queen. As the great saint Ammachi says, “When you are in a dark room, do you turn on the light, or do you push the darkness out?”

We turn on the light by acknowledging and claiming that it is already here, that it is what and who we are, and that we have the power to choose to act from that place and none other.

We have what Rev. Michael Beckwith calls “spiritual technologies” to put you in the vibrational state that brings your life into manifestation. We have meditation and affirmative prayer. We have Abraham Hicks. We have New Thought and Agape Prayer Ministry. We have videos from all kinds of teachers. We have Emotional Freedom Technique. So it interests me to know what keeps this truth of “you are That now” out of our open hands!



Consider the following Good Girl rule as a major barrier to grabbing your bliss now: How insistently we remain under the thumb of the ages-old idea that we are somehow inherently flawed and need to improve. There is something in that age-old “original sin”-type idea that lies to us, telling us that in “working on” our “sin” – our issues, our flaws – we are rewarded, we get significant “perks” that we would not want to live without.

And honestly, those perceived perks are not small: Safety, Permission/Approval, and a Sense of Control, things that we humans tend to deeply appreciate! But those safety-enhancing perks are all fixing mechanisms that stave off perceived or anticipated hurts and attacks; we remain in self-defense instead of free exploration. When let go of the “Good Girl” and those perks, we are letting go of continuing to endlessly “fix” ourselves, and instead saying hello to a truly powerful, fulfilling and self-directed life in which we are at the wheel.

How frightening! If we let go of our habitual methods of self-protection, to what do we cling? What are our new perks? Where are our safe zones, our permissions, our sense of control?

They are in us. More specifically: They are in how we learn to – daily, potentially hourly, possibly moment to moment - experience our lives as magical and mysterious and ever-unfolding, and our part in it as endlessly able, creative, and miraculous.

So we look to ourselves, and in a radically new way. That is what this book is all about: taking on a new allegiance to ourselves in ways that are outside of the protective-defensive paradigm that the Good Girl lives within. So, while it does take time to change our allegiance from the old views of fixing, to the new views of being fixed already, it doesn’t take nearly as much time as it has taken to try to “fix” yourself.

I have been there, trying endlessly to fix myself. I was there for decades. And if you are reading this, chances are good that you have been there too. Now my practice is to turn my consciousness to the Truth that lives within the “reality”, and invite myself to allow the All Good to show itself through all of my life.

For many years I attended so many workshops and classes presenting an answer to life, business, illness, spirituality, whatever, because I was assuming that someone other than me must have those answers, because I certainly didn’t seem to have them! I swallowed that perspective hook, line and sinker.

I learned a magnificent amount of information from those workshops. The ongoing problem was that I was never set free by it!



I also walked through years of psychotherapy and was helped enormously by it, but was not set free...

I walked the spiritual path for decades as a Good spiritual aspirant who “doesn’t know”. I was awed and moved by aspects of the spiritual path, but I was not, from my Good Girl perspective, able to be set free...

...until I took my healing, my answers, my spirituality and the recognition of my own abilities into my own hands. Until I let go of the Good Girl on the spiritual level.

It doesn’t seem to matter whether we talk about mental illness, codependency, personal “issues”, or social, psychological, emotional or spiritual matters, one thing seems to stop our energies and keep us unhappily engaged in fighting with life: thinking there is a “right” way, and that we are not yet doing that right way correctly. We are zeroed in to the Good Girl perspective so closely that, like a piece of paper held tight against our faces, we see nothing else. We are not seeing that there is a whole world within which the Good Girl perspective lives, and that we can allow into our perception, our consciousness, and let go of our identification with the limits laid upon us by experience, self-protection, habit, and training.

There is no great spiritual being who has played by the rules. Not one.

Mother Teresa

- 1) While teaching in school for wealthy girls in Calcutta, Mother Teresa felt called to leave the convent and dedicate her life to the poor. It took several months for her to receive permission from Rome, as the authorities were not keen on the idea of a solitary sister working in the violent streets of Calcutta.
- 2) When she finally received permission to leave, she left with hardly any money and really no place to live or to treat the dying. She had not really thought things through and simply trusted in God.
- 3) When she left the convent, Mother Teresa had no place to put the dying people she wanted to care for; she had to beg.
- 4) In the beginning she was alone until some former students came to join her. Very few parents were happy that their wealthy daughters were joining Mother Teresa and there was a great deal of resistance.

(From wiki.answers.com)



Ammachi

Ammachi's family thought she was mentally ill when in fact she was manifesting the God-presence as herself. She stole gold jewelry from her mother's jewelry box to feed the poor and Untouchables. And she chased prospective grooms away – at least one with a hatchet – because she knew that her mission was to serve the people of the world.

Jesus

Jesus left his family behind and – it is believed – traveled to India to immerse himself in the spirituality that called to him. And returned with the message that he was the Son of God, and that – like him – we could do those things that he did. Many did not understand him, but many were touched by him – so much so that to this day we know his name and continue to try to understand and embody his message.

The ex-Good Girl lives in the unfolding of her mastery, instead of a practice of always and forever “getting there”. “There”, as we overwhelmingly practice it, is all of our goals and hopes for success, love, abundance. Here seems to be...well, just not quite *there*! And we grow unhappy that we are not yet “there”. Worse, we layer on the self-blame and shame and inevitably feel as though we'll never dig ourselves out of our misery. Even *that* is an application of a Good Girl rule: beating yourself up as a way of impelling yourself forward. Problem is...not only does it feel like crap, it doesn't really work. It doesn't fix or address anything!

Abraham Hicks says that they wish we knew what they know: that we are actually where we want to be *right now*.

The Goodbye Good Girl process is one that we can engage in joyously, authentically and individually to go through the true emotional maturation process: Moving from our self-identification as a surviving victim endlessly trying to heal, and moving into self-identification as free, creative, powerful and capable explorers of a life of endless opportunity.

When you feel good about simply being yourself, you feel strong.

When you recognize your strengths as being here, right here and right now, and accessible right here and now, your decisions and responses come from a new place; one that has incalculably greater ease and wonder.



I don't mean to imply that you will never feel an uncomfortable emotion again. I mean that you will never be victim to them; you may dance with them, you may sing them, you may curse them, but in your mastery you will know how to be the master and not the victim of them, and you will have the ability to choose which status – victim or master - you would like to experience in any given moment, and which of any number of states of being you would like to move to next!

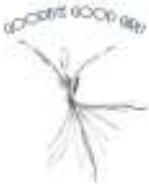
There is an old Jewish saying that I admire: “From strength to strength”. It means, “May you move through your life from places of strength,” rather than from a place of feeling flawed, hopeless, or beaten. It also implies, powerfully, that you *must* start from a place of strength in order to gain strength; you simply can not start from a place of infinite weakness and suddenly become strong. Saying Goodbye to your Good Girl persona is a choice to increasingly live from places of identified strength, which are so much more powerful than the places of perceived weakness, rather than to live solely from places of fear and doubt. Fear and doubt are difficult holes to climb out of.

I know this truth firsthand. I suffered from depression and anxiety for 30 years, and experienced two nervous breakdowns, one of which took me to the edge of a psychotic break, and the other which took me to the edge of all I knew. It was only after I attended a class that brought all of my spiritual and psychological explorations together under one umbrella-like philosophical-spiritual perspective that my depression cleared, as if by magic. But that is not where my journey began.

<p>It began with redefining my identity. As long as I thought of myself as “the depressed one”, I would have to stay there, no matter how much my depression “improved”.</p>
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I had to find some places to experience strength along the way. And when I found those strengths, I had to begin to acknowledge and own them. I also had to learn to take in information a new way: I had to listen with authority instead of with the Good Student I'm-a-blank-slate-and-I'll-learn-anything-you-tell-me perspective; to ask if this information would help me, and even ask *how* this new information would help me. And I had to learn to let it go if it did not. My old Good Girl self would have considered that unthinkable.

The first step in my transformation was creative self-expression. Nervous, but fascinated, I walked into the worlds of acting and singing. And from those two practices I learned that I was capable of so much more self-expression, self-definition and joy than I had imagined. As for acting, the practice is entirely about opening yourself to yourself, and publicly. Actors learn to feel, to express, and to respond with courageous abandon. As I did so, I felt the space around



me expand; I was no longer “just Lori”, I was able to see just how limitless I was in my emotional and psychological self-expression – the limitless scope of who I could be. It would take many years before I figured out that I could apply the lessons of acting to transforming my life.

Singing is physically and emotionally a different experience from acting, even though it includes it. Singing is a whole-body experience of upliftment and vibrational alignment with something beyond one’s perceptions. It is, in its own unique way, multi-dimensional.

Singing lessons were my “church” for six years. I couldn’t wait to get to class! I couldn’t wait to feel my whole body emerge from its accustomed held-back emotional stance of self-doubt into the challenge and necessity of physically standing tall (and therefore more visible!) to align my vocal chords, my head, and my attitude with the power necessary to produce the tone and emotional expression I was going for! I always left class with a smile on my face. I always left feeling stronger and happier!

Both of these art forms broke me out of a certainty that my self-doubt, depression and anxiety were my sole Identity. The arts gave me freedom when I was doing them, but they were not the only tool that I put into my tool belt as I began to emerge as a strong personality! Therapy was a deep tool that ran the gamut from internal to interpersonal. Individual therapy kicked my butt privately, and group therapy brought six of us women out into the open, and supercharged my life-long fascination with communication, Emotional Linguistics™ and personal growth. During those years, I studied the therapists’ methods and modes of communication almost as much as I did my own changes.

I learned lessons that I had incorrectly assumed everyone but me had learned simply by going through their teens and early 20’s. I learned how to admit previously unexamined possibilities and people into my world, and how to communicate with what seemed to me then the most unusual of both. I learned to question my assumptions. I learned that I might not always be right, and how to deal with and respond to that. I began to learn how to identify my true emotions, how to honor and manage them while I learned mastery in communication so that I didn’t “go all Jerry Springer” on people, or on myself! And I learned so much about how amazing I am in my creativity, my curiosity, my abilities. I started to use all my abilities consciously and with great intention. I started to step into life in a bigger way in my personal life as well as my stage life.

You can imagine the changes that began to bring into my life.



So...what if *you* could do it differently? (*You can!*) What if - instead of following rules - you could be exactly the kind of woman you know, in your heart of hearts, you could be? (*You can!*) A woman free of self-doubt and full of confidence; a woman who accesses her softness without losing her strength; a woman who has both her boundaries and her open heart; a woman who knows how to let down her guard without sacrificing her safety; a woman who doesn't apologize for herself unnecessarily; a woman who is her own authority, who doesn't need permission or approval to be visible, self-expressive, herself. (*You can, you can, you can!!!*)

You can.