

RISE



get unstuck.
make a change.

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ISBN 978-0-9945646-6-5

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author photo: karen gunton

printed by: ingramspark.com

dedication.

for my mom

leanne dutka haltiner

you were stuck for so long. you had so many things you still longed to do. you ran out of time. in your name, i make a promise to help as many people as i can to get themselves unstuck so they can have the life they long for, do the things they dream of, and be exactly who they wish to be. life is too short for anything else.

with thanks to my dad

ken haltiner

you lived your life exactly how you wanted to... no excuses, no apologies. you had the biggest, most generous heart of anyone. and you reminded me in your final weeks and days that life is here for living. you were truly stuck... i just *felt* stuck. but i actually have everything i need to get unstuck and move forward and live a life that you and mom will be proud of.

rise.

our stuckness is like a box...

it keeps us small, safe, same, still, and silent.

when we shift the box...

we can RISE.

forward.

The broken in cushions of your couch. The heavy comfort of down feathers on a king size bed. For me it was a worn out rug on my office floor and a popcorn ceiling that stared back at me for hours. We all have a place where we go. To sink. Our place to turn it all off. Or convince ourselves we're trying to. We like to think it's comfortable there. That it's safe. Only it's not.

It's stagnant.

It's a trap.

And we built it ourselves.

Getting up just to lay back down again can become an easy habit to justify. Especially when doing anything else seems so triumphantly hard. Outside there are voices barking, too many, too loud. Or just the opposite; a silence that's heavy and lonely. Expectations. People don't understand. People understand so much you can't relate. Or don't want to. You are always alone. Inside your head is the real battle. Your own voice telling you *no, there's no point*, aching for you to stay where you are. That's the one you listen to most.

Getting up when you're down is the biggest of internal battles. We make it worse without realizing. We make excuses. We lie to ourselves. We're not good enough. We're not ready. We want someone to

tell us what to do because the thought of us knowing on our own is so incredibly daunting. What if we're wrong? What if we fail?

The thing is, and it's a big one, there is no yes or no or right or wrong. There is only you. Actually making a choice to get up again. Rising is not about coming out of the ashes an all mighty powerful Phoenix, suddenly triumphant and unstoppable. It's about taking steps. Little steps that say: *Yes. I'm going to. I can.* No is such an easy word to tell ourselves, but all it does is stop us. And it's pointless. Because it only pretends to keep us safe.

No matter what it is that got you where you are, make no mistake, you're allowed to lie down. You're allowed to feel lost and unsure, wounded and weak. You're allowed to sink. You're just not allowed to stay there.

Getting up again can feel like the tallest mountain to climb. But it's just about taking a little step. And then another.

Say yes.

Make a choice.

You're already reading this book. That's a little step.

Bruce James

about this book.

as you will notice right away, this book does not contain capital letters. you may be wondering what the hell is up with that?

when i started writing and blogging in 2010 i really struggled at first to get my words on the page and nothing i wrote felt like me because i was trying to conform to all of these rules i had in my head about writing. i decided then and there to *just be me*. to write like i talk, to swear if i want to, and to not use capital letters. once i gave myself permission to be me, and to break the rules, the words started to flow.

since that day you will not find capital letters in anything i write, teach, create, or share. ever. anywhere. including this book. (well, unless i am doing SHOUTY caps. i like those caps.)

so, if i started using capital letters now – just because this is a real book book, one printed on actual paper with a glossy cover and everything – that would be a complete cop out, wouldn't it?

my message has always been that *you need to be YOU*. just as i need to be me. the whole premise of the lighthouse revolution – rising up and standing tall and shining bright and BEing a lighthouse – is that you deserve to own your light in the world and live a life that lights you up.

we RISE when we BE who we are and light up in whatever way we choose.

and so i will carry on shining my light in the way that feels like me, and i hope to inspire you to do the same.

now let's get unstuck.... let's RISE.

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preface.

i wrote this book during NaNoWriMo, november 2017. just a few months later, my life began to change... irrevocably.

on february 20 2018 i was at my desk, working on plans for the new year ahead, feeling energised and creative. (for me february is the new january!) the phone rang, my mom calling from canada to deliver heartbreaking news: my cousin had died, tragically, and could i please come home.

through the rest of 2018 i found myself falling into a deep depression. we decided to NOT move back to canada (which is what i had been envisioning and dreaming about), and this decision, after losing a family member and longing to go home again, created more grief than i expected. i deeply missed my family. my husband spent the year working and living in another city. we bought our first house. it was a lot.

on february 21 2019 i got another awful call from canada, my dad with the news that mom had terminal lung cancer.

ironically, i was sitting in the same spot when my dad called as i was the day, one year plus one day previous, when my mom had called with heartbreaking news. it was once again the start of a new year, i was finally feeling ignited again after the loss and the grief and the challenges of the previous

year. and then my dad called, and everything changed... again.

i went home twice over the coming months to be with my mom for extended periods of time. i was there with her in hospice when she died on july 4th 2019.

six months later, on new year's day of 2020, just as i was beginning to feel like i was healing, i received yet another devastating phone call. my dad had a massive stroke.

i went home to be with him. and i am so fucking grateful for the time i had with each of my parents before they died. (note: if you ever get the call and wonder 'should i go or not?' the answer is yes, go. you won't ever regret going even if it is difficult and costly.)

when my mom died i felt like i had lost myself as well as losing her. when i sat with my dad after his stroke - he was alive and breathing and nodding his head yes and no, but he couldn't move and he couldn't talk and we didn't know if he could understand us - he reminded me that life is for living. i could no longer stay stuck in my head or my bed... dad was the one truly stuck, my stuckness could be shifted.

on february 15 2020, my dad had another stroke and died. the pain of losing him was excruciating, especially so soon after losing mom. but i do believe he is in a better place, and that comforts me.

sadly, on may 29 2020, my beloved grandad passed at 95 years of age. he was my actual hero. from him i learned about living life to its absolute fullest... experiencing every bit of adventure, love, and joy we can create. the gift of the previous trips to canada for each loss in our family provided me with more time with him... losing him felt like a closure in a way. after that, i pledged to once again begin the work of moving forward.

i still feel lost, i have no idea what to do or where i go now... but i can also move forward into whatever that is, knowing my parents gave me everything i need: strength, love, and unwavering support.

it has been a tough two years. my business basically shut down, i am suddenly an orphan feeling untethered in the world, and i lost my sense of purpose along the way. but i know i can find those things - business, purpose, and belonging - again.

at the start of a new year i used to think: '*yes! i am leaving that crap year behind! THIS is my year!*' but now i think maybe the crap is just going to keep on happening, and i just need to get better at dealing and healing and moving forward.

and so this is how i came to revisit this book – about getting unstuck and rising – once again, nearly three years after i first wrote it.

you will learn about something i call 'the wreck' in an upcoming chapter; i believe i have experienced the wreck in a big way these past months. i have never felt more stuck than when i was trying to emerge from the depths of depression and grief, truly lost in the darkness. i have been using these strategies myself and discovered some new ones too.

as i do the work to finish this book and share it with the world, we are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, isolated at home, with many people experiencing new levels of anxiety, stress, worry, overwhelm, grief, depression, dejection, frustration, fear, and sadness. this is a period of time that will change each of us – something different will be on the other side. and i know from experience that climbing out of that space can be tricky, so i hope that when people are ready, the strategies shared here will be simple, practical steps to help you move forward into whatever is next for you.

there is absolutely a time for grief, a time for quiet and stillness, a time for processing and just being. but then i think there comes a time where you feel ready... ready to emerge, ready to move forward, ready for change, or ready for the next steps.

after the darkness comes the RISING.

this book is for those of us feeling ready to RISE again.

introduction



get unstuck.

i believe that we are here to shine our light in the world. this is our purpose, it is what we were born to do... we are here to shine in whatever way we choose, in whatever way calls to us.

but i do find that the word *shine* is a bit overused in our world today... sometimes it feels like everyone is throwing it around.

"it's your time to shine!"

my brain asks: *ok. but HOW?*

my first book *lighthouse revolution* was a HOW.

i figured that if i wanted to shine, then i needed to build myself a lighthouse... i needed to BE a lighthouse.

lighthouse revolution is all about how to build up each component of our lighthouse so that we can indeed shine.

this book is a little different. it's about being our own lighthouse keeper and doing the ongoing maintenance that is required to keep shining.

many of us spend a lot of our lifetime exploring what ignites that light inside of us... we search for that sense of purpose, we chase after our dreams...

but there is more to 'shining' than being ignited.
there is more work to do in our life time.

because even when we do indeed feel lit up inside
there can be a layer of FOG that clouds over the
windows of our lighthouse and prevents our light
from shining through.

that 'fog' comes from all of the **fear, worry, doubt,
lack, frustration, and overwhelm** we experience and
all of the various ways that stuff shows up in our
lives. clearing it away is part of our job here... in fact
it is an ongoing job, one that never really ends.

and the truth is, this isn't easy work.

as we take this journey towards shining our light we
can experience all kinds of stuckness. it can feel like
a barrier is in the way – a block in our path, an
obstacle we must overcome, some sort of resistance
preventing us from moving forward – like a box that
keeps us small, safe, same, silent, stuck.

we can feel ignited, we can have an idea of what we
need to do in order to shine, we can even have an
idea of what is getting in the way – what is fogging
up the windows – but still feel so *very stuck* because
we don't know HOW to change things or clear the
stuff that is in our way. we aren't empowered with
tools that work... it all feels too hard... and we stay
stuck.

this book is the HOW. it offers the tools and strategies and ideas for cleaning those foggy windows, for getting unstuck, for creating a shift or making a change... for being your own leader and RISING out of the place you are in and into the place you want to be.

i have been searching for concrete HOWs – real strategies that we can actually use to work on our 'stuff' – for a long time. i have been learning and exploring and testing these strategies myself, and i want to share them with you.

this book is a little different to other 'self-help' type books that you will come across. i have written this as a *choose your own adventure* style of book because the truth is that we each have different kinds of 'stuff' fogging up our windows or blocking our path.

you care most about *your* stuff... the stuff that is causing you the most stuckness right now!

plus you will have *your* own way for working on your stuff... the way that suits you best! we are each different. you do you!

my background is teaching. i started my career path teaching science to kids and have been teaching in one form or another for over 20 years. i know that we all learn in different ways, that some strategies or

tools will suit some and not others... i honour and, indeed, value our differences.

so my aim is to offer you a variety of strategies and tools that you can choose and try and apply to your stuff... i want you to feel empowered to take action in your own life to get unstuck and RISE up.

please note: this book and the strategies i am sharing here do not replace therapy, counselling, or medical intervention. if your particular brand of stuckness includes depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, suicidal thoughts, OCD, or any other mental health challenge, please seek professional help. i am not a trained mental health professional and i absolutely do not want to discount the enormity of anything you might be experiencing right now.

quite simply, i am a teacher. i am here to teach self-leadership strategies that i hope will help you to help yourself. i wish to offer strategies that you can do yourself, try yourself, practice yourself, and adapt yourself. each strategy shared here is something you can try out on your own, right away. if you find a strategy that resonates i do encourage you to learn more or practice further, and where possible i have included resources that can help you with that.

i want to make things click. i want this to be doable. i want you to have the tools you need to get unstuck and RISE up in one handy spot... so that you can

actually do something about your stuckness and experience a real difference, instead of just talking about it or living with it or struggling with it on your own.

having said that, i acknowledge that i am writing this book very much aware of my own privilege – i have the space, support, time, money, ability, and safety to do this work on and for myself. i fully recognise that some challenges won't be overcome by simple self-help strategies with cutesy names. some of us are facing issues that go beyond being 'stuck' – systemic oppression, inequality, discrimination, and abuse; barriers entrenched in race, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, ability, and more.

i honour the reality that many of us are facing some big challenges, ones that i do not wish to negate with the simple ideas shared in this book.

my hope is that no matter what we each are facing, this will be a book that will be a starting point, something you can build on, a way to help yourself in whatever stuck place you find yourself in - lost, inertia, doubt, lack, fear, frustration, etc – by working on your own personal thoughts, actions, beliefs, mindset, or energy.

if you can RISE from the stuckness you experience inside of you... you can better work on the stuckness you find around you.

if you can move forward with your own dreams, plans, and goals... you can shine your light in the way you choose.

the more of us that do that we have the greater capacity to change the world in bigger ways.

choose your own adventure.

here's how this book works...

part one includes strategies for awareness to explore and shine a light on whatever is fogging up your windows or leaving you feeling stuck in your path. you can't do the work to shift your stuff if you don't know exactly what is getting in your way!

part two includes general strategies for clearing that stuff. these general strategies are tools in your toolbelt that you can call upon and use for all kinds of stuckness, in all kinds of situations!

part three includes specific strategies to shift the exact things that you are experiencing right now: maybe it's a lack of confidence, maybe it's a lack of mojo, maybe it's something else!

what you can do with this book is choose an awareness strategy from part one, a clearing strategy from part two, and some specific help for your 'stuff' in part three... put them together, adapt them, or make them your own to create a doable, practical, and powerful strategy for yourself that will actually help you RISE out of your stuckness.

you might just want to skip ahead right now to whatever your personal brand of stuckness is... and you can definitely use this book in that way! but i do recommend reading through the whole book first to get an idea of the different strategies you can use. i

hope to plant the seeds in your mind so that you know they are here for you to try whenever you might need them! you can always come back to the book for a refresher.

some of these strategies are perhaps ones you already use or have considered trying and now, seeing them again, will be a reminder to you that it's time to ramp up your efforts in some way or to add a new tool or new strategy to the work you are already doing to get unstuck.

this book is like a *choose your own adventure* in that you get to pick and choose from the strategies that you need now and that will work for you... but it is also an invitation to go on a new adventure! to try something you haven't before... to see things in a new way... to take more consistent action with the stuck stuff in your life.

my wish is for you to feel empowered.

to go beyond the awareness of whatever has you feeling stuck, into a space of feeling empowered to actually *do something* about it.

to take yourself by the hand, and pull yourself up out of your stuckness.

to do the work to clear your foggy windows so that your light can shine a little brighter.

to RISE up out of the darkness and into the light.

practice self-leadership.

at the core, this book is about *self-leadership*: being a leader to yourself.

you might also think of it as *sovereignty*: taking dominion over yourself.

or you might connect to this idea when you remember: *my happiness depends on me. you all are off the hook.*

one of the reasons i love to use the word *revolution* in my work is because it is time to follow a new leader, one who will take you towards the future that you want for yourself. that leader is you.

here is my take on what self-leadership is all about...

self-awareness. know yourself. know your strengths, your dreams, your purpose. know what lights you up and fills your tank. know where you are going, who you are being, and why.

self-expression. own your voice. speak up for yourself. allow your true self to be seen. be authentic and vulnerable and real. expand your comfort zone.

self-direction. make choices that align with you. give yourself permission to do it your way, to do what serves you best. decide what matters.

self-motivation. back yourself. take action. do the work. take steps to get to where you want to be. pave your own path. alter your path!

self-responsibility. for where you are at. for building yourself up. for changing things. for your feelings. for healing. for your journey.

self-management. seek support when you need it. stay grounded in the here and now. come back to your path when you get off track.

self-guidance. connect to your inner self, your inner knowing, your inner guidance system. believe that you are exactly where you are meant to be, that this is your next step.

self-love. you are deserving and worthy of a beautiful life. you are enough as you are. you are here to shine... your light matters.

self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence, self-fulfilment, self-belief, self-empowerment, self-transformation, self-trust, self-compassion, self-validation, self-determination, self-empowerment, self-transformation...

basically... take any word that describes what you want, need, or crave... and then put the word *self* in front of it and then remember that **your next step depends on you.**

i want you to have the tools to take that step... i want you to have the HOW... i want you to feel empowered in your own life... to have the strategies you need to take yourself by the hand, to pull yourself out of the muddy puddle you've been stuck in, to take steps forward towards more of what you say you want... to RISE and SHINE however you choose.

because the truth of it is this: change starts with you.

it's an inside job.

you cannot change anyone else around you – anyone that contributes to your stuckness – it is up to that person to change. **you can only change you.**

and no one else will come along and do this work for you... no one else is going show up and wave their magic wand and voila, things are different! **only you can change you.**

that might feel a little scary, a little hard. if you have been holding out for a hero to come along and slay your dragons or break you out of your prison box then recognising that YOU are the hero you have been waiting for might be a shock.

i will be very honest: getting unstuck is hard, y'all. truly. it's something i still work at every single day. there is one mantra i use over and over in my daily life, thanks to author glennon doyle¹. i want you to practice it too:

we can do hard things.

in other words... you've got this!

are you ready to create a shift in your life? to clear the fog from your windows and shine a little brighter? to get unstuck and move forward? to RISE?

let's get started!

we RISE when we take responsibility.