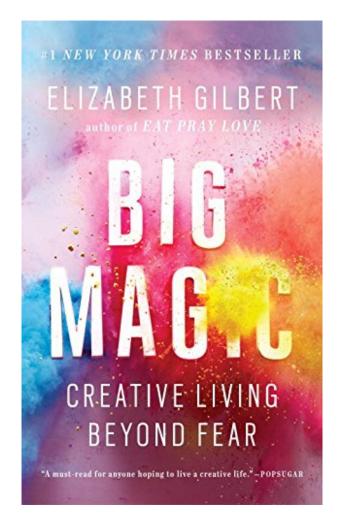
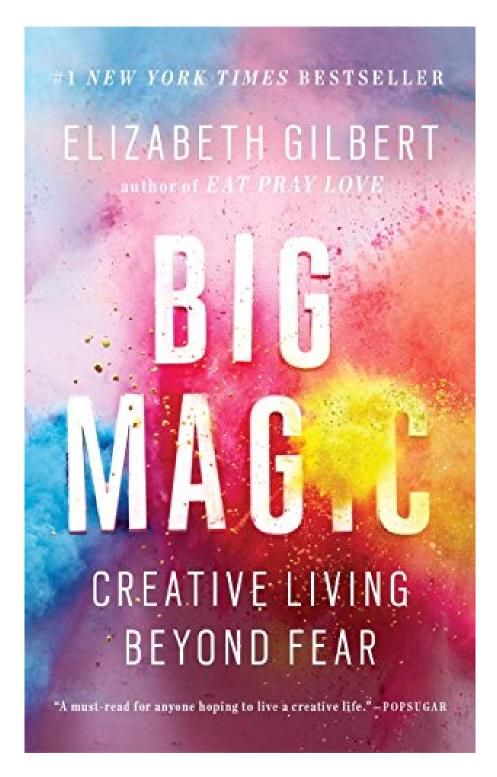
BIG MAGIC



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Incredibly powerful.

By Ladybug

Talk about receiving the right message at the right time. Wow. Big Magic is one of the most honest discussions about the creative process that I've ever read. Gilbert strikes a playful and conversational tone, but make no mistake, this is all straight talk. Her no-BS attitude helps do away with the unrealistic expectations and unnecessary melodrama attached to the concept of "creative living" (like how she so expertly pish-poshes the "tormented artist" ideal). And in its place, she asks all people who feel called to create (writers, painters, musicians, ice skaters, WHATEVER) to quietly and joyfully accept their creative inclinations and ideas as gifts from the universe. She reminds them to approach their creativity with curiosity and openness, with playfulness and joy—even when it's tough, even when there is no Pulitzer, no bestseller list, no Olympic medal, no call from the Met. Own that creativity, she encourages. Also, stay light with it.

This was the message I (apparently) desperately needed to hear. I'm a stay-at-home mom with three young children. And when people ask me what I do, that is what I always tell them. But that isn't what I want to tell them—what I want to shout from the rooftops, in fact—is that I'm a writer. Sure, barely anyone reads what I write, I've never been published, and it probably goes without saying that I've never been paid for a single sentence. In other words, no one really gets anything out of my work but me. But I love it, straight up. So I keep writing, regardless.

Yet it feels weird to declare yourself "A Something!" when that something doesn't earn you money or status or likes or hits or retweets. Which means even though this side-passion feels so authentically "me," I hide it so people won't think I'm a loser, an imposter, a wannabe, an embarrassment, a failure...and the list goes on.

I guess this reality had been bumming me out more than I realized, because when I read the following words, they resonated with me in an unimaginably powerful and loving way--like I was receiving a cosmic hug:

"Shake yourself free of all your cumbersome ideas about what you require in order to become 'creatively legitimate'... You do not need a permission slip from the principal's office to live a creative life. Or if you do worry that you need a permission slip—THERE, I just gave it to you... Now go make something."

In other words, Gilbert's message is this: accept that you need to create. Accept that this is a part of you, that you are ALREADY "creatively legitimate." And just do what you naturally feel compelled to do. Do it with joy—even when it gets difficult—and don't worry about how it will be received (if it's received at all). If you are called to be a maker, then you will just have to make. Own who you are, for better or worse.

So that's what I'm doing from now on. I'm owning it. This is me stating my intent:

Hello, world. My name is Ladybug. I am a writer.

331 of 357 people found the following review helpful.

One creative's engaging and personal take on how to live a more joyous and creative everyday life. By IRG

Given the success of her earlier works, it's probably no surprise that Gilbert has now entered the self-help book genre. I can easily see how her editors and publishers might have pushed her along this path and into creating this book. It's not without merit but it's one of those things where it might never have seen the light had it NOT been written by a best-selling author who does intersperse her thoughts with her real-life experience with the challenges of the creative process and who has the creds to speak with authority.

Your response to this book is likely to be based as much on how many books/articles you've read on the topic of creativity rather than on what the author actually puts forth here--or your personal feelings about her life. If you've read a lot already, you'll know that there isn't necessarily anything "new" here on the subject but rather, as always, some clever packaging and a unique POV--and, as you'd expect of a good writer, some memorable quotes. What may keep you more interested are the various personal insights Gilbert offers on her own life and its creative path. She is honest about the difficulties and that alone helps "ground" her book and give it the credibility it needs to be a true inspiration.

Big Magic is one of those titles that turned me off and not on. It's only the subtitle that drew me in: Creative Living Beyond Fear. Yes, that's the thing about creativity. It requires risks and comfort with the unknown. Fear is the killer and the dragon we must face to shape our best lives.

If you come away with nothing more than a bit less fear about living your daily life as you would like, then the book is worth your time. Sometimes it's not about one's career or writing a book or screenplay or achieving world fame or success. Sometimes it's just about getting all the joy and juice out of an average day and life.

All inspiration is personal and subjective. If Gilbert's work has "spoken" to you, you're likely to both enjoy and benefit from her insights from her journey. Clearly she has been living a creative life on many levels.

226 of 243 people found the following review helpful."Holy Crap, Elizabeth!!"By Heather LaReeI've hit my happy...stride in this book... when reading a book that I absolutely don't want to stop...I want to keep seeing flashing neon lights framed around the BIG MAGICal WORDS that spells, "YES YES YES YES!"

Thankfully, I'm also in the section where Gilbert reminds and affirms that LIFE doesn't always abide to how and what we want when we want it...but she also encourages that... if we are faithful lovers, that magical "IT" won't leave us either. So, I have 100 pages remaining, but am SO pumped and happy that I have this snippet of time to WRITE... a review.

If you're passionate about your writing, your art, your whatever-makes-your-precious-heart-sing & be happy... I highly recommend Gilbert's book -- this one. For if you've stalled, set down, given up, cried privately, wondered if it's just too freaking late for you to be the artist, the receiver, a creator, because of the other practical life... here is an experienced wayshower who calls your bluff, your whatever you've told yourself why you can't. She's been rejected (tons), she's kept her day jobs, she's continued through deserts of

unknown, silence, angst, doubt, about "the work"...and she's laying it out for us/me/you/your offspring/your friend... find your way.

Find it. Because it IS there (patiently waiting, playing, whistling, digging in the sand with its toes) and it's probably not quite how you've framed it (if you've stalled).

I am feeling this is my "eat, pray,, love writing" book. Thank you, Elizabeth (and I adored your comment, "Are you finished with that?" Thank you again ~

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