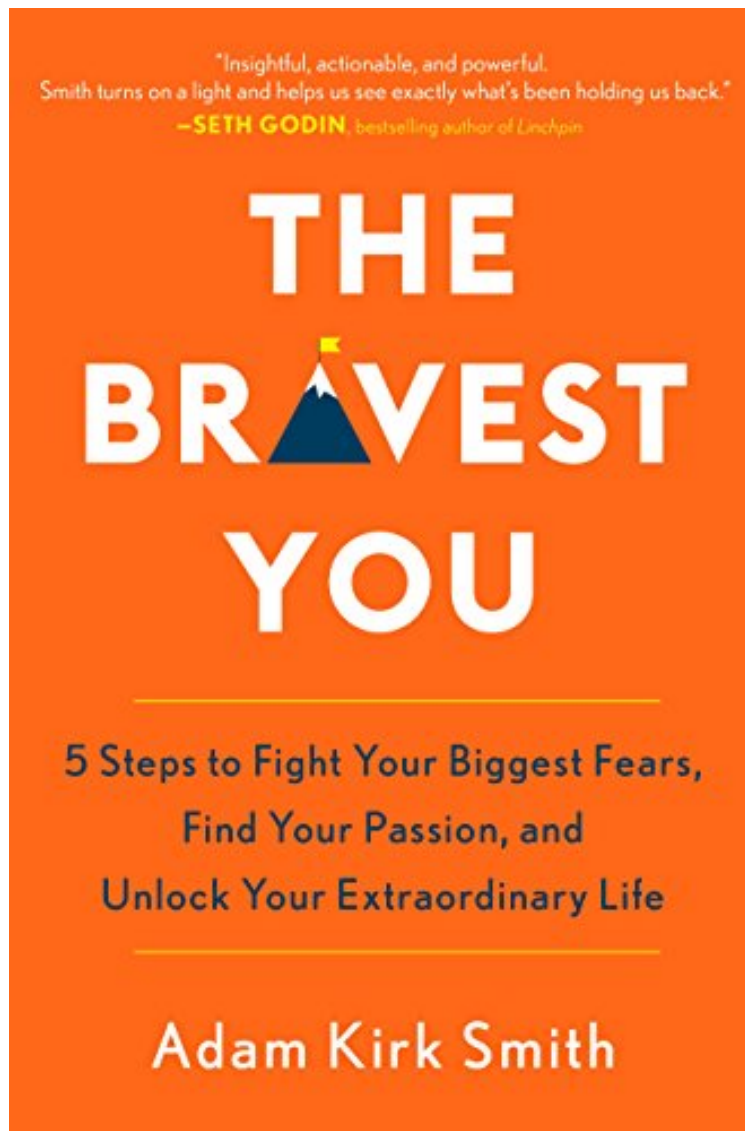


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# The Bravest You: Five Steps to Fight Your Biggest Fears, Find Your Passion, and Unlock Your Extraordinary Life

*Adam Kirk Smith*

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**Adam Kirk Smith : The Bravest You: Five Steps to Fight Your Biggest Fears, Find Your Passion, and Unlock Your Extraordinary Life** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Bravest You: Five Steps to Fight Your Biggest Fears, Find Your Passion, and Unlock Your Extraordinary Life:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Life-changing Read!By CustomerThank you, Adam Kirk Smith for

the message in your book "The Bravest You". It has changed my husband's and my lives. In just one example (because there are many), he and I are beginning a much needed better health journey. Because of the motivation found on these pages, we are making this journey together while fighting fears, as well as growing in focus and self-care - another word for self-discipline. As NYT best-selling author Jon Acuff said, "...The Bravest You dares you to live differently. You're the only you we've got; learn how to love that truth with this book." We whole-heartedly agree! To become the best ever in all areas of your life, purchase it now - you won't regret it! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books to find your passion and live a more ...By Brenda H. This book is extremely helpful if you need actionable steps to be more courageous. His writing is inspiring and you get practical advice from him. One of the best books to find your passion and live a more extraordinary life! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Love it.... Thank you for writing it!

Fear has hindered each of us from achieving something significant at some point in our lives. But that doesn't have to be the case. Popular life coach and consultant Adam Smith has discovered a groundbreaking way to overcome the obstacles preventing us from realizing our goals by exercising an inner strength we each possess but rarely use: the passion that drives us to pursue what we want. The Bravest You introduces Smith's unique five-step bravery process that helps us fight the ten biggest fears we all face and attain the success we desire. Rousing us from complacency, Smith shows us how to identify our goals and reveals proven techniques for harnessing the inner ambition that will empower us to conquer our doubts once and for all. Covering everything from the common fears of inadequacy and being judged to rejection, failure, loss of freedom, and loneliness, The Bravest You arms you with the necessary tools to confront any fear-inducing situation head on and lead braver, better, and more successful lives than you ever imagined. From the Hardcover edition.

"The Bravest You is insightful, actionable and powerful. Smith turns on a light and helps us see exactly what's been holding us back." — Seth Godin, bestselling author of *Linchpin* "Instead of cringing before challenges, those using Smith's principles should be able to face any situation not only with confidence but with aplomb." — *SUCCESS* magazine "In a world of online criticism, trolls and constant invitations to create a fake social media version of yourself, The Bravest You dares you to live differently. You're the only you we've got; learn how to love that truth with this book." — Jon Acuff, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Do Over* "Your greatest fears and challenges will lead to your greatest accomplishments and triumphs if you have the courage to keep moving forward. The Bravest You shows you how! Read it and leap toward your destiny." — Jon Gordon, bestselling author of *The Energy Bus* and *The Carpenter* "Too many of us live in the shadow of fear, letting it steal our happiness and human potential. Adam Kirk Smith's book is a welcome antidote — a practical guide to living courageously that anyone can follow." — Marshall Goldsmith, executive coach, business educator, and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Triggers: Creating Behavior That Lasts* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* "Courage is fundamental to human life and accomplishment, and it is completely learnable. In this book, Smith gives readers specific action steps they can take to fight fear and make bravery a reality in their lives." — Sydney Finkelstein, bestselling author of *Superbosses* and professor, The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College "If you've ever held yourself back or played it safe, you know the toll that fear and conformity takes. You owe it to yourself to live a life of meaning and impact. The Bravest You shows you the path forward." — Dorie Clark, author of *Reinventing You* and *Stand Out*, and adjunct professor, Duke University's Fuqua School of Business About the Author ADAM SMITH is an entrepreneur, life coach, consultant, and motivational speaker. His popular blog, [asmithblog.com](http://asmithblog.com), has more than 70K unique monthly readers and offers insights on leadership, bravery, and life purpose, among other topics. Named one of the most influential people of 2014 by *American Genius*, Smith has written for *Entrepreneur* and *Success Magazine*, among others, and has been featured in *Newsday* and other media. He has more than 275K Twitter followers and growing followings on Instagram and other social media outlets, and he hosts a weekly podcast called "Live Life with Purpose." He lives in Illinois with his family. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1: The Five Stages of the Bravery Process At some point — present or past — fear has torn us all away from some significant accomplishment or victory. You can probably think back to a moment in life where you avoided it, suppressed it, or hid it. If your experience is anything like mine, I know that none of these reactions helped you achieve anything. Instead, you found yourself further away from what you wanted to accomplish and more frustrated than ever before. But you don't have to keep running from fear. In fact, there's a way to overcome and eradicate each and every fear you face. Let me introduce you to the five-step bravery process I have created to help people fight the ten biggest fears we all face. The diagram below outlines its specific steps — or stages — which everyone moves through in their quest to unlock an extraordinary life: complacency, inspiration, fear, passion, and bravery. Note that you start off at a low and flat point of complacency or the "playing it safe" stage, before an inspiration or idea strikes that spurs you to want to make a positive change. Often this is also the point at which one or many of the common fears we'll explore in this book sets in. You may find

yourself asking questions like "What if I fail or am rejected?" "What if I'm not up to the challenge?" "What if it's the wrong decision or it ends up hurting my future or those around me?" These or unexpected obstacles can easily send you back into the valley of doubt and fear. But as I will show you in each chapter, you can harness the power of your passion and drive to overcome any fears or mental blocks that are stalling your progress toward achieving your dream. And eventually that leads to the final step of the process, bravery, where you emerge stronger and more courageous and confident than before. In undergoing this journey, you eventually move to a higher and much happier point in your life and toward the bravest version of yourself. It's important to point out as well that I've placed the five stages of the process in this order because it is the order in which most people whom I have worked with as a successful business consultant and life coach—and many I interviewed for this book—have experienced them. I underwent them in this order as well. However, you may find that you go through them in a different sequence, perhaps with an idea or inspiration sparking your bravery process and then fear or complacency settling in until something kindles your passion and drives you to take the leap to achieve your goal. The order in which you undergo the stages doesn't matter as long as you keep moving toward the end goal, which is developing the courage to pursue what you want and live the life you've dreamed of. Along the way, you will be reminded of why you started climbing in the first place, and you will be forced to make the most important decision of your life, possibly more than once: choosing whether to give in to fear or fight it and climb onward toward bravery. This book will help you power through your own bravery journey, so the critical first step is to identify where you currently are in the process. Let's start by exploring complacency, and then I'll move to finding ideas that are big enough to pursue and passion for them that is strong enough to carry you through to bravery. Complacency (the "Playing It Safe" Stage) If you know anything about car racing, or sports for that matter, then you have probably heard of NASCAR driving legend Richard Petty. Many people remember him for his Charlie 1 Horse cowboy hat and trademark sunglasses, but he's best known for winning the Daytona 500 seven times. Something happened in the 1970s that sent his winning streak into a tailspin, though. His opponents changed with the times and updated their cars, but instead of doing the same, Petty was complacent. When asked how things changed so drastically, he answered: "I'd been winning steadily for twenty years and decided we wouldn't change." Petty played it safe, and as a result he didn't have one win in the last eight years of his career. Not one. Complacency and/or "playing it safe" are silent enemies that can tell us all the reasons why we don't need to keep pressing forward and become better. This concept doesn't just apply to sports—it can stall any aspect of life or business. As I mentioned earlier, I played it safe for such a long time that once I got an idea, I never looked back, but for many, the idea comes first in the bravery process, and complacency follows suit. Again, keep an eye out for this during your bravery journey. If the word "complacent" comes to mind when you think about yourself, then you need to begin by asking yourself this two-point question: "How much is living a great life worth to me, and can I afford to not become better?" Your answers will give you your much-needed reason to begin moving away from complacency and toward bravery right now. So what does "playing it safe" or "being complacent" look like? One way that people play it safe is by using their full schedules as a reason for why they aren't pursuing more of their life's dreams. As life becomes busy, we become attuned to the rhythm of monotony, and the easy thing to do is to let time get away from us. Chances are that a lack of time is the reason you fall back into this false sense of security and aren't adding more value to the world around you. This is why you will see many ideas around the subject of time in this book—our fears and our amount of available time are related in many instances. I get it. You are busy. But maybe your busy life is your crutch: you keep saying yes to things that don't matter, and that is what keeps you in the safe zone. The problem is, life just keeps getting busier, and our crazy schedules will keep us stuck in a boring, safe routine. "Oh, my boss wants me to work such long hours that I only get four hours of sleep a night and barely see my family." Sure, gotta become a workaholic to make money and get it all done—right? Maybe you know what I'm talking about. If we're not careful, other people, or outside forces with their own agendas, will recruit us as their puppets. When we find ourselves letting everyone else dictate what we do and how we use our lives, we miss out on vital opportunities to succeed, grow, and feel fulfilled, ultimately leading to complacency. I know you don't want to give business the upper hand and bury the chance of moving forward with the life you want, and the good news is that you don't have to. It's time to take back your life. Fix your schedule to create space. This much-needed time is what will get you to the next stage: ideas. I don't want you to find this space only for the sake of clearing out the mental clutter that bogs us all down. I want you to find more time before you begin moving, to allow you to tinker with ideas in the next stage. Having time not only allows you to think about what is ahead, but also frees you up long enough to really engage with your thoughts, put them under the microscope, and then test them out. If you're having a problem with thinking of new ideas, your issue is probably not a lack of imagination; business is what's keeping you rushed and clouding your mind. Without rest, meditation, and free thinking, you will continue using the crutch of playing it "busy" and safe for far too long. Learning to fight business should be your number one priority. How do you do this? By focusing on what you want and need to accomplish. When

you know what your top priorities are, you don't have to wonder what needs less attention, because you have already streamlined your life to focus on what matters most to you. Prioritizing brings clarity and direction. When you take on anything and everything, life quickly becomes chaotic. You can't possibly do everything and still do it well. But when you decide what you need to pour your heart into, you allow yourself to be more creative in those areas and can make a bigger impact with your life's work. Now, grab a notebook and take ten minutes to write down your current priorities before you begin this journey. You will need this notebook for later exercises as well so keep it close by. (If you already know your priorities, use this prompt as a reminder.) Now that you're finished writing your priorities down, take a look at your findings. Are you happy or unhappy with your results? If you're unhappy with your priorities, the good news is that you can now make changes as you see fit. But don't wait to remove what doesn't move you toward your goals. Make a phone call if you need to make a phone call to free up more time. Send an e-mail if you need to send an e-mail. Schedule a meeting if you need to schedule a meeting. Whomever you need to talk to and whatever you need to do to create more time in your day, do it right now. This book is pointless unless you take action to improve your life. Place a bookmark here and continue reading once you eliminate the unnecessary. Now that you have your focused priorities, you can add more things back into your schedule. But as you add these commitments back in, you will now be more aware of your unique purpose. This step is so important because when you take the time to tweak your life to hold only what is near and dear to your heart, you become optimistic and more effective with your efforts. Great things happen when there is time to mold our ideas into better ones, and that only happens when we give the process of finding solutions more of our time. Rushing creativity leads only to basic, surface thoughts, but when we have time to ponder our ideas, we get to push through and dig deeper to find the best possible answers to our biggest questions. Prioritizing helps us commit to what is important and lowers our unnecessary stress levels. Overwhelming stress is not helpful, but the kind of stress that moves us out of our comfort zone is not necessarily a bad thing. Stress is sometimes the little push we need to get things done, but again we need to make sure that the stress we are feeling is only being directed toward what is important enough to pursue further. As each of us figures out our priorities, it's important to consider the season of life we are in. Not all life seasons are the same. Some are busier and some are slower, and it is your job to be aware of the season you are in and still affect the world in the midst of it. If it is a busy time in life, then your impact probably won't be as big. If you find yourself with tons of freedom, though, it's time to get to work. As I write this, my wife and I have two young children. I own two businesses and am involved in various community projects. But if you were to ask my wife how our marriage is, she would say it is the best it has ever been. How is this? I have learned how to manage time well. But if it were the old me, I would probably have to let go of the community involvement at least. It's about knowing your season, seeing your limits, being realistic with your time, and prioritizing what is truly important. When I began the process of stepping out and deciding to not play life safe, did I bite off more than I could chew at some points? Did the pursuit of bravery and moving ahead sometimes cause me to commit to too many things? I have to answer yes, but it was because my focus wasn't on priorities. I kept agreeing to do more without looking at what was truly valuable. Again, to move from playing it safe your priorities need to be aligned to free up time so you can take on bigger and better things. And if you ever feel like you don't have enough time for your priorities and everything else in life, just remember the story of the mayonnaise jar and two cups of coffee. A professor stood before his philosophy class, with some items in front of him. When the class began, he picked up a very large, empty mayonnaise jar and filled it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. The professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured it into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was, again. The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous yes. The professor then pulled two cups of coffee from under the table and poured their entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the grains of sand. The students laughed. "Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jarred presents your life. The golf balls are the important things—your passions. Things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the things that matter, like your job, house, and car. The sand is everything else—the small stuff," he said. "If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "There is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. So pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Take care of the golf balls first—the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand." One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented. The professor smiled and said, "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."