

The
Book
of
(Even More)
Awesome

Neil Pasricha



AMY EINHORN BOOKS

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Hoping and thinking and dreaming and playing and being and living and loving.

AWESOME!



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Awesome

So what's this all about?

We're all gonna get lumps.

We're all gonna get bumps.

Nobody can predict the future, but we do know one thing about it: **It ain't gonna go according to plan.**

Yes, we'll all have massive highs, big days, and proud moments. Color-faded, **postcard-streaked blurs** will float and flash through our brains on our deathbeds, of wide eyes on graduation stages, **father-daughter dances at weddings**, and healthy baby screeches in the delivery room. And dotting those big moments will be smaller ones too: fragile hugs from Grandma on **Christmas morning**, two-year-olds handing you a bouquet of dandelions and saying "I love you," or your boyfriend staring into your eyes **and smiling** while lazing in bed on Sunday morning.

But like I said.

We're all gonna get lumps.

We're all gonna get bumps.

It's sad but things could happen or hurt you that you just can't predict.

Your husband might leave you, **your girlfriend may cheat**, your headaches might be serious, your dog could get smacked in the street. Yes, your kids might get mixed up with tough

gangs or bad scenes. It's sad but your mom could get cancer . . . or your dad could get mean.

There will be times in your life you're tossed down the well too. There will be times you'll cry yourself to sleep, **with twists in your stomach**, with holes in your heart. You may wonder if it's all worth it and you may think that it ain't. You may wonder if you can handle it or **you may beg for restraint**.

But when bad news washes over you and when the pain sponges and soaks in, I really hope you feel like you've always got two big choices:

1. You can swish and swirl in gloom and doom forever, or
2. You can grieve and face the future with newly sober eyes

Sure, life has dealt me some blows in the couple years I've been writing about awesome things. There was the **mind-numbing loneliness** of moving to a brand new nowhere town, the broken heart of a broken marriage, and the searing waves of regret when a friend took his own life.

But I'm lucky because I've had **a way out** for the past two years. I've had a secret pill to swallow, a magic potion to swirl, and a bubbly cauldron to sip from every time I felt down **or felt black** or felt blue. And I hope you know that remedy and I hope you feel it too.

After all, you're reading it right now.

Yes, awesome things make my life better, people. And I hope they do the same for you.

I honestly can't go a day anymore without smiling at a couple tiny awesome things in my world. Whether it's stepping on barely frozen puddles, **finally peeing after holding it forever**, or driving to an intersection just as the lights turn green, these tiny things make a great big difference.

So come on. Come on! Are you with me? Who's with me? I say if you've got a couple fist pumps in you, if you've got a **sneaky twinkle in your eye**, if you've got an itchy old soul that loves smiling at strangers, dancing at weddings, and popping the heck out of Bubble Wrap, then come on in and join **The AWESOME Movement**.

It's my sincere hope that awesome things help those of us who need them to grieve and **move on**, and remind us that the best things in life are free. For us, maybe it's a ladder out of the well or a dusty flashlight beam in the darkness. For others, perhaps it's just a little laugh on the back of the toilet, **a bit of peace before bed**, or a spark for debates about what matters most to you, you, or you.

For me, I know I'll have more dark days, and I know my friends will too, but I like thinking that glue movies, **flavor pockets**, and big night naps will always cheer me through to the other side.

While polar ice caps melt, **while health care debates rage on**, while buzz saws chop down forests, while wars go on and on, I hope there's always a special secret place where we can

turn off that bright light, **snuggle right on up**, and get comfy to chat about the sweetest parts of life.

Thank you for reading *The Book of (Even More) Awesome*. I feel so incredibly grateful, lucky, and honored to walk down this road with you. And thank you for letting our stories all **tightly twist together** as we all keep moving forward and we all keep moving on.

Hope you enjoy the book.

—Neil

Coming back to your own bed after a long trip

Do you remember your **Worst Sleep Ever**?

Man, I sure do. It was back when I was in college and a few friends and I drove a **skiddy van** across a snowy highway in the middle of a blizzard to crash with my friend Chad. It was a frozen weekend full of laughs and catching up with friends who had all been pulled apart after high school.

Now, it was late Friday night in this quiet college town when a few of us figured it was time to hit the sack. There were no fresh linens, soft pillows, or fluffy towels waiting for us there. Nope, all we had in that cold, dark basement were a **couple ratty couches**, a hollow wooden door to the blizzard outside, and some cheap ticking clocks on the wall.

Well, what choice did we have?

We made little beds from couch cushions, used sweatshirts for pillows, and covered our shivering bodies with zippery, snow-smearied winter coats. As if that wasn't bad enough, the clocks **tick-tick-ticked** all night and somebody got home really late and left the back door wide open. Nobody noticed until morning when all our teeth were chattering and there was a **foot-high snowdrift** under the ping-pong table.

It was a nightmare, but I know you've been there too.

Power-napping on bumpy airplanes, crashing on **flabby futons** or jabby mattresses, sleeping in rainy forests in leaky tents, you've had your fair share. Bad sleeps, sad sleeps, **sack-pillow heaps**, weird alarm clock beeps, and through it all you enjoy long, fidgety nights of groggy pillow turns and fuzzy blanket burns.

But after those killer sleeps in **nightmare paradise**, it's always a great feeling when you come home to the warm and cozy comfort of your heavenly bed. Yes, you're like a bear scraping together **crinkly leaves** and warm mud for a long winter of hibernation or a **soaring eagle** swooping home from the windy treetops to the twiggy goodness of your comfy nest.

Your dented pillow, warm flannel sheets, and preset alarm clock are waiting for you.

So welcome home, baby.

You made it.

AWESOME!

Sneaking cheaper candy into the movie theater

Contraband candy tastes better.

Here's how to make the magic happen:

Step 1: Bag Up. Large purses come in handy here.

Ladies, pull out the fattest potato sack you got and sling it across your shoulder with pride. For everyone else, you can try a bulky backpack or shopping bag. Business folks can pull off the classy briefcase. Moms can use the false bottom of a diaper bag. The only thing to avoid are *Matrix*-style trench coats with burrito dents in all the inside pockets.

Step 2: Food Up. Stuff that puppy with gummy worms, bubble tape, and cinnamon buns. If you're feeling risky, throw in a couple cold and slippery cans of soda, a bag of microwave popcorn, or a pocket flask. Know your limits, though. Steamy meatball subs and hot soups in thermoses are for experts only.

Step 3: Walk Up. Confidence is everything. Hold your head high, strut a mean strut, and you'll be

just fine. No ticket ripper should say anything, but if you do happen to get caught you can always pretend you're diabetic. "Honestly, these are prescription Pop Rocks."

Step 4: Eat Up. Tear open the bag of chips with your teeth, crack the soda during a gunfight, and shake the Nerds during the Spanish dance sequence. Just get in there and get munching.

Get in there and get crunching.

Get in there and get

AWESOME!

Stomping dry crunchy leaves on the sidewalk

Green baby buds pop out in the spring, healthy leaves **fly high to the sky** all summer, and aging beauties flash and change colors in the fall. Then they eventually snap off and crack off and **crumble and tumble** down to the sidewalk.

People, it's true—the sun rose, the sun set, months went by, and the Earth actually **tilted on its axis** before this moment could appear before you.

So smile a big smile on your way to school and enjoy the **crispy crunch** that comes when you walk ten inches out of your way to smash a brittle little leaf into smithereens.

AWESOME!



Finally getting that tiny piece of popcorn out of your teeth

You know when you can just feel that **popcorn kernel** stuck back there in the **swampy recesses** of your mouth and it's totally infuriating?

Yes, your tongue slides past its smooth surface unsuccessfully, your toothbrush's **flimsy bristles** just can't shake it, and your fingernails can't pop it from the **tight molar deathgrip**.

So the fork is dropped and the dessert lies unfinished, the conversation fades to a blurry, distant noise, **and the world stops** around you as you keep trying and trying and trying and trying to bust that kernel out. You close your eyes and squint, you tilt your head, you emit a deep-bass *nnnnnnn* sound, as your body directs all available faculties to getting this thing gone. But the dastardly kernel still clings tightly, **clogging and gumming up** your entire system until you're completely frustrated and annoyed beyond belief . . .

Then it suddenly falls out.

Trumpets blast and **angels sing** as your mouth rejoices in a tiny moment of heavenly relief. Now it's time to dive into that cheesecake and rejoin the lost conversation in a beautiful moment of

AWESOME!

Peeling that sticky glue off the back of your new credit card

Peel the pleasure.

It doesn't matter if you're a **Smooth Roller** who uses your finger to slowly wheel the sticky icky into a little jelly roll or a **Stretch Inspector** who grabs a glue corner and yanks it further and further until it eventually snaps.

Nope, doesn't matter at all.

Just enjoy the ride.

AWESOME!

The Kids Table

The Kids Table is where all the kids eat dinner at holiday family gatherings.

It's generally a rickety card table from the basement pushed beside a **yellow plastic one** from the playroom that ends up turning Grandma's hallway into an eat-in kitchen. Sometimes it's two different heights, sometimes the chairs are broken, and usually the whole thing is covered in a plastic Christmas tablecloth freshly ripped from the **dollar store** cellophane.

No matter what, though, The Kids Table is a great place to find **burps, laughs, and juice spills** at a holiday meal. Everyone's enjoying a warm evening with cousins, decked out in their finest cable-knit sweaters, rosy red cheeks, and sweaty bedhead.

The Kids Table is great for many reasons.

First of all, **no parents**, no problems. Nope, the grown-ups are all baking pies, playing ping-pong, or sipping eggnog by the fireplace. The parenting theory here is that the kids sort of form a group safety net that will come screaming if somebody gets hurt, so no need for a pesky watchful eye. With all adults distracted, rules fly out the window and suddenly elbows lean on tables, **chewed-up broccoli** gets hidden in nap-

kins, and somebody starts eating mashed potatoes with their bare hands.

And no matter how old everyone is, the rule at The Kids Table is that you must act like you're seven. Teenagers who think they're too old for the table quickly start blowing bubbles in their milk, **pouring salt in people's drinks**, and giggling like mad. Then someone pops a **loud fart** and everyone laughs for ten straight minutes.

Lastly, let's not forget that The Kids Table eats first and sometimes features special items like lasagna with no onions, random chopped-up hot dogs, or real Coca-Cola awkwardly poured from heavy 2-liter bottles into tiny Styrofoam cups.

A lot of good times and great moments happen at The Kids Table. Little ones learn from older siblings and cousins. Childhood bonds are formed over toys, tears, and **gravy spills**. And it's good practice for growing up and eating with high school pals at greasy spoons, scarfing hungover breakfasts with college roommates, and enjoying Christmas dinner with old family friends from the dining room next door.

So thank you, The Kids Table.

For all you do.

AWESOME!

When batteries *are* included

I'm the **Robin Hood** of batteries.

Since I am an extremely cheap person I always rob from the rich battery-filled remotes on my couch and **give to the poor** new gadgets lying on my counter. I stumble around Sherwood Living Room, clicking open plastic battery doors, hunting for dependable double-As to get the job done.

Of course, this battery robbery always backfires next time I sit down to watch a flick. I plop onto the couch and pick up the lighter-than-usual remote and then curse my former self for screwing my current self. Then the camera pans to another scene of me stumbling around again, this time **battery-jacking** the poor so I can feed the rich.

It's a terrible, neverending cycle.

That's what makes it special when batteries **are** included. That's what makes it special when you yank open the new Baby Farts-So-Real and there's a small, plastic-wrapped case of cheapo batteries from the **Taiwanese black market** sitting in the box.

Sure, sure, maybe those knockoff Ultra-Power or **Extra-V Vvoltage** batteries don't inspire the most confidence, but

whatever man, because surprise batteries are a big win every time.

It's like the company is saying "Come on, let's get going, people."

"First round's on us."

AWESOME!

When it feels like the lyrics to the song you're listening to were written just for you



Maybe a quiet haze drifts in your dorm as you worry about upcoming exams and patchy friendships. Maybe your heart just got flattened by a **run-away relationship** and the knots in your stomach are twisting and burning. Or maybe you're trekking cross-country with a backpack and a dream and are suddenly **sucker-punched** with a jabby stab of loneliness.

When you're pumped up, **pumped down**, shaken sideways, or rattled around, it's always comforting to share a moment with a song that perfectly reflects your mood. Sometimes it seems like they're singing right to you.

So come on and smile along, **nod quietly with the song**, and push ahead, plow forward, and keep soldiering right on.

AWESOME!

Correctly guessing if the door is push or pull

Doors can be trouble.

Strutting to the mall, **strolling to the store**, you spy those glassy doubles in the distance just waiting for you to size them up and give them a big push or pull.

Sure, it looks easy, but we all know it's nothing but.

Nope, thanks to years of tense negotiations, backroom deals, and political infighting, the **International Alliance for Door Design Consistency** has reached a suffocating stalemate in its goal of coming up with one door we can all understand. So while those corporate bigwigs give each other evil eyes in smoky boardrooms **We The People** are left figuring it out on the front lines, door by door, day by day.

It sucks when you make the wrong move too. Pull a push or push a pull and you're suddenly five years old again with wide eyes, **untied laces**, and thick boogers snaking down your upper lip.

Yes, that's why swinging open a confusing door on the first try is such a great high. You just saved yourself a **horrible second of humiliation** and are now coasting smoothly through life in the fast lane.

AWESOME!

When a cop finally passes you after driving behind you for a while

Cruising cops cause traffic stops.

Yes indeedly, we law-aspiring citizens immediately slow to a **speed limit cruise** when we spot cops silently swerving behind our bumpers. We're the jittery **school of fish** with jumpy eyes and they're the silent shark swimming over to our lane.

With our hearts drum-thumping and our **white-knuckled hands** gripping the wheel, we temporarily become **Super Drivers**—using our signals, leaving space, and checking our mirrors every two seconds.

We don't know if the cop is eyeballing us, about to **flick his flashers**, or typing our license plate into his computer, so we're in a heightened bug-eyed state. Seconds tick by like hours when **Yourtown's Finest** stick to our heels and force questions through our brains: Was I actually speeding? Should I change lanes? Does he want me to speed up?

Everything slowly and slowly builds and builds to a bigger and bigger feeling of tension and pain . . .

. . . until he finally just zooms off into the distance, never to be heard from again.

AWESOME!