

# Liberate Your Weird

10 Weirdo-Affirming Reframes to Help You Ditch Conventionality, Unleash Your Inner Maverick, and Become the Awesome Special Snowflake You Were Always Meant To Be



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# About the Author



## Who am I?

My name is Emma Love Arbogast. I write about self-liberation: how to be radically happy, fearlessly powerful, and free from the inside out. It started with me trying to figure out how my not-so-great childhood affected me and how to become a happy, functional adult. Along the way, I studied a lot of different healing methods and read a lot of self-help books, and got hooked on personal growth. I have been doing this work for about 20 years, and I love distilling and passing along what has worked for me.

## Why did I make this?

I was 42 when I finally said *fuck it* and started writing exactly what I wanted to write, the way I wanted to write it. And the more I did it, the better it felt! I didn't realize it at first, but I had made an inner decision to *embrace my weird*. I started a newsletter called Sparkly Dark and plastered unicorns on everything. *Cause I wanted to*. Over the course of a few months, I started writing a lot more vulnerably, and realized *Oh, I'm ADHD! and autistic!* I made new friends, and realized *weird is awesome, actually*. This mini ebook is me capturing that lighting in a bottle for you.

You can find all of my writing and projects at [emmaarbogast.com](http://emmaarbogast.com).

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# Before We Start

## **What do I mean by “weird”?**

“Weird” is often used to mean anything that is strange and unusual, unexpected, or not natural.

What I’m specifically aiming to discuss in this ebook is our internalized shame about being different.

What makes you different could be anything—neurodivergence, being queer, being kinky, having a different upbringing than those around you, or just your oddball sense of humor or eclectic taste in clothes.

It’s anything that people find different, peculiar, odd, offbeat, idiosyncratic, eccentric, unconventional, unusual, remarkable, or unexpected.

(Of course, there are lots of worse-sounding words too..like abnormal, bizarre, aberrant, freak, abomination, wacko, crazy, deviant, unnatural... which is why I wrote this book.)

This book isn't about *what* makes you weird—it’s about liberating your relationship to it, so you view it as a source of pride and opportunity, rather than shame or embarrassment—because nobody should have to feel like there is something wrong with them just for being who they are.

## **What is a reframe?**

A reframe is an empowering mental tool that shifts the way you see things by challenging the underlying assumptions around an area or topic. It can change how you feel about something, allow you to solve a problem, and help you get unstuck.

# OK, let's get started!

## #1 Nature is weird.

Whether you believe in God as dude-in-the-sky, God as the force from Star Wars, or you don't believe in God at all, let's just look around. There's some weird-ass shit in this world. If there is a God, or any kind of order in the Universe, it *loves* weird-ass shit!

Naked mole rats, axolotls, deep sea anglerfish...weird! Carnivorous plants? Platypus? Quantum physics?? Nature is all kinds of weird!

Even if it all happened by accident, *your* being weird is entirely in keeping with the laws of nature. *If nature has a flavor, it's not vanilla.* It's a wild world out there, and you're just part of nature's inherent wackiness.

In other words, *normal is an illusion.* *Weird* is how the world really is.

## #2 What we think is "normal" really IS weird.

In psychology research, the acronym WEIRD stands for "Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic"—to demonstrate that most psychological research has been done on a tiny population of outliers, compared to the whole world population of humans. On top of that, a 2010 study published in the journal *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* found that 67% of subjects in American psychology research were *undergraduates studying psychology*. That's like studying a bunch of slices of white bread and declaring you understand food!

Self-help is also an echo chamber of WEIRDness. So much of it traces back to the Human Potential Movement, which was *also* entwined with American universities and psychology professors. Self-help so far has been

largely written by white people and marketed to white middle-class Americans.

Don't get me wrong, I've gotten a lot from all these WEIRD things (cause I'm WEIRD too)—but let's not kid ourselves—they don't represent humanity at large.

The psychology industry also has an outsize power to declare some human variation to be “disorders”, which has immense impact on people's lives, for better and for worse (it's getting better...but historically, it's been terrible).

I'm not suggesting we throw it all out, just be aware of where these norms and expectations come from, and remember that what is considered “normal” isn't even “typical”—it just represents the views and needs and experiences of whoever has power and resources in a society.

### **#3 Weird is valuable.**

Marketing 101 is about finding your Unique Selling Proposition. It's the thing that makes your offer stand out from the competition. Unique sells!

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*Originality is attractive. It's the difference between generic-brand cereal and that gourmet, artisanal stuff that comes in a paper bag with hand-drawn fonts and a quirky tagline.*

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Now sometimes this is a manufactured difference, and it's all just cereal in the end. But the point remains—*humans love novelty*. And *you*, my friend, are a novel creation.

Which means *your weirdness is inherently valuable*.

## **#4 Weirdness attracts your Right People (and repels the Wrong People).**

Being your wild, wacky self lets others self-identify as being your kind of people.

When I was an awkward teenager, I ended up at the “table of misfits”, who were far more accepting than the “popular” kids were. The highest level of acceptance I have ever felt was walking into the dungeon floor at Kinkfest. We all knew we were *totally weird*, and it was *totally awesome!*

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*Which party do you want to be invited to, the weirdo one or the boring normal one? Which table do you really want to be sitting at? The one where you have to perform a fake version of yourself? Or the one where people love you for exactly who you truly are?*

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When you embrace your weirdness, you also act as a natural repellent for people who wouldn't appreciate the real you anyway. *And that's OK.* Let them find their own people, and let yourself be embraced by the people who get and love *you*.

## **#5 Weird is way more fun.**

Conformity is a soul-sucking exercise that ages you before your time. Being weird keeps your spirit spry and your imagination alive.

How do I know this? Look at children! Their drawings are weird. Their stories are weird. They walk and move weird. Ok, some of it is just a lack of fine motor control. But still—we know kids are more divergent thinkers.

Embracing your weird gives your inner child a chance to frolic.

Even if it can't turn back the clock, being authentic taps you into the energy and vitality of your youth because being your natural self gives you energy, and trying to be someone else drains it.

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*Do you want to spend your limited energy, resources, and time on Earth trying to fit into a set of norms that are an illusion anyway, or do you want to spend it discovering and developing whatever makes you a truly unique individual? Which outcome do you want to invest in?*

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## **#6 Weird is an investment that pays off with awesome.**

Ok, let's be real. It does take work to turn *being different* into something that is also valuable and attractive to others. It's not like being different just grants you an automatic invitation to all the cool parties.

Sometimes our weird can turn people off. It can be hard for other people to find a route into connection if we don't build them a bridge.

But if you can take the raw ingredients of awkward, odd, and eccentric, and combine it with empathy, self-awareness and listening skills, you've got a winning combination.

Being a connected, contributing member of a group can be learned. Weird has to be *developed*, by leaning into it. Just like art-making is something we

refine through practice, cultivating our originality and individuality is something we can make into an ongoing investment.

When we do that, we find our purpose: our unique contribution to the human story. We find what nobody can replicate or replace. And we become a channel to unleash that unique magic into the world.

There will never be another you. And your unique contribution matters. Your voice matters. It matters that you give yourself the time, attention, and devotion to cultivate it.

## **#7 Weird is inclusive.**

Your weirdness gives others permission to be themselves, which they might really, really need.

Your willingness to be your true, unique self is a permission slip to people who may not be ready (or feel safe) to come out with their weird.

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*I know what shame and self-loathing feel like. I know that if we had a society that was more inclusive, lives would be saved. And many lives would be better lived, in the light instead of the shadows.*

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Being your real self is a vote for a healthier, saner world. It's also a direct contribution to that world taking root around you, in your personal social circles.

Being yourself has an impact on everyone you meet, in ways you may never see, but they matter.



## **#8 Being weird is a never-ending journey, while being normal is a never-ending grind.**

Being normal is a dead-end road.

Committing to being yourself and loving yourself for who you are means continually giving birth to new levels of awesome. The more you peel away the layers of societal expectations and define your own perspective and purpose, the more you discover your unique, authentic, vibrant, multifaceted self.

You don't know what you'll do or create until you get there: that's what makes it an adventure! It's the choice to be fully alive as who you truly are, giving life everything you've got.

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*Conformity has one goal: safety. And yes, it can give you that. But it can't give you magic, wonder, meaning, or purpose. You have to find those yourself, by taking risks.*

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I follow my intuition and creative impulses as much as possible, and I have no idea where I will end up or who I will be a year from now. A year ago, I couldn't imagine being who I am now. There is no end to this road, and I love that. Being yourself makes you free.

## **#9 Weird is the future.**

Have you noticed that the internet makes everyone weird?

People online are constantly grouping up and going further into their weird. That has its downsides (like echo chambers and radicalization). But I

think if you zoom out, what is happening is an evolutionary explosion in human cultural differentiation.

Turns out, there are a lot more weirdos out there than we thought, and it's changing how we think about humanity. We're all encountering people who are radically different than us, and it's been a bit of a learning curve to co-exist. There are some growing pains still to work through, but I think we are entering a new era in how we relate to difference.

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*The world we are moving into is one where conformity—or even having a single standard to conform to—is old news. Self-definition and self-creation is a cultural skill that is all about embracing what makes you unique.*

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In other words, *weird* won't be *weird* much longer. It'll just be how you are, because it will be acknowledged that we are all different, and that's OK!

## **#10 Weird is revolutionary.**

If you're not fitting into the system, maybe the system isn't fitting you. Your personal act of embracing your weirdness is a micro-revolution, which contributes to slowly shifting the culture over time.

Whether it's societal norms, outdated laws, or unjust systems, it takes a weirdo to question why things are the way they are—and envision a better way. The normies are not the ones who ignite progress—we are.

Weirdos are the glitch in the Matrix. We can't fit in, so we make the world change to fit us. And by simply being ourselves—we change the world.

## Some final words...

Being weird is not always an easy road to walk, I'll be honest. It took me many years to accept and embrace who I am, and I'm sure there is more learning and growing to come.

But I've come to that point in any growth journey where you want to loudly (and lovingly) shout at your younger self, "What were you thinking!? You have SO much to offer!". I didn't know how to value myself and my differences when I was younger. I only looked at how much I struggled, and not how awesome I was when I thrived.

So I offer this ebook as a love note to you and to my former self: It's not just "OK" to be weird. It's fundamentally, totally, overwhelmingly, fabulously *amazing* to be weird.

And the best part is that all this awesome is already in you. You just have to let it out!

## Journal Prompts

1. Where did I get the idea that it was not OK to be myself?

Go Deeper: Are there any patterns? Have there been any times in your life when your differences felt celebrated? How did that feel?

2. What messages did I get about difference growing up?

Go Deeper: What messages did you get from your family? Culture? Social group? School? Workplace? Look for messages both about what was normal or allowed, and what was abnormal or shunned.

3. Were my parents similar or different than their peers?

Go Deeper: Look at different dimensions, like socioeconomic class, being an immigrant, mental illness, trauma, incarceration, queerness. How did they deal with their differences?

4. What differences have I learned to celebrate?

Go Deeper: How did I learn this? How could I celebrate them more? Who do I celebrate with? What have I not celebrated that I could?

5. Do I have any beliefs that say differences are not safe for me to have?

Go Deeper: What bad thing would happen if you were out and proud? What does it mean about you to have this difference? What do you want to believe about yourself, or about differences in general?

6. Do I have a belief that certain differences will just never be accepted?

Go Deeper: What would it be like to not have that belief? Is there any contradicting evidence, like examples of places or people who accept or welcome that difference?

7. What awesomeness might I unleash if I embraced my weird?

Go Deeper: How do I see the world that is different than other people? What perspective is missing from the world that I could offer?



## **10 Reasons to Embrace My Weird**

- 1. Weird is natural.**
- 2. “Normal” is an illusion.**
- 3. Weird is valuable.**
- 4. My weirdness attracts my people.**
- 5. Weird is way more fun.**
- 6. Weird is an investment that pays off with awesome.**
- 7. Weird is inclusive.**
- 8. Weird is a never-ending journey.**
- 9. Weird is the future.**
- 10. Weird is revolutionary.**