What Modern Enlightenment Is.
And What it Isn’t.

This book is about experiencing more peace in your life. It’s about living in a way that makes you the source of your own happiness rather than waiting for other people or circumstances to do that job for you.

It’s also about those things you’ve always done—your deep-rooted habits and patterns—especially if you’d like to stop doing what you’ve always done. It’s about checking in with what you’re thinking and feeling from time to time and beginning to choose how you think and feel rather than be a victim of your thoughts and emotions.

It’s about loving and accepting yourself. It’s about really loving and accepting yourself. And loving and accepting other people, too. It’s also about having easy relationships that don’t resemble a roller-coaster in any way (Except that they’re fun. And exciting. And worth the wait.)

Oh, and it’s also about asking for guidance and tapping into a crazy universal energy that’s much bigger than all of us.

There’s a lot covered in this book and it all comes down to one basic idea: becoming just a little more Enlightened today than you were yesterday.

Modern Enlightenment

Enlightenment is achievable by anyone—including you.

Enlightenment is gained by simple shifts and small steps; by developing new perspectives and better ways of being. Enlightenment is achieved by making small tweaks to how you see and interact with the world. It comes from being just a little more awake and aware in your own life. This isn’t your Grandma’s Enlightenment. It’s not Enlightenment done the way some old-school sage or guru would have you do it. It’s not achieved by taking a vow of silence, or spending hours in meditation, or always turning the other cheek. You don’t have to give away all your stuff, or stop swearing, or quit your corporate job to be Enlightened.

This is Enlightenment the modern way. It’s practical and down-to earth. It’s Enlightenment for navigating this particular time on the planet because you can live in the modern world with compassion, kindness, and self-acceptance. In fact, I highly recommend it.

Modern Enlightenment is about letting go, and realizing you don’t have to try to control things anymore. Things work out pretty well—better, actually—when you take a step back and let them
unfold. No need to force them to look like what your limited perspective thinks they should look like.

Modern Enlightenment is about radical acceptance of What Is. This means accepting your circumstances, people in your life, and yourself. It means not wasting your time wishing things were different, but accepting exactly What Is and then creating what you want when and where you can.

Modern Enlightenment is about being fluid. Not rigid. It’s about being easy and willing to change. Holding tightly to beliefs and latching on to thoughts is the opposite of Modern Enlightenment. Modern Enlightenment is approaching those ideas that run through your mind with curiosity, not with attachment.

Modern Enlightenment is about taking total responsibility for the state of your life. Responsibility is the opposite of blame, by the way. I’m not talking about blaming yourself for what’s there, I’m talking about accepting whatever it is and choosing where you want to go from there. Your happiness is your business, no one else’s.

Modern Enlightenment is about doing things that scare you. You don’t wait around until the conditions are right before you act, but decide what you want to do and do it, fear and all.

Modern Enlightenment is about paving your own path. It’s about leading your own life. It’s not about following the rules, using someone else’s blueprint, or relying too much on what the experts say. Your life is yours to design and create. You’re the architect here.

2

Whose Underwear Are You Wearing?

Isn’t it cool that there are people who are really passionate about algebra? And chemistry and dry cleaning and accounting? Thank God for those people, because I love a good dry cleaner and it would suck to have to do that myself.

Think about all the people who are stuck doing stuff they don’t love. They’re trying to jam themselves into a mold that doesn’t quite fit—it’s like living a life that’s not really yours, and going through the motions of something that doesn’t feel quite right.

Maybe you know firsthand what it feels like to live a life that doesn’t seem to really belong to you.

I don’t believe that our passions are random. I believe that if something gets you excited, there’s a reason for it.
I don’t care if it’s algebra or watching General Hospital. If it seriously feels good—and I don’t mean the “I’d rather watch General Hospital than organize my closets” good, but the you-have-a-real-physical-inspiration and-genuine-excitement-about-it kind of good—then that’s what you’re meant to be doing.

If you have that kind of passion about becoming an artist, or starting a business, or adopting a puppy but your mind keeps telling you, “you’re not good enough,” “there’s no money in that,” “there’s poop involved,” respectfully tell your mind that you appreciate it’s opinion but please stay out of this. And then follow the inspiration because I guarantee, it’s not for nothing.

What if everyone just did exactly what they most loved to do in life? Wouldn’t it be cool if the number of people who would truly love to be vacuum cleaner sales reps or cardiac surgeons were perfectly equal to the number of vacuum cleaner sales reps and cardiac surgeons the world needs?

Maybe if everyone followed what they were most passionate about, we’d all fit perfectly into our place in the world like a puzzle coming together. We’d all be authentically ourselves doing what we love every day.

Think about how good we’d all be at what we did and how smoothly the world would run. You’d never think, “Am I qualified?” or “Is there a market for that?” Your passion would qualify you.

Instead, it’s like we’re all trying to fit ourselves into clothes that don’t fit. Not everyone—some people are doing what they’re meant to be doing. But far too many of us are wearing someone else’s underwear. And they are cutting off our circulation.

Find a nice pair that fits. And do whatever it takes to wear them every day.

3

If Nothing Ever Changed, Could You Be as Happy as You Want to Be?

The power was out on much of the East Coast last weekend. Some people were really affected by the outage. You’ve seen them—they are the ones who get interviewed by the local news or The Weather Channel. Their lives are put on hold until power is restored. They have no control over when their power will come back because they rely entirely on external power sources.

At the other extreme are people who weren’t impacted by the outage at all, usually because they have their own generators. They don’t rely on getting their power from external sources so when the external sources break down they carry on as if nothing has happened.
Who are you more like? Where do you get your power? By the way, I’m not talking about electricity anymore. *I’m talking about personal power.* Do you pull yours from external sources or generate your own?

**Your Power Source**

There comes a time in almost everyone’s life when you realize you don’t need anything to be happy. You know that if nothing ever changed—if this was it—you could be just as happy as you want to be.

Maybe that realization comes in a series of fleeting moments. Or maybe it hits you all at once and changes everything. For many people, it comes when they’re defeated by the outside world (their externally supplied power goes out) and they give up expecting things to be different. They surrender to What Is.

When you surrender, you realize there’s something operating under the surface. Something *inside of you* that generates peace. It turns the old, external power model on its head. The old external power model goes like this: if you want to feel better than you feel right now you should think about the external changes that would make you feel better. Then you should run out and make those things happen.

The new, generator model says external stuff makes you feel better for a while, but it’s not sustainable. And it’s certainly not reliable. In the new model, you get to feel how you want to feel *now.* You don’t have to wait for outside conditions to catch up because you have an internal happiness generator.

It’s okay to work by the old model. Achieving goals is fun, getting stuff is fun, bettering your life circumstances will certainly add joy…to an extent.

It’s just that instead of working *only* by the old model, you can work the new model, too. Working both angles puts you in the sweet spot because you get to chase external goals without *needing* to achieve them. You get to go for the promotion or lose the weight just for the sake of being promoted and feeling better. Not because your happiness depends on it. It takes all the pressure off.

The goals are mostly irrelevant to your happiness. They’re like nabbing the prime parking spot at grocery store. It’s nice, but not necessary. You can still get all the groceries on your list no matter where you park.

When you’re not dependent on the goals, you’re not attached to them. Then, if for whatever reason, the promotion doesn’t come through or the weight doesn’t come off, you don’t have to be so distraught. The only thing that will have happened is that you didn’t get your promotion or you don’t fit into your skinny jeans.

It’s not like you have to be unhappy because of it.
Dr. Amy Johnson is a psychologist, master certified coach, and public speaker.

She has taught university-level psychology, consulted on several high profile court cases, spoken to audiences around the country about success and happiness, and sailed around the world.

Amy uses innovative therapy and coaching tools to help clients change old patterns, see the world in a more Enlightened way, and live a life they love. She works with clients worldwide in individual and group coaching programs.

In addition to her work with clients, Amy trains life coaches in her unique methods. She has co-authored a book called *Changes of the Heart: Martha Beck Life Coaches Share Strategies for Facing Life Challenges* and she regularly writes and consults for several online and print publications such as *YourTango* and *Health Magazine*. To find out more about her coaching services, coach training, or to inquire about booking Amy for a speaking event, visit www.DrAmyJohnson.com.