



Brave, Not Perfect: Fear Less, Fail More, and Live Bolder

Reshma Saujani

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In a book inspired by her popular TED talk, *New York Times* bestselling author Reshma Saujani empowers women and girls to embrace imperfection and bravery.

Imagine if you lived without the fear of not being good enough. If you didn't care how your life looked on Instagram, or worry about what total strangers thought of you. Imagine if you could let go of the guilt, and stop beating yourself up for tiny mistakes. What if, in every decision you faced, you took the bolder path?

Too many of us feel crushed under the weight of our own expectations. We run ourselves ragged trying to please everyone, all the time. We lose sleep ruminating about whether we may have offended someone, pass up opportunities that take us out of our comfort zones, and avoid rejection at all costs.

There's a reason we act this way, Reshma says. As girls, we were taught to play it safe. Well-meaning parents and teachers praised us for being quiet and polite, urged us to be careful so we didn't get hurt, and steered us to activities at which we could shine.

The problem is that perfect girls grow up to be women who are afraid to fail. It's time to stop letting our fears drown out our dreams and narrow our world, along with our chance at happiness.

By choosing bravery over perfection, we can find the power to claim our voice, to leave behind what makes us unhappy, and go for the things we genuinely, passionately want. Perfection may set us on a path that feels safe, but bravery leads us to the one we're authentically meant to follow.

In *Brave, Not Perfect*, Reshma shares powerful insights and practices to help us override our perfect girl training and make bravery a lifelong habit. By being brave, not perfect, we can all become the authors of our biggest, boldest, and most joyful life.

Brave, Not Perfect: Fear Less, Fail More, and Live Bolder Details

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From Reader Review Brave, Not Perfect: Fear Less, Fail More, and Live Bolder for online ebook

Jonathan Carter says

Disclaimer: The publisher has given me an E-ARC of the book via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Brave, Not Perfect: Fear Less, Fail More, Live Bolder is a book every person needs in their life. Especially girls and women. The book discusses how you'll never be able to do a thing without being courageous. It's about taking chances, failing, and learning from those failures.

Reshma Saujani really did an impressive job in being an inspiration. Even myself, a guy, learned so much from a book that is marketed to empower women. I learn so much about the inequality of life even for our modern age. I felt the poignant reality of women being raised to be perfect and not brave. And most importantly, I saw that anything is possible if only we put our minds to it and find the right support.

Overall, Brave, Not Perfect is the perfect book to learn how to be brave. It is a timely and relevant collection of experiences and tips to conquer our fears.

Betina says

Beginning has some interesting research into gendered upbringing, and the end has some interesting ideas about how to make bravery a daily practice.

The middle gets lost in selling bravery as a concept and even takes some irrelevant (although accurate) shots at the current government.

I liked it, but it could have been half as long.

Kristie says

This book has something to offer women that struggle with trying to be perfect, saying no, and reaching for their goals. Unfortunately, I do think that many women fall into at least one of these categories. Many don't value themselves enough and are afraid of being judged harshly, embarrassed, or failing. Those are the women that this book attempts to reach.

I thought it was a decent book for someone that is looking for some support in moving forward out of this type of life cycle. Unfortunately, I did not find anything new in the book. Of course, my education is in mental health, so I may be more experienced in this area than some, but I also think that a lot of this just comes with time and life experience. Therefore, I also think it may be more useful to someone that is younger.

The last part of the book offers some helpful suggestions to people trying to break these habits, however some of it may be easier said than done and women should be aware that it will take not just bravery, but

motivation and repetition of effort to effect the type of changes suggested.

I did have one issue with the book and that is that the author involves politics on several occasions. At times I could see how it applied to what she was trying to say, but other times she just added it in because it is an interest of hers. I feel that this might alienate women that have a different political view than she does. I would suggest that there are plenty of women with opposing political views that the author might be able to help who would be turned off by the political aspect.

In addition, I found the book to be a bit too repetitive for my taste and took longer to finish than it should have. I didn't think it was a bad book, but I didn't find it particularly interesting either. However, if the subject interests you, go ahead and give it a try. You may love it.

Thank you to NetGalley and Crown Publishing for providing me with a free electronic copy in exchange for an honest review.

MundiNova says

"I'd rather be caught trying than not at all."

Yes, I'm this book's demographic: A women working in tech who doubts herself constantly.

Self-help business books are hit or miss. But after reading *Brave, Not Perfect* I'm now realizing why they're hit or miss: Ask yourself, "Am I this book's demographic?" If the answer is no, then the book will be a miss. Just because you're working in the corporate world, doesn't mean every pseudo-psychology/business book is meant for you. Some are written specially for C-suite or VPs who have the flexibility to make large scale choices. But *Brave, Not Perfect* was written for me.

If you're wondering if it's written for you, ask yourself if any of the following applies:

- 1) You spend too much time reading, rewriting, and rereading an email before you send it because one small grammar or spelling mistake would plague you for the rest of the day. Or worse, make your colleagues think you're an idiot.
- 2) You didn't apply for the job you wanted because you didn't meet 100% of the requirements and don't already know how to perform it perfectly. Because taking the time to learn the job could waste your employer's time, and you'd hate to do that.
- 3) You sacrifice your time to please someone else, to make them like you more, even if you really don't want to do it.
- 4) You have a safety net in place that allows you to take chances.

That last one is key.

This book is not for the working single mom, living paycheck to paycheck just to put food on the table, who can't afford to take risks with her or her family's lives. There's a certain level of privilege this book caters to.

That's not necessarily a bad thing. Multi-millionaires need financial advisers, that doesn't mean being a financial adviser is an evil profession and shouldn't exist. This book is very much needed for the sad demographic of ~20% women in tech.

As I was reading this book (which took only a day because I couldn't put it down), all the women in my life that I love and want to see succeed would bubble up in my head. In one section, I thought, "This is what A needs to read!" In another section, "I need to tell B to do this!"

So yeah, ya'll been warned. I'm going to tell you fine ladies to read this book.

Theme: 5 stars

Writing: 4 stars

Maria says

Saujani ran for Congress and lost. It was the first major failure of her life. And after she picked herself up, mourned and recovered she realized that it was a gift, an opportunity to change directions and a moment that not many women allow themselves to face. She started Girls Who Code and she wants to make resilience and bravery a foundation of girls' lives.

Why I started this book: I am always looking for books and reminders to be BRAVE.

Why I finished it: Short and sweet, this is a great reminder of the power of bravery. That there is immense courage in using the word YET. I'm not a good public speaker YET. I'm not ____ YET. That we can learn, grow and become.

Tara says

A good helpful book if you're looking to break out of the cycle of how you were raised, breaking out of believing you aren't good enough, that you have to be perfect. There are some good tips here, I found it a bit repetitive at times, but it has good sound helpful ideas. Sometimes a bit simplistic but I did find it helpful, a good starting point to jump off into further reading.

Thanks to netgalley and the publisher for a free copy for an honest opinion

Donna says

I didn't know who Reshma was before reading this. I wasn't sure I'd like her within the first 10 pages, but I loved her honesty, passion and commitment to living her best brave life. But what I loved the most is that she was not only a strong woman, but she supported all other women. She doesn't feel the need to put others down (mainly women) to elevate herself. So I applaud that tenfold. I also liked the research she used on how different little girls are treated than little boys.

This is one of those books that made me think....lots of food for thought here. I would have liked this more if I had been younger, but where I am at in my life, I'm pretty secure and have raised my girls to be the same way. But even with that said, I think my girls could benefit from the messages that this author speaks about with such a drive. I loved the be brave message. So 4 stars.

Sarah Holton says

This book called me out in a lot of ways and I will be thinking on it for a while.

I did have a quibble with one part where it felt pretty victim blaming when talking about the Aziz Ansari Me Too thing. I get what she was trying to say but it didn't come off quite right. Though honestly I'm not sure how to have it come off better. I wouldn't let this put you off of reading it though.

Donna Hines says

"Where along the way did we trade in our confidence and courage for approval and acceptance? And why?"
The girls are taught from a young age to be nice, pretty, be a young lady who is soft and perfect.
You're not allowed to speak out against injustice, you're not allowed to tell your truths, you're not allowed to be aggressive and fight for what you believe in.

"Fighting with the world" is how I was always labeled because as a young girl with three brothers I had to 'fight' for everything including attention.

Nothing was handed to me and hell I certainly was not spoiled contrary to the beliefs being an only girls with three boys.

In fact I was also labeled 'the mouth of the south' by my non loving parents who ruled with an iron hand and taught with militaristic style. I wouldn't just allow someone else to have more rights than me and when something was wrong I sure as hell called it out.

I still do and it's why I'm both an empath and a feminist.

I don't believe women should be forced to take a back seat to societies norms.

Being perfect is not brave; failing and succeeding now that's bravery!

Perfection is great if you want to be an overblown hyped up model who is on a starvation diet -- I'd know--

Never tall enough, skinny enough, quite smiling all over self enough..

But today I know I AM ENOUGH!

We are all made in the image and likeness of GOD.

We all have something special we are born with to offer up to the world.

We can all do our part to help others and in helping others using gratitude and kindness we can keep the ball rolling.

It's not our job to be exhausted, to give so much we lose ourselves, to work to death with nothing to show but a measly \$7.25 an hr salary.

It's our job to help one another. To be the light that supports and ignites the spark.

As a points of light recipient our president mocked the light but I'm so proud to be able to help my fellow members of my community.

What will be our legacy? What will be your dash?

You decide!

Netta says

Perfect for a TED talk and just a tad bit repetitive and go-get-it-ish for a book. Having read this book, though, I realised how lucky I am because I've never been told that I ought to be perfect (or ought to be something other than just happy and content, for that matter) or, that being a girl, I'm a less something.

I grew up in the family where women would have none of this “softer gender” thing (my great-grandmother travelled across the country during the WW2 on her own with six little children), and men - my Dad and my Grandpa - lauded the brilliance, kindness, generosity and, yes, bravery of the women they love. In fact, my Grandpa, one of the smartest men I know, my constant interlocutor and opponent, encouraged me not to use "but-I-am-a-girl" as an excuse to not understand or not know something. When I was at school and couldn't figure out how to deal with a difficult math homework, he tried to explain me things that I found too complicated to grasp. Refusing to make an effort, I asked him to just tell me what the answer was, "because I'm a girl", I added. "So what?" he said. In this regard *Brave, Not Perfect* is an eye-opening book for me as what I've been taking for granted my entire life turned out to be a privilege. And yet, I, too, don't often feel brave enough, and I'm definitely prone to either having a perfect result or not doing anything at all. I asked myself, why. And I daresay it's because things are a bit more complicated in real life than they are in a TED talk or a How-To book.

I don't like eerie boy-girl binary opposition that Reshma Saujani used in this book. She states, for example, that women don't go for what they want unless they're sure that they're 100% qualified, while for men 60% of confidence is enough. She says that boys are encouraged to be brave, while girls are encouraged to be likable. It's the truth, of course. But is it the whole truth? I know boys who are as striving to be nice and perfect as much as girls from Saujani examples. I know men who were taught to play it safe and don't even dare to try something bold. I know women who don't give a damn what others would think and go for things they want in what should be called "a man's fashion". As much as I liked this book (because it resonated with me, despite the fact that I cannot relate to the reasons and explanations Saujani gives), I would love it to be more about a person (male or female) striving to meet some illusive expectations rather than just girls overcoming the issues of a boy-girl framed mindset, just because this way the book might have been helpful for many more people.

Amanda (Books, Life and Everything Nice) says

Thank you to NetGalley, Currency, and Reshma Saujani for an ARC ebook copy to review. As always, an honest review from me.

Like:

- A self help business book for woman without being overly technical or dry
- She launched Girls Who Code and ran for political office
- Gives a voice to all the things that so many women experience

Love:

- Incredibly relatable
- That bravery is a muscle: the more you use it, the stronger your bravery muscle will be

- The author's voice/writing style: professional, authoritative, but relatable and kind
- The message that its okay to not be liked, because those just aren't your people
- The quote "In a world full of princesses, dare to be a hot dog."

Dislike: —

Wish that:

- There were a few more practical examples of how to be brave on a day to day basis
- The book was longer!

Overall, a very powerful, relatable book that every woman needs to read. Even if you think you're brave, I think you will find many elements of value in here. A book I'm going to be referencing again and again.

Kelly says

An outstanding personal development/self-help/growth book about the ways men and women are cued to behave differently. Women, so frequently, are encouraged to be perfect and when something can't be done in such a way, they shouldn't bother trying. That leads, then, to not trying new things or developing their bravery muscle. Saujani offers up some of the ways that bravery can be practiced and integrated and how to break away from those preconceived ideas of perfection.

Short, succinct, and doesn't feel like a book made from a TED Talk. It offers actionable steps, powerful insights, and tons of science/social science research. The voice is excellent and encouraging. It was a reminder to not shut up in instances where speaking up or out would be of tremendous value.

Perfect for those who love DROP THE BALL or who are tired of cis white dudes leading the ~disruption~ in personal development. Saujani is a woman of color, and her background is tremendously necessary in this space.

More to be said on the "All The Books" podcast!

Heart1lly says

More like a 3.5.

Let me just start by saying I really respect Girls Who Code. I'm not a girl anymore, I'm a woman (34), but if I had a Girls Who Code program in my school things might have gone a bit differently for me. Reshma illuminates a lot of problems girls face and have faced in our society growing up. The information and anecdotal evidence wasn't new to me, it was everything I've heard before and then some, before I've lived through the circumstances she admonishes throughout Brave, Not Perfect.

I have well-meaning parents, but I sometimes wonder what would have happened in my life had they not cringed every time I was interested in something that involved math.

"That has math in it, you can't do that."

I was interested in science once upon a time, but...because it had math in it, something I didn't do well in, I was discouraged from even trying. When I picked up an astronomy class in university my parents scoffed at me because they just ~knew~ I would fail and end up dropping out. So, when I DID end up dropping out I felt like I was just proving them correctly that I was a screw-up and couldn't learn math or do anything involving math. I'm actually feeling angry as I type this review.

Teachers have told me that they were frustrated with me because I wasn't getting it, or learning the math and ugh. Just ugh. Everyone around me actively discouraged me as a child from really going after my dreams and it's not just me this happens to. It happens to countless girls in school.

So, if you have a young daughter, reading this book might be a good idea. If you're already a fan of Reshma's, then none of this information is going to be new to you. All in all I thought this was a pretty okay read, though I don't think I was truly the demographic. I'd say this book is way more helpful if you're a young woman just starting out in the world or the parent of a young woman.

Sadly, I feel like the advice is lost on me only because I've already learned the lessons within the book and I feel like I could tell other young women the same stuff Reshma espoused.

It's also a very quick read. I got through it in a day when I really sat down to listen. The audiobook is narrated by the author, and the performance is pretty good though there are some weird pauses here and there. It's a bit "rah rah, you can do it, get it girl!" but I think it's perfect for a young woman who might be struggling and I know we all know or knew young women who were struggling because of the weird-ass nature of how society treats those of us who aren't dudes.

Kim says

I think I would've gotten a lot more out of this if I fit Saujani's definition of a perfectionist—fixed mindset, constantly worried what others think of me, a Type-A Hermione Granger. As more of a Faramir (blessed with an awesome father instead of Denethor), I didn't quite reap the full *Brave, Not Perfect* experience of empowerment.

Which is not to say I didn't benefit from the read. Having Saujani's concepts and assertions to push my own experiences against allowed me to more closely define how my own drive toward perfection behaves in my life. And reading what motivates her and other Hermione Granger perfectionists to push themselves toward bravery (regret, jealousy, competitiveness) offered me the opportunity to realize that my motivations will have to be something else entirely. Even looking at some of her strategies to cultivate a bravery mindset affirmed that the ways I've worked to enlarge my life since adolescence are solid, beneficial approaches.

But this was definitely more a case of *Learn How Different You Are* than *Learn How You Too Can Change Your Life!* I'm an enneagram 4, so you'd think I'd be rolling in that special snowflake-ness like a cat in catnip, but...honestly...I could really use some help with the type of perfectionism I *do* experience.

It didn't help that a lot of Saujani's statements about the source of perfectionism in women, women's right to claim their truth, and how her readers, too, can achieve greatness through bravery were very black and white and riddled with logical holes and inconsistencies. Instead of focusing on what she was advocating, I kept getting snarled in what wasn't being said. (Or cited in the Notes.)

I mean, sure, maybe we should rethink how we raise our girls, but do we really think raising them like our boys is the solution? Doesn't the way we raise our boys cause problems of its own? And, yes! Claim your

truth, ladies! ...But don't think that your truth gives you the right to stop hearing others' truths, too. And it's fantastic that so many women have found that bravery has led them to creating amazing non-profits and opening new chapters of success...but isn't that still focusing on the end goal instead of the process of being brave?

I think *Brave, Not Perfect* will leave many, many readers with an awakening sense of their own power and a roadmap for fully inhabiting their own lives, but for those of us outside Saujani's template—or those less moved by the pathos of her encouragement—there's a lot less here. I will certainly take the insights I've gained and see whether I can turn them into weapons in the neverending battle against my own perfectionist demons, and there are a few strategies I can put into immediate action (Take On a Physical Challenge; Trust Yourself; Review, Reassess, Realign), but the hunt for advice that speaks to my Faramir-type perfectionist continues....

Purva Deshpande says

I'd give it a 3.5 stars. Although I couldn't relate with all of the emotions/experiences in the book, I did find myself exclaiming "Exactly!" or "OMG this is so me!" quite a few times as I was reading the book. It does a great job of pointing out the many small (and big) ways in which we women tend to beat ourselves up over insignificant things and also gives some good pointers for "building the bravery muscles". The style of writing is quite informal and the addition of people's experiences/stories etc. made for quite an enjoyable read (not as preachy as I expected). It does tend to get rather repetitive, especially near the end. Overall, it was an interesting read and I would certainly recommend it.
