

SHUT UP & SIT

FINDING SILENCE
AND ALL THE
LIFE-CHANGING MAGIC
THAT COMES WITH IT

YEDDA

DEDICATION

To my parents:

Mom, you have been my biggest cheerleader. Your insatiable curiosity, creativity, spunk, and eternal youth have given me the ability to always make something out of nothing and believe I can do anything. Your journey to healing truly paved the pathway to breaking generational chains of suffering.

Father, although you now rest where none weep, your artistic abilities to manifest anything, your dynamic presence to own a room, and your intensity when you would get lost in the inner struggle and brood over the complexities of life have given me the ability to keep my foot on the accelerator of my life, even when I know I am heading straight into a brick wall that must, too, come down.

Dad, your discipline, persistence, and tenacity to face pain (where the will is broken) have allowed me to remain unbroken while serving something greater than myself. I owe my relentless ability to keep getting back up over and over again to you.

Pop, your belief in me and your willingness to teach me about business and leadership have been invaluable — as you will see by some of the content in this book. Your ability to tell stories and keep an audience engaged never ceases to amaze me.

To my family, friends, and clients:

Thank you for all the moments of laughter, love, learning, and letting go; for the beginnings and endings and everything in between in this beautiful, full life we share.

To the two partners of my personal life:

The first one for making me whole and teaching me how to love others; the second one for cracking me wide open and teaching me how to love myself.

To my son:

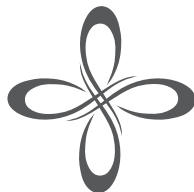
You are my greatest gift, my greatest teacher, and my greatest love. You are a gift that came through me and to me, to teach me the sacredness and holiness of love. You are the highest and grandest expression of Source. Thank you for constantly reminding me who and what I truly am and for showing me how to let love live me.

To all the saints and sages who have come before me:

We're all just learning and borrowing from each other, and creating new stories from the building blocks of those who arrived here before us. I honor you all for your truth-seeking and truth-telling. I am humbled and inspired by your wisdom and your courage to heal the world.

To All:

I see you. I am aware.



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A SHUT UP AND SIT BOOK™

Shut Up & Sit:
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PREFACE

If you know me, you know that I love Tiffany's—Tiffany's and Tieks. A lot. (To be totally honest my alter-ego is Audrey Hepburn, circa *Breakfast at Tiffany's*: Wearing all-black, a jaunty tiara on her head, and totally Zen, poised in lotus position with a long cigarette holder in her mouth... because yes, I used to smoke two packs of cigarettes a day!) But as much as I love luxury, pampering, and posh now, I come from somewhere else altogether.



MY STORY BEGAN ON THE BACK OF A TRIUMPH MOTORCYCLE.

My mom was a seventeen-year-old girl, seven months pregnant and barefoot on the back of that motorcycle, on her way to marry my dad. At twenty years old, he stood over six feet tall—dark and gorgeous; both of my parents were gorgeous. And they were just kids, living in one of the poorest neighborhoods on the Southside of Richmond, Virginia. They were so poor at one point that my mom didn't even own a pair of shoes. But she loved my dad more than anything.

My mom says that my dad had this presence. She compared it to when people used to say "Elvis is in the building," because everyone could feel his presence before they even saw him. My dad had that same kind of magnetism. He would walk into a room and consume the entire space, and my mom was completely drawn to him.

But they were out-of-control crazy. My dad hung out with a lot of the bikers in town, and they partied all the time. They broke beer bottles over my mom's head when she was pregnant. Life was full-throttle from the moment I was conceived.

As my mom tells the story, as soon as they got married my dad took off, and she didn't see him again for three days. Weeks later, when my mom gave birth to me, he did the same thing; my dad dropped her off at the hospital door, saying that he'd be right back, and days went by before she saw him again.

Both of my parents grew up with staggering levels of dysfunction, including alcoholism, drug addiction, and domestic violence. They were dirt poor and lived in government-subsidized housing with no car and no money. Neither of my parents learned to aspire to or dream of a life that could be any different or better than the one they had.

When I was an infant and my dad went out to party, he would leave us for days with his parents. My grandparents were honest-to-goodness, falling-down-drunk alcoholics. They literally owned the mattress that they slept on and the clothes on their backs, and they drank from sunup to sundown. My baby book documents the very first time I drank a beer... at nine-months-old, and the first time I got drunk... at eleven-months-old. (Seriously.)

So, that's how my life began. I had these parents who were just—well, as we'd say, *nucken-futs*; two kids who were riding high on chaos and raw emotion, doing whatever they could to survive. And all of a sudden, they had this baby. We were surrounded by alcoholism and drug addiction, and people on welfare who only knew how to live their lives in lack and despair. It's no surprise that two kids who fell in love at seventeen and twenty years of age, with zero education and raised in toxic home environments, didn't make it very long as a couple. My father didn't know how to handle the magic of who he was as a human being, so he turned to the familiar—drugs and alcohol—to deal with the things from which he felt he suffered. And my mom couldn't sustain that lifestyle.

That is my origin story.

So, I mean it when I say that being where I'm at right now is a fucking miracle. Mindfulness isn't just something I teach; it's been my personal journey. A journey of sitting down and shutting up—and discovering through silence all the life-changing magic that comes with it.

JUST SHUT UP AND SIT—

I say that to myself a lot. Just shut up and sit. Stop analyzing, stop agonizing, stop doing, stop planning, stop questioning, stop critiquing, stop, stop, stop. Just. Shut. Up. And. Sit.

IT'S NOT ALL THAT DIFFICULT.

(Except, it totally is.)

As humans, we have a brain that wants to *know things*. We want to know who, and what, and where, and when, and why, and how, and for how long, and what will it feel like, and what will be the outcome, and what if we don't

like it, and what if people don't like us, and what if we lose, and what if we fail? What if we do this when we were supposed to do that? What if we go here when we were supposed to go there? What if we aren't enough, exactly as we are?

This book comes from that place of unknowing, from a mind filled with the same "I don't knows" that probably fill your own mind. There is so much I don't know. I don't know why I'm doing what I'm doing, why I'm going where I'm going, why the universe selected me for one task, and not another. I have no idea.

But here's what I do know: I know that I have to do this. My journey to mindfulness, personal growth, and transformation came filled with guides. I have read so many books like this one, attended so many workshops, sat at the feet of so many gurus—and through it all, I remember thinking: *Does this really have to be so fucking hard?* Does it have to be so damn arduous to unravel why we do what we do, why our behaviors are what they are, why we were created the way we were? We make everything so complicated—and, let's be honest, sometimes it is. But it's also very simple.

There has to be something on this journey that I went through that I can now use to help others.

It's been an intense study, personally and professionally, to create my love-based vision of what health and well-being looks like. This has been the work of my whole career—digging into how we all can build a love-based vision for our lives and understanding what guidance is needed along the way. I have more than two decades of hands-on experience as a leader, a narrative coach, a mindfulness teacher, and a guide. The purpose of this book is to guide you through learning to systematically identify, isolate, and eliminate your negatives while amplifying your positives and taking a quantum leap toward greater health, vitality, and success. This book is my story of waking up and guiding others to do the same. My passion and purpose are to help you create your love-based vision for optimal health and well-being. This book will be your guide.

So just shut up and sit. Be present, awake, and aware—and we will get through this journey together.

This book was written for the people who aren't going to read over 500 books on mindfulness (like I did), or attend years of seminars and workshops (again, like I did), or continue to mine the world around them for the clues that lead to answers that make sense. I did all that.

(YOU'RE WELCOME.)

And that is what I am giving you here: The fast track, Cliff Notes®-style low-down on how to achieve real, lasting behavior change. (It's what my coaching clients pay me for, after all.)

**AND HERE'S THE REALLY BEAUTIFUL PART:
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR
WHAT YOU DO, OR WHERE YOU COME
FROM—THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN FOR YOU.**

***It was designed to guide you through the
journey to arrive at your innate sense
of wisdom, to uncover your truth, and
most importantly, to return to the whole,
unbroken parts of yourself that the world
desperately wants and needs.***

Along the way, you'll hear parts of my story—a story that was, at times, shocking, scary, and filled with abuse and neglect. It's a story that, nonetheless, I wouldn't change for one moment. In writing this book, I strived to be as factual as memory makes possible, knowing that whole stories are made up of many voices. What these pages hold is merely some of the recollections that have shaped my life. They are not written to assign blame, attack, or hurt those who hurt me—and I understand that others may recall things differently and have been equally shaped by their recollections. I share my story with the intent of inspiring and offering hope to others. If I was able to arrive where I am today, given where I started, so can you—so can anyone.

In each chapter of this book, you will learn or re-learn valuable lessons on how beliefs and behaviors are created and how to let go of what is no longer serving you. Each chapter offers resources from experts in their fields (what I like to call *TOOLS FOR WOW*—as in “wow, I had no idea!” or “wow, now I know!”) as well as *Shut Up and Sit* exercises to help you continue your journey of growth and evolution. You'll even hear a few stories from my clients in a section called *Voices of Mindfulness* on how this work has profoundly changed their lives and how they live and lead differently as a result of doing this work of shutting up and sitting.

A mentor once told me that a great teacher and speaker is someone who knows how to take the message and the people to the mountaintop, and more importantly, knows how to shut up and leave it there.

Let's take it to the mountaintop.

*“Our deepest fear
is not that we are
inadequate.
Our deepest fear is
that we are powerful
beyond measure.”*

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Let's be honest—mindfulness is everywhere these days.

From first grade classrooms to executive suites it seems like everyone in the West is finally starting to reach for the power of a practice that has been a part of the Eastern world for centuries. But, in case you haven't noticed, mindfulness (what I call shutting up and sitting) doesn't come all that naturally to our fast-paced, big-spending, high-achieving Western world. In fact, for many of us, the idea of sitting still in the long, dark quiet of our minds seems downright terrifying.

But mindfulness doesn't have to be scary. And no, you definitely don't have to stare silently at a lotus flower for hours on end in order to reach enlightenment (although, if that's your jam, more power to you.) In *Shut Up and Sit: Finding Silence And All The Life-Changing Magic That Comes With It* Consciousness Coach and Consultant Yedda takes her personal and professional years of study into the science and psychology of mindfulness and distills those teachings down to their clearest (and yeah, their sassiest) essence—making the practice of meditation accessible to anyone. Through a collection of stories, the latest research, exercises, and tools, Yedda brings the power of mindfulness down from the monk's mountaintop and shares it in a way that speaks directly to Western readers.

Yedda brings a passion to professionalism, unlike anyone I have ever worked with. I only wish I lived closer, I would work for her! Her ability to manage such a successful company comes from her ability to successfully manage people.

Ken Blanchard

CO-AUTHOR • ONE MINUTE MANAGER



Yedda grew up surrounded by alcoholism and drug addiction, depravation and limiting beliefs.

She carried those young lessons with her into her own adult life, always believing there had to be another way to live, but unsure exactly how to walk that path herself. But through years of heart-crushing family loss, followed by a series of once-in-a-lifetime encounters—with teachers like Ken Blanchard and Deepak Chopra—Yedda learned how to overcome her lifelong limiting beliefs, find trust in the universe, discover her deepest self—most importantly—to shut up and sit, and how to bring the most successful part of herself (her soul) into the room in all she does personally and professionally...and you can too.