

DEATH BY DOORMAT

A mini guide for people pleasers

BY ALBERT JAMAE

SAMPLE ONLY

Yep! The boring stuff we all have to put in.

Copyright © 2022 Albert Jamae

<https://albertjamae.com.au/>

All rights reserved.

No portion of this book may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher or author, except as permitted by U.S. copyright law.

Disclaimer: No material in this book is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment and never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this book.

Oh yeah I guess I should warn you there might be some salty language of mine. I'll try to keep the swearing to a minimum but hey at least you have the heads up!

CONTENTS (SAMPLE)

The Opening Bit

1. Another Damn Origin Story

2. The Hidden Beast

About the Author

CONTENTS (FULL VERSION)

The Opening Bit

1. Another Damn Origin Story

2. The Hidden Beast

3. The Pleasing Diagnosis

Trait #1: The Auto Bot

Trait #2: The Gut-Feeling Gatekeeper

Trait #3: The Failure-Phobe

Trait #4: The Zen Martyr

Trait #5: The Conflict Crusader

Trait #6: The Dimmer Switch

Trait #7: The Meddling Mechanic

Trait #8: The Toxic Enabler

4. The 'All About Me' Movement

5. A Radical Shift

6. The Time-Poor Recap

The Closing Bit

Epilogue

About the Author

THE OPENING BIT

Does this sound like you?

You spend your days aware of everyone around you. You're conscious of their needs, their behaviours, the trigger points that make them happy or sad. Your interaction with others is spent waiting for cues so you can adjust yourself and your behaviour in order to keep the peace. You'll make quiet sacrifices that others don't know about because the outcome will benefit someone and give you a small sense of achievement. If asked you might give your opinion, but rarely will you spout something objective if you think it might ruffle feathers. You don't want that kind of attention.

Most times, if all goes according to plan, you're okay with this way of life. You're doing your job, exercising your gift in what you believe you were put on this earth to do. You're the perfect mediator, a great listener, enjoy giving in so many little or big ways, that it forms the basis for your self-esteem. You've become that rock to who others can rely on to prop them up, justify their opinions, their existence, while

making *them* feel loved and appreciated. Hey, it's a wonderful feeling...most of the time.

But in those quiet moments when you're not 'clocking in' to someone else's needs, you realise you might be feeling a bit stale. Tired. Fed up? And often you reflect on times you would love to be that person who is honest about their feelings, stop being that doormat to everyone around you, but instead you tell yourself '*What's the point?*'

I'm guessing you also don't like conflict. You just scurry around making sure others are okay, perhaps having a quiet grumble to yourself on how ignorant they are to your needs and desires. How you wish they could be more aware of you, as you are of them. Like that iconic Moving Picture's song from the 80's, you're waiting at the counter of a corner shop shouting '*what about me?!*'

I'm no doctor, no psychologist, no counsellor...but if I was to take a stab, I'd diagnose you with the common ailment...the disease to please.

WELCOME TO THE CLUB.

Sorry you don't get a nice glossy badge to wear or patch for your denim jacket. No certificate of authenticity or weekly newsletter. But what you do get is one small reassurance that our membership is in the millions, and I certainly could've been a strong candidate for President.

Now one challenge in dealing with this ailment is that people pleasing does have its perks so why fix it? Especially considering this condition hardly embodies the same status as anxiety disorder, depression, or any other mental health concerns.

People pleasing is just a soft buzz word that gets thrown around and not a prime candidate for social change. Let's face it, the wider world isn't hampered by having a bunch of people scurrying around trying to do good for others and make them happy. By its very logic it isn't an issue worth exploring so yeah... why fix it? What's wrong with that?

Nothing really...unless you're feeling burned out, exhausted, unappreciated, bitter, regretful. The list goes on. Now it's a problem because feeling any or all of the above isn't sustainable. Not if you wish for a life of fulfilment. And take it from me, these pent-up

feelings will grow bigger if unattended. Feelings which became the catalyst that prompted me to try and figure out *why* we do what we do. What are the common traits? Can we spot them before they happen and approach things differently to get an alternative result? You see, I'm not good at accepting the answer from people '*oh that's just the way it is*' or '*that's how I am.*' I'm like that annoying toddler that keeps asking, '*But why? Why can't it be different?*'

It took a while for me to go on this deep dive before I did find a different approach. A brutally honest, self-reflective process which brought me back to the surface with a new perspective. Now I'm not saying this book will cure *your* disease to please, but I'm hoping it may shed some light on a few traits we share and tweak your perspective on the patterns we find ourselves repeating. The ultimate goal here is to discover ways to change habits, while being prepared that our habits will try to push back. And with that, we'll explore how to deal with those raging fears that consume us – the same fears that turned us into people pleasers in the first place.

A key thing I've learned ever since then is awareness. Most of the things we do are subconscious. We just plod day to day with varying habits, emotions and reactions we're not aware of. But if we stop and shine a small light on them and become conscious of what we're doing and why, then we can't get trapped in doing things the same way. That's the beauty of awareness, once you know something...well, you can't un-know it.

So, this account of peeling back the onion layers of a Bonafide people pleaser is simply *my* awareness, exposing my own vulnerabilities and what I've done to counteract that learned behaviour. A raw, unfiltered, firsthand account of what it's like to spend half a century dealing with this condition; prioritising other's needs and feelings over what I really want.

Even in the writing of this book I discovered more about myself that I had buried. It's also an honest reflection of how angry I've felt. Angry at myself that it's taken so long to find the real me behind the people pleasing, always reliable, 'yes man' I had become.

So if you're keen to try something new and retire from this club, then strap on your dancing shoes and let's tango.

1. ANOTHER DAMN ORIGIN STORY

**“MEMORIES ARE CHARGED WITH ENERGY
THAT TRANSCENDS TIME...”**

Without lying you on a couch and listening to your complicated upbringing, I do feel it is important to first establish your own origin story. It helps give gravitas to what you're going through today, but it doesn't define who you'll be tomorrow.

My guess is that if you're the type to read a book like this, then you're likely to have already thought about your childhood and how it connects to the way you behave as an adult. But it comes with a warning. Don't linger there too long. While it's important to reflect upon, conversely it can reinforce a negative mindset that we are slaves to those shackles of the past. This can be tempting to use as an excuse to fall back on, explaining why we can't possibly change the way we are...which is clearly a myth.

The goal is simply identifying where this pleasing persona consciously started for you. So pick the most vivid memories you can recall. Significant moments or subtle ones. You might not even have anything that springs to mind and that's cool. Quite often when you start taking time to think about random things in your childhood, a memory or two will pop out of nowhere and these are the ones calling for attention. And even though they may be painful, if you're willing to revisit them, they will become the anchor points for change. That's it, nothing more.

Now before you go off reflecting on *your* origin story, I guess I should give some brief context around mine. It's most likely different regarding situations, scenarios, or lifestyles, but I'm guessing we may share the *feelings* associated around these. People are people, parents are parents and kids are kids. We all share common traits regardless of how you might class yourself. I guess there's some weird comfort in that.

Mum was one of nine kids, living in a dilapidated cottage in Coburg Victoria behind the old Kodak

factory. They were tough times post World War II. They scraped food together from getting the dented unmarked tins from the back of the general store that would've otherwise been thrown out. It was a fun game of '*what's in the tin*'. Could've been tomatoes, beans, or Mum's favourite strawberry jam. Bread and dripping were a staple in their diet and the title of my mum's book which she never got to write was *Broken Biscuits and Bruised Fruit* – pretty much summed up their world.

At six months of age, the man I call Dad came into my life and was an absolute blessing for me. He was that typical down to earth country lad who also did it tough. Lost his father when he was eleven and despite his penchant to have a good laugh with accompanying beer, he carried a quiet anger underneath, feeling like he always got the short straw. He was a proud man that couldn't be told what to do which I attribute some of my stubbornness from. So he spent his last few years shaking his fist at the world. Bitter about everyone supposedly taking advantage of him and *not giving a shit*. But being a heavy smoker since the age of twelve, he was certainly on the path for an early grave.

So Mum wanted to be the good girl who did no wrong in the eyes of her father. I was aware of the difficulty she endured to transcend her lower-class upbringing and give me and my sister a better life. But of course with that, comes pressure. She used all her strength to keep her head up high, and above water, with those little duck feet paddling like mad beneath the surface. Her whole life, dedicated to distance herself from the shame of poverty. I will always admire her for that insatiable strength she maintained, right up to the day she died.

However, growing up with her did take its toll. I remember her saying many years ago that my existence basically saved her life. During some dark times, post a toxic marriage, and a short term relationship, she was considering the ultimate way out when she realised she was pregnant. So in a way I've carried that, what I call 'responsibility from the womb'. On some unconscious level if I don't do good and stop her from falling apart, or disappoint her, or let her down, then she might literally die.

I know, sounds a bit blunt, but this is how our deep-down fears operate. Despite being void of logic, I

see emotions as a language of the extreme which is why they have such a major impact on our daily living. It's how they shape our identity. And while these fears define us, like my mum and her cancer diagnosis, if left unattended, can defeat us.

So there's a little backstory as to how I came to enter this world and the small carry-on baggage I started with...which yes I added to as I grew older. My childhood was pretty good actually. Both Mum and Dad made sure of it. It was still low income living, but we did ok. Had great friends in the neighbourhood and spent thousands of hours kicking the footy, hitting the tennis ball against the outside wall or riding my bike as long as I could until it got dark. It was the glorious late 70's early 80's when life was simple. Music was iconic, computers and video games were a new novelty that only a few kids at school had access to...and my people pleasing ability came in handy to make sure I befriended one of them.

I reckon it was in my early teens that I can identify the time I ramped up my people pleasing persona. Which in the rough suburban public high school I went to, it became a way to avoid getting a random

beating now and then. A time when going to the toilet was riddled with anxiety of who would get the royal flush as we'd call it!

So you had to be savvy. In my case, I had started theatre at a young age and picked it up again for the high school musicals. It was something I had a knack for, but more importantly, my performances pleased those around me. I was no longer considered just one of the nerdy kids with just two or three friends. I was hanging with the popular crew, rehearsing with the theatrical buffs while also being embraced by the flannelette, ripple-wearing cool kids. You know, those that smoked behind the sheds who found a weird amusement in what I did. God I even dated one of them!

I guess this 'pleasing' persona kept me safe while also making my mum happy as she adored the theatre – win win! And to be honest it probably continues to be the driving force as to why I stayed in that bubble and built a career in the arts, media and entertainment industry. It became my safe haven.

Now although most are unlikely to relate to my career journey as such, I'm sure you'll have your own moments to draw upon. That which brought you to where you are now and how it plays into the people pleaser you've chosen to become.

Memories are charged with energy that transcends time and their impact can have such resonance on our emotional state of being. For example, if positively charged, it may give you that euphoric jolt back to when you'd be riding your bike to the local shops to buy 20c of mixed lollies with your pocket money. Or the belly laughs you had with your cousins while building a pillow fortress during a sleepover.

They also have just as much impact if negatively charged. Memories of events which can continue to destabilise us at every turn. Every small or large confrontation you felt powerless within. Of course, these are the ones we'd rather forget! Yet if we are to make significant change to our lives, we must face them head on. It's the only way to counteract these oppressing forces within us.

Changing your natural habits are the hardest thing you may ever do. It takes time, but the reassuring thing is even the smallest change, as I plan to outline in this book, can start to shift the pendulum to your favour. All with the intention for you to reclaim a lost power you once had or hoped you might have.

Okay enough about yesterday, let's focus on today, as we try to work our way out of this people pleasing contract we've bound ourselves to

2. THE HIDDEN BEAST

“VULNERABILITY IS SUCH A FINELY TUNED EMOTION THAT IS THERE TO PROTECT US.”

Alright so assuming you've had some reflection on your past and how it brought you here to the present, before we go any further, I wanted to establish the type of mindset needed to surge ahead.

Touching on the origin story gives you a sense of *why* you became a people pleaser. The behaviours and traits we'll unpack in the next chapter will demonstrate *how* this has affected your life thus far.

But before we attempt to make any adjustments to the status quo, I wanted to outline an important premise which I feel is needed to achieve sustainable transformation. And it starts with first acknowledging something deep within our human

conditioning. A fragile beast which lies in the shadows, trying to thwart our every attempt to make change. The primal state of being vulnerable.

To me, vulnerability is the reason I stayed in my habits. It governed my moods, behaviours and decisions as I did everything in my power to mask it. Pleasing others was my way to do this. It was my source of comfort. The way I see it, when we please another we feel alive, relevant and that we deserve to exist. And when we don't, we feel vulnerable. Unsafe. Or to cut to the bone...we feel the absence of love. A feeling that I'm sure every one of us has felt at the heart of our origin story.

While we are in the moment of feeling loved, we can't simultaneously feel vulnerable. As if it's biologically impossible to remain in both states. Therefore when we don't feel that loving connection, we do whatever we need to safeguard ourselves. Hence, keeping up that rigid armour of protection while we're waiting for that shot of love again. The unfortunate result is a vicious cycle.

Find someone to please > receive love > feel safe > shit happens > love disappears > armour back up >

desperately seek next target to please...rinse and repeat.

When this repetitive sequence intensifies over years, it gets bloody exhausting. And the times I would do backflips to please but wasn't successful, pushed me in the opposite direction. It led to feelings of frustrations, anger and withdrawal. *'I don't need anybody! I'm keeping to myself! I'm sick of being a doormat for them to wipe their shitty boots all over...I don't need to be loved!'*

So despite being aware that I was going through this cycle, it occurred to me that on some level it was worse if I tried to change this. It's the old saying 'better the devil you know'. Or as I like to call it 'comfort in the chaos'. It was my masterful design to keep me safely tucked away from that vulnerability beast which I feared was going to devour me.

So much easier to convince yourself you don't need the very thing you want while you're not getting it. Let's be honest, far less painful. And this is when my toddler self rose his stubborn little head to ask the obvious question...*why?*

If I know this fear of being vulnerable is why I felt hurt and hated being so close to the possibility of love only to have it ripped away, why can't I change my approach to this? Surely if we know the ins and outs of anything, then we have the power to change it?

So I started looking at how we perceive vulnerability as a weakness. It must be a weakness right? If this beast governs our emotional being so strongly that we'll churn ourselves in knots to avoid it, then it really has some negative power over us. So how can we see it as a strength?

If we could find the positive side to this emotion, then we position ourselves to reclaim a form of self-empowerment. We slowly reduce that crippling effect when we *fear* vulnerability and replace its purpose as an actual foundation of strength to build upon. A leashing of the beast, so to speak. This could in theory start to shift everything around us, the way we approach others, creating a new form of stability. A new place of safety.

And the simple thing I discovered is that vulnerability is such a finely tuned emotion that is there to protect

us. It keeps our species intact. It prevents us from completely tuning out from everyone around us and helps maintain this need for human connection. As I described my repetitive cycle above where I would swing to the opposite direction and wanted to disconnect from everyone, I began to realise it was my vulnerability which brought me back from the dark side.

If we see vulnerability as a threat to safety and the absence of love, then in theory it becomes the very conduit to *receiving* that love and safety. If it didn't, then we might happily withdraw and become roaming nomads. We could totally disengage from those around us and consequently miss out on the opportunity to grow, evolve, and ultimately exist cohesively. And this definitely would have been me. Bottomline, being vulnerable keeps us human.

As a lover of sci-fi, it's what I see separates us from the fears of artificial intelligence taking the helm. A computer program, (as far as I know!), wouldn't comprehend the state of being vulnerable as a way of bonding with its fellow species. There's no rational logic to it whatsoever, yet somehow it's this invisible glue we come to rely on.

So when going through this book just try to keep this concept in mind. When you experience that vicious, vulnerability beast trying to bite you in the arse and force you back in the corner, see it as an asset instead of a liability, even if it feels uncomfortable or overwhelming at the time. Any doubts and fears that arise when trying to change is natural, but when understood, it's just a reminder of how much you want to remain connected to the life you've chosen and the people within it.

Embracing vulnerability as a strength is a major step in rebuilding, rediscovering and reinventing the person you want to be. Then and only then can you tame your hidden beast, and it won't tame you.

FOR THE FULL VERSION VISIT

[HTTPS://ALBERTJAMAE.COM.AU/AUTHOR/](https://albertjamae.com.au/author/)



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Albert has emerged from an entertainment background exceeding 40 years. From a variety performer for stage, screen and radio to producing more than 100 theatrical productions, touring shows, documentaries, music videos, short films and television.

His writing credits include award-winning plays which have toured the international Short 'n' Sweet circuit. He penned over 200 mini scripts used by actors, casting agents and drama teachers, and won three national awards for comedy radio. He was also commissioned to create over a dozen plays and three full length musicals as author/lyricist.

As a performer, he hosted Here's Humphrey (1993-95), appeared in TV commercials, local films and plays, with stage shows for Disney and Warner Bros. As director/producer he made three documentaries for NITV, won best comedy for his short film Red Wire Blue Wire at the SA Screen Awards and is currently head of production at Channel 44, Adelaide.

For more information on his works and other titles visit **www.albertjamae.com.au**