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**THE
LET
THEM
THEORY**

**A Life-Changing Tool That Millions
of People Can't Stop Talking About**

Mel Robbins



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London • Sydney • New Delhi

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The Let Them Theory

Let Them + Let Me

CHAPTER 1

Stop Wasting Your Life on Things You Can't Control

If you're struggling to change your life, achieve your goals, or feel happier, I want you to hear this: *The problem isn't you. The problem is the power you unknowingly give to other people.*

We all do it, often without realizing it. You make the mistake of thinking that if you say the right thing, everyone will be satisfied. If you bend over backward, maybe your partner won't be disappointed. If you're friendly enough, maybe your co-workers will like you more. If you keep the peace, maybe your family will stop judging your choices.

I know this because I've lived it. I spent years trying to be everything for everyone else, thinking that if I could just do enough, say the right things, and keep everyone happy, I'd finally feel good about myself.

But what happens instead? You work harder, bend further, and shrink yourself smaller, and still, someone is disappointed. Still, someone criticizes. Still, you're left feeling like no matter how hard you try, it's never enough.

It doesn't have to be this way. This book is here to help you take your power back. To stop wasting your time, energy, and happiness

trying to control things you can't control—like other people's opinions, moods, or actions—and, instead, focus on the one thing you can control: you.

And here's the remarkable thing: When you stop managing everyone else, you'll realize you have a lot more power than you thought—you've just unknowingly been giving it away.

Let me introduce you to the simplest, most life-changing idea I've ever discovered: the Let Them Theory.

What Is the Let Them Theory?

The Let Them Theory is about freedom. Two simple words—*Let Them*—will free you from the burden of trying to manage other people. When you stop obsessing over what other people think, say, or do, you finally have the energy to focus on your own life. You stop reacting and start living.

Instead of driving yourself crazy trying to manage or please other people, you'll learn to *Let Them*.

So, what does this look like? Imagine you're at work, and your colleague is in a bad mood. Instead of letting their negativity affect you, just say *Let Them*. Let them be grumpy. It's not your problem. Focus on your work and how you feel.

Or maybe your dad makes another comment about your life choices, and it hits you like a brick. Instead of letting it ruin your day, just say *Let Him*. Let him have his opinions. They don't change who you are or what you've accomplished or your right to make decisions that make you happy.

The truth is, other people hold no real power over you unless you give it to them.

Here's why this works: When you stop trying to control things that aren't yours to control, you stop wasting your energy. You reclaim your time, your peace of mind, and your focus. You realize that your happiness is tied to your actions, not someone else's behavior, opinions, or mood.

It sounds simple—and it is. But I'm telling you, this shift will change everything. And, even though it's called *Let Them*, this book is about YOU—your time and your energy—because these are the most precious resources you have.

The Let Them Theory will teach you that the more you let other people live their lives, the better your life gets. And, the more you let people be who they are, or feel what they feel, or think what they think, the better your relationships will be.

Learning how to let adults be adults has changed my life. And it will change yours too, because when you finally stop giving your power to other people, you'll see how much power you truly have.

But perhaps the most surprising thing about the Let Them Theory is how I discovered it in the first place.

I'm almost embarrassed to tell you the story.

I discovered something that changed my entire approach to life at . . . a high school prom. (Now there's a sentence I never thought I'd write).

The Prom That Changed My Life

I don't know what it is about proms, but boy are they stressful. I went through four of them with our two daughters, so I figured our son Oakley's would be a breeze. I was wrong.

Our daughters had obsessed about every detail for months: dresses, dates, promposals, hairstyles, spray tans, makeup, corsages,

bus rentals, post-prom parties. It was never-ending, and I was so glad when their proms were finally over.

Our son, on the other hand, wasn't sure he and his friends were even going to go. Despite my prodding, he communicated zero details or plans with us. (I know everyone with a son, a brother, or a boyfriend is nodding along with me right now.)

And then, of course, the week of the prom, Oakley decided he wanted to go. Everything was a last-minute scramble—the tuxedo, the specific sneakers he wanted to wear, the logistics. Even finding his date, something our daughters agonized over for months, was left for 48 hours before the big event.

When prom finally arrived, miraculously, we had the tux, the tennis shoes, the date, and the location of the pre-prom photos figured out. Somehow we had also been talked into hosting the post-prom party. Whew!

Right before we were racing out the door, my husband, Chris, fixed Oak's bowtie one last time. Our daughter Kendall, who was home from college, looked at her brother and said, "You look SO good, Oakley."

I stood there and took in the moment. What a handsome young man he had grown into. I couldn't believe how fast 18 years had flown by. I also couldn't believe that Kendall was almost done with college, and our daughter Sawyer had already graduated and was now working at a large technology firm in Boston.

As I stood there in the kitchen, I allowed this fact to wash over me: Time was passing, and I wished it would slow down. That's the cruel fact about time. It's going to keep passing, whether you slow down or not. The time that you have with the people that you love is like a melting ice cube.

One minute, it's there. . . The next, it's gone.

And here's the sad truth: You and I, we can't stop the ice cube from melting. The only thing we can do is make the most of the time that we have with the people that we love while we have it. In moments like this, when I really stop and pause, I always feel a little sad.

I don't know about you, but I feel like I am racing through life and not allowing myself to truly enjoy it. And I get so worked up about things that don't matter that I ruin the brief moments I have with those I love.

Did I really have to get so stressed out about the last-minute scramble and take it out on Oakley? No.

I'm sure you can relate, even if you don't have a child going to the prom. Maybe you've let comments from your family ruin an entire holiday together, or been so consumed with work or school that you cancel yet another plan with your friends. You can waste years of your life being distracted by meaningless things or late nights at work. It's easy to get yourself so stressed out about life that you forget the entire point is to live it.

As I stood there in the kitchen watching Chris fix Oakley's bowtie, I just tried to take it all in. I took a deep breath, walked up to Oak, and gave him a hug. I looked at him and said, "You look so handsome."

"Thanks, Mom." And then he saw what time it was and said, "Dude, we gotta go!"

And just like that, the moment was gone, and time was moving again. Life is funny like that. One minute you are tearing up about the passing of time and how old the kids have gotten, the next minute you're racing around trying to find your keys and getting annoyed that someone left their dishes in the sink, AGAIN.

On the way out the door, I opened the fridge and grabbed the beautiful corsage I had made from the local flower shop for Oakley's

date. He took one look at it and said, “Mom, she doesn’t want a corsage. DON’T bring that.”

I stared at him. “But it’s so beautiful,” I said. “Are you sure?”

“I already told you, she said she doesn’t want one.”

“Well, how about I just bring it with us, and if she wants to wear it she can. . . and if she doesn’t, she doesn’t have to?”

He snapped at me, “Mom, please. I don’t want you to bring it.”

I rolled my eyes at our daughter Kendall, looking for some backup. She shook her head at me and said, “Mom, drop it. He’s nervous. He doesn’t really know the girl he asked. Don’t push it.”

I’ll admit that I was annoyed and maybe even a little hurt. I had spent time scrolling online researching flower trends for prom, and I had ordered his date something really killer AND taken the time to drive down, get it, and pay for it. Here I was trying to do something nice for him, and instead of being grateful, he’s barking at me. Plus, it was his first prom—what did he know?

So I stuck the corsage in my purse, and we headed out the door to the place where everyone was taking pre-prom photos. Once we got there, Oakley introduced us to his date, who pulled out a boutonniere for his lapel and asked Chris if he could help her pin it in place. I, of course, couldn’t help myself.

I reached into my purse, pulled out that corsage like it was a winning lottery ticket, and said to her: “Oakley said you didn’t want something, but I had this made up for you just in case.”

Oakley shot me a look, and I immediately wished I had kept my mouth shut. He turned to his date apologetically. “You don’t have to wear it.”

She looked back and said, “It’s okay. . . I’ll wear it.”

And that’s when I noticed she had made her own corsage, which she was already wearing on one of her wrists. Kendall rolled her eyes. Chris shifted. If I could have evaporated in that moment, I would have.

Oakley grabbed the plastic container from me and slid the corsage on the free wrist she had graciously extended. And then Chris pinned the boutonniere on Oakley's tux. We took a couple of photos, and then, out of nowhere, it started to rain. And by rain, I mean. . . downpour. Rain hadn't been in the forecast, so not one of the 20 kids dressed in black tie, or their parents, had a rain jacket OR an umbrella.

These kids are going to get SOAKED, I thought. But it didn't seem to faze the kids at all. They just kept talking in a group, and that's when I overheard them say, "So, what do you guys want to do for dinner?"

I leaned toward Oakley and whispered, "Oak, you guys don't have a reservation for dinner before the prom?"

"Nope."

I looked at my husband and said, "They don't have a reservation for dinner?!"

He shook his head. "I guess not."

This didn't seem to bother my husband or my son. Boy, did it bother me. How the hell do 20 kids have no reservation or plans to eat before the prom? Our daughters had this handled months in advance.

Oak and his friends kept discussing their options as a group. I looked at them and said, "So what are you guys going to do for dinner?"

Oakley turned toward me and said, in that way that only a teenage boy can, "I think we're going to head out and go to Amigos."

Now, the Amigos Taqueria is this great little taco place in the center of town. . . but it's got maybe four tables. The entire place is the size of a shed. All the moms froze, and even the dads were now questioning this plan. Twenty kids in black tie were planning to head out into this rainstorm with no umbrellas or rain jackets to a fast-food joint that maybe ten of them can squeeze inside of. . . before prom?! I couldn't help myself.