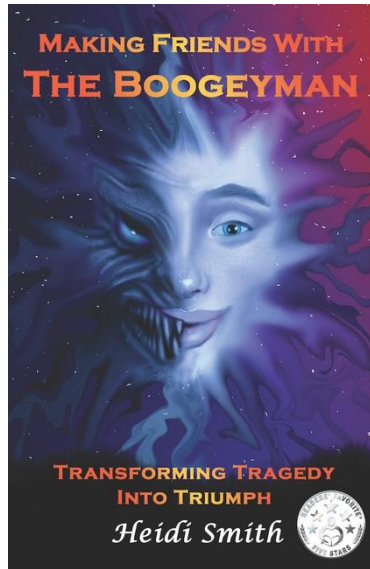


NONFICTION

Roadmap for a new narrative

One remarkable human's transformation offers universal truths to light the way out of the darkest night



**Making Friends with the Boogeyman:
Transforming tragedy into triumph**

Heidi Smith

Free Yourself Live Your Dreams, 191 pages
\$24.95

REVIEWED BY
ALEX VAN TOL

I tell this story now in case you don't know that you are the most precious soul. You are beauty and power beyond

words. Now, I am the one seeing you there, a pure being surrounded by unconditional love. All the shame and hatred are just stories that keep you from the miraculous truth of who you are. You are love. You are loved. It is already true. Everything else is a lie; it's not real. I know it's not real because I've lived in nightmares and self-hatred, feeling like a pile of maggots was eating me from the inside. Thank God, I realized it was a nightmare of my own creation, which meant that since I had the power to make it up, I had the power to let it go.

And in that final line we find the nut of it all: that we create our own realities, however terrifying...and that with practice, persistence and self-love, we can reshape those realities into something entirely different.

An evocative read that engages the senses, *Making Friends with the Boogeyman* offers major life lessons in the form of gripping, graphically rendered anecdotes artfully woven against a backdrop of eternal truths: that everything in your life happens in

support of your awakening—even the hard and painful events; that we have the power to lessen both physical and psychological suffering by changing our thoughts; that the key to freedom lies in accepting ourselves and our unique path through life.

Part memoir, part self-help manual, *Making Friends with the Boogeyman* walks readers through author Heidi Smith's harrowing journey with addiction and self-loathing during her formative years, stopping for rich spiritual discussion at each scene in a series of vibrantly rendered tableaux: crack cocaine days under the stark chandelier glare of a barren dining room; nights of drinking frozen vodka alone in front of the television; a

devastating childhood trauma that rippled across decades; stealing money from family to feed endless rounds at the casino; the house parties; the shouting matches; the blackouts.

Throughout the journey, Smith—now in her 19th year of sobriety—queues up key universal learnings with powerful quotes, including teachings from AA, well-known spiritual leaders, and her mentor Satyen Raja, founder of Accelerated Evolution and trainer

of esteemed thought leaders like author and

Even the most widely read in the self-development field will find themselves rocked by Smith's clear, potent reductions. With yogic precision, she imparts enormous life truths in a simple

motivational speaker T. Harv Eker and physician Gabor Mate.

QR codes dot the book, connecting readers to meditations, songs, coaches the author has worked with, and key websites and practices.

Drily funny in places, *Boogeyman* stirs the emotions with mic-drop stories and chapter endings that, in just a line or two, serve up stunning truths. Similarly punchy one-liners seal up impactful passages. Even the book's acknowledgments are poetry, every word considered and truthful.

A seasoned coach herself with the benefit of lived experience, Smith provides solid tips for managing anger and anxiety, allowing emotions to flow through your body, and how to keep committing...and recommitting. She writes about the importance of consciously choosing the words we use with ourselves, transforming the felt sense of a word and therefore its vibration throughout our bodymind. She talks about the importance of practice when it comes to rewiring our neural loops, whether it's swapping out a word with negative associations for a word that evokes strength and positivity, or reframing entire messages inside your mind.

Thought-provoking discussion questions and a handful of powerful self-help practices cap the book, offering practical tools for readers to take away and apply in their own lives.

Making Friends with the Boogeyman underscores a powerful, age-old message for readers who are caught in the grip of something bigger than themselves: "If she can do it, I can do it." Even the most widely read in the self-development field will find themselves rocked by Smith's clear, potent

reductions. With yogic precision, she imparts enormous life truths in a simple few moves. How to still the frantic mind. How to pry apart the steel jaws of an ancient, rusted belief and free yourself. The art of rewiring doubt into positive conviction. How to redirect focus onto desired outcomes. Each one an infinite universal concept, crisply folded into a palm-sized missile of enlightenment.

This one changes lives.

*Alex Van Tol is a Victoria writer,
teacher and bestselling author.*