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The #1 bestselling author of *ON FIRE* shows us how to harness our childlike sense of wonder to find joy and renewed purpose amid adversity—a much-needed message as Americans struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## IN AWE

*Rediscover Your Childlike Wonder to Unleash  
Inspiration, Meaning, and Joy*

By **John O’Leary**

### Select Praise for IN AWE

“Engaging . . . O’Leary encourages us to see the world through a child’s eyes.”

—**Mitch Albom, author of *Tuesdays with Morrie***

“Get ready to have your world rocked.”

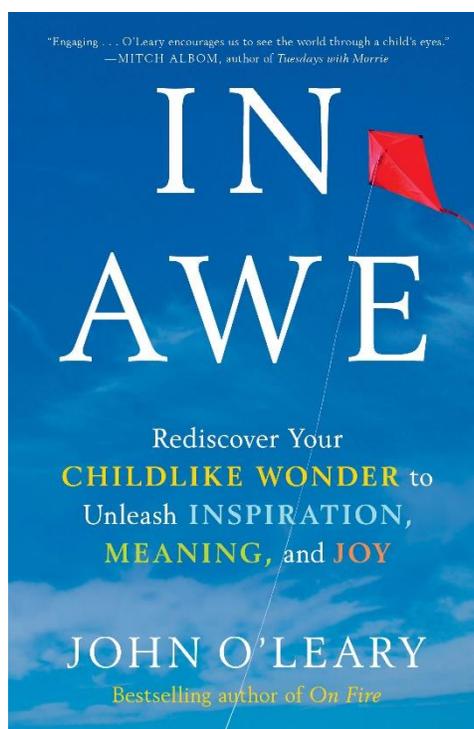
—**Dave Ramsey, author and radio host**

“If the greatest advantage in this life is a positive brain, it is vital we find a way to bring joy back into our work and relationships. John O’Leary shows us that joy and awe can not only be recaptured, they must be. They are the fuel we use to face a challenging and complicated world with boldness and confidence. Reading *IN AWE* will return hope and wonder back into your pursuit of happiness.”

—**Shawn Achor, author of *Big Potential* and *The Happiness Advantage***

“In a world full of negativity, John O’Leary will remind you that you always have a choice. Life is still good and the best days remain ahead. This is a must read. You’ll be ‘In Awe’ at how John changes your outlook and the possibilities you will see still present in your life.”

—**Mel Robbins, host of *The Mel Robbins Show* and author of *The Five Second Rule***



When John O’Leary was 9 years old, a horrific accident left him with burns on 100% of his body and a slim of chance at survival. He would somehow defy the odds, making a miraculous recovery, and since then has embarked on a mission to share the life-changing lessons he has learned about overcoming adversity—an undertaking he has addressed with increased urgency as our world now faces unprecedented challenges. Through his professional speaking engagements, O’Leary has delivered his message to over 1,000,000 people in 14 countries and at 1,600 events for clients including LEGO, Southwest Airlines, Microsoft, Pepsi, the St. Louis Cardinals and more. In 2016, he shared his story in the #1 national bestselling book, *ON FIRE*, and continues to inspire people through “The Live Inspired Podcast,” which has been downloaded over two million times.

In his new book, **IN AWE: Rediscover Your Childlike Wonder to Unleash Inspiration, Meaning, and Joy** (Currency; May 5, 2020), O’Leary shares his insights and

inspiring message to help readers to live a fuller, happier, more engaged life by recapturing the sense of childlike wonder and curiosity we so often lose as adults—that sense that anything is

possible, there are no set rules or expectations, and that we can be anyone we want to be. And, as we adjust to living life under quarantine and socially distanced, O’Leary invites readers to join him in the [IN AWE 21-Day Challenge](#), which distills the lessons of the book into actions to spark inspiration, meaning, and joy, even in the most trying of times.

**Among IN AWE’s universal lessons for resetting your mindset:**

- **Why not? . . .** Children are fearless in questioning *everything*. They are nature’s natural scientists. As adults, we often forget that everything that exists today was at one point believed to be utterly impossible. Think about what you see in life as impossible, and ask yourself: Why not? Who Says? What If? These questions can spark creative and radical ways to make the impossible possible.
- **Bring Your Glove.** Kids believe in endless possibility. Like John’s son Patrick, they bring their gloves to Major League Baseball games. As adults, we know the odds are a million to one that a ball will be hit to us, and we’d look foolish carrying a glove. But then Patrick catches two balls in two games. John’s point – you have to be open to new possibilities; you can’t catch a ball if it does come your way without first bringing your mitt. In times of crisis, it’s all too easy to focus on the devastation, instead of looking at the possibilities to rebuild a brighter future.
- **Daddy you missed it!** Sometimes, do you feel like you’re missing it, and you haven’t been traveling anywhere? When you are physically present, but emotionally absent? At an everyday scene at the park, the kids are thrilled to be there, making new friends, lost in a game of make-believe. And the adults? Their heads are bent, their thumbs swiping their phone’s screen, blinded by the busy. We were not made to be in a thousand places at once. We were made to be here, in this moment. Self-quarantine allows us the time and space to think about what we can be doing during this season of stillness, and begin to tackle that list.
- **Get in the game.** Thanks to his learnings from conversations with over 2,000 clients over the past 12 years, John breaks down the current landscape that business leaders and workers are navigating. He shows how rediscovering childlike wonder, applied in nearly every setting and situation, is the winning ticket to meeting ever bigger goals in an ever faster, more crowded and competitive world. Enter each day with the wonder, curiosity, and questions of a child to feel an invigorating sense of freedom that will lead you to accomplish more than you thought possible.

In an incredibly personal narrative, **IN AWE** interweaves new studies and pioneering research with insights and stories from some of the courageous, amazing people John has met and profiled, including his own family. Whether you are a manager hoping to motivate your now remote team, a parent navigating a new world of working from home with children learning at home, or simply looking to find the positive amongst the barrage of bad news, **IN AWE** show us how to live more fully and re-ignite our lives.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Once expected to die, today **John O’Leary** teaches others how to truly live. As an internationally acclaimed speaker, bestselling author, and podcast host, John helps hundreds of thousands of people to *live inspired* each year, sharing his insights and inspiring message with emotional storytelling and unexpected humor. He is the founder of Rising Above, a lifestyle organization helping people and companies live an inspired life, and the author of the #1 national bestseller, *On Fire*. John inspires countless more through his weekly Monday Motivation essays, “Live Inspired Podcast” episodes, and exclusive membership community. He lives with his wife and four children in St. Louis, Missouri.

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**IN AWE: Rediscover Your Childlike Wonder to Unleash Inspiration, Meaning, and Joy**  
**By John O’Leary**

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\* Also available as an audio book \*

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Instagram.com/johnoleary.inspires/ | Youtube.com/user/joleary4444 | LinkedIn.com/in/john-o-leary-08b2805/

## **Additional Praise for IN AWE**

“My career and passion is to wake individuals and organizations to their full potential. John O’Leary does exactly that in the book **IN AWE**. He’ll remind you of the natural joy, hope and wonder you possessed as a child, explain why you lost it, and reveal how you can return to it. Read this book. Thank me later.”

— **Hal Elrod, author of *The Miracle Morning***

“Every human being needs this book.”

—**Rachel Macy Stafford, author of *Hands Free Mama***

“We all know the attitude we choose determines the lives we live. But I can think of few people who model this better than John O’Leary. After reading **IN AWE** you’ll be inspired to not only choose a positive attitude, but to embrace the gift of daily joy and to live a life of meaning. With so much negativity and divisiveness in the world, the time is now to return to living In Awe.”

— **Jon Gordon, author of *The Energy Bus, The Carpenter, and The Sea***

“If you, like me, fell in love with John O’Leary’s heart through the story of his personal journey, this book will only extend your admiration. John reminds us all to hit pause, to reflect on and to appreciate the life we are blessed with. I’m an even bigger fan of his after reading **IN AWE**.”

—**Don Yaeger, eleven-time *New York Times* bestselling author**

## **Select Praise for ON FIRE**

“This is a book about coming alive—about practicing courage and fully showing up at home, work, and with the people we love. John is a storyteller, change-maker, and cage-rattler. Reading this book is like having a good friend look you square in the eye and say, ‘The time to be brave is now.’”

—**Brené Brown, Ph.D., LMSW, author of the #1 *New York Times* bestsellers *Daring Greatly* and *Rising Strong***

“ON FIRE, by John O’Leary, celebrates the beauty of LIFE! Through courageously sharing his own pain and devastating loss, O’Leary reveals how crucial it is for us to keep moving forward after a setback or trial—still hope, still dream, still see the possibilities before us. Eventually we must all make the choice to truly live or just exist. A magnificent and inspiring read!”

—**Sean Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* and *The 6 Most Important Decisions You’ll Ever Make***

“If you haven’t heard John O’Leary speak from the platform of a sold out arena, you’re missing out on an incredible message. But you’re in luck! John has put his inspirational and life-changing message into this brilliant book. His story and words of wisdom will not only encourage you, they will ignite a passion to live your life to the fullest.”

—**Les Parrott, Ph.D. #1 *New York Times* best-selling author of *You’re Stronger Than You Think***

“John O’Leary is truly one of the most amazing humans on the planet. His story will not only inspire you but give you practical ideas for how to enjoy your life more, appreciate all that you have, and push you to achieve all that you are capable of doing.”

—**Rory Vaden, Cofounder of Southwestern Consulting and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Take the Stairs***

“There a rare handful of people in the world whose life story will change you forever. John O’Leary is one of these people. The powerful life lessons in this book will forever inspire you to live, lead and love differently.”

—**Tommy Spaulding, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Heart-Led Leader* and *It’s Not Just Who You Know***

“Fast-paced, emotional and surprisingly funny, ON FIRE is an amazing reminder that we might not be able to choose the path we walk in life, but we can always choose the manner in which we walk it.”

—**Joe Buck, Fox Sports**

**For further information or to schedule an interview with the author, please contact Stacey Stein at [ststein@penguinrandomhouse.com](mailto:ststein@penguinrandomhouse.com) or 212-782-9271**

**A Conversation With**  
**with**  
**John O’Leary**  
**Author of**  
***In Awe***  
**Currency; 5/5/20**



**Q. Tell us how you came to write IN AWE?**

A. It’s difficult not to be a bit discouraged by the challenges we face today. Whether looking in the mirror, within our organizations, or at society, many of us struggle with where things seem to be heading, feelings of isolation, and even despair. While we may have a longing for something better, there’s a pervasive sense of negativity around where things are and uncertainty on how improve it.

And then I’d see my children. Really, all children.

They have a certain freedom and bliss that is remarkable. They participate fully, float through their days, dance into rooms, and sail through adversity. They smile more, laugh more, connect more, and question more. They move by skipping, rather than walking, and exude a brilliant joy. I wanted to understand what children intuitively possessed, why we lose it as we age, and if it’s possible to reclaim it. IN AWE is the result of what I discovered and how others can live it.

**Q. Once it started to become clear the toll that the pandemic would take, why did you decide to create the [IN AWE 21-Day Challenge](#)? Can you tell us a bit about what it entails, and the reactions you’ve received?**

A. I wanted to share a burst of inspiration that leads to ACTION to keep people focused on what they can control in this season. There’s so much chaos and unknown, to give them one thing they can count on each day, something that breaks through the clutter, lifts them up + shifts their perspective.

The feedback has been great. Some folks are doing it as families and sharing about it over a meal each day. Some are doing it with their colleagues and it is giving good, positive interaction during team meetings. Others are doing it alone and it’s giving them reason to grow personally during a season that it is so easy to just sit back and numb with television, food, etc.

**Q. As we age, many of our senses begin to fade. Although we have little control over our physical senses, you suggest there are five senses we can not only not maintain, but reignite. Tell me about that?**

A. Well, it’s no secret or surprise that our senses fade as we age. Vision, hearing, taste, even touch decline. But what I also discovered is they aren’t the only things that deteriorate over time. There are five other senses children exude that due to time, education, expediency, adversity and physiology also fade: wonder, expectancy, immersion, belonging, and freedom. These senses inform how we experience the world, how we show up in it, and how we influence it.

**Q. Returning to childlike behavior may seem counterintuitive for those in the workplace. Why is it so important?**

A. The majority of US citizens are less optimistic about the future than the past. Although we’ve never enjoyed greater connectivity in the history of the world, the majority of us feel isolated. We have more abundance, but feel more pressure. The pace of change has never been so stunningly rapid, yet it will never be this slow again. With engagement within our professional organizations waning and burnout rising, I think it’s time for a different approach, a fresh perspective.

What we need more than a new approach to efficiencies and process and supply-chain and leadership is a return to the mindset we once possessed so vibrantly as children. It's a perspective and worldview that would liberate us to more effectively innovate, connect, create, work and live.

**Q. You were involved in a horrible accident as a child, but you write that life's challenges have launched you, and not limited you. What do you mean by this?**

A. We often view adversity as a negative, something to avoid. However, growth in any facet of life requires the movement through the difficult. While it's hard to imagine a more agonizing experience than when I was burned on 100% of my body at age nine, it's also simply impossible not to acknowledge the significant good that came from it.

The fire united our entire family and community together in ways that still bind us three decades later. It galvanized traits like resiliency, faithfulness, bravery within me. While it forged character to push through seemingly insurmountable odds, it also created the space for the willingness to accept help from others.

The fire ultimately influenced where I went to college, which led to a chance encounter with a brunette named Beth, which led to four little kids I write love dearly, learn from daily, and wrote about extensively in the book IN AWE.

The very best of my life today, including my career, is the result of a tragedy. So far from limiting the man I could become, the fire elevated it.

**Q. IN AWE is packed with heartwarming stories of lessons you've learned from your own children. What is the greatest lesson they have taught you?**

A. Living bravely.

Children aren't afraid to raise their hand, make a new friend, tell others how they feel, ask a question, think differently, try something radically different. They wear their emotions on their sleeves, are quick to forgive, and are wide open to sharing love.

They live fully immersed in the total magnificence of all life can be. Far from being mundane or miserable, they believe each day is a gift to be explored. Far from seeing others as competition to fear, they see them as potential friends to connect.

They believe their best days remain ahead of them and have the audacity to actually step forward.

**Q. It's also full of powerful, emotional stories of others who, by living "In Awe" have embraced the type of life most of us only dream of. Can you share your favorite example?**

A. Dozens of stories come to mind, but the most moving for me is the story of a little boy who should have died in a car accident. Through several stunning coincidences, I got to meet little Curtis and his parents in a hospital's Intensive Care Unit. We stayed in contact during his months of recovery, celebrated his miraculous return home, and I was even present as he returned school.

I'm purposely leaving out the details that knit this story together, but it's one of the most beautiful I've ever heard, and I get to share it IN AWE.

With so many of us feeling overwhelmed and isolated, the story of little Curtis will convince you, unequivocally, of our need to show up, the benefit of pushing forward, and what happens when we physically engage with those around us.

**Q. One of the stats you shared is that almost 1.5 million US citizens attempted to take their own life last year. Why so many and how can living "In Awe" begin to change that?**

A. The answer must begin with a continued focus on improving mental health, brain health, and treatment of psychological disorders.

What is clear from all research, though, is that there is a direct correlation between feelings of depression, anxiety, isolation and the amount of time we invest stagnantly staring at a screen, overscheduling our days, reading chronically negative news headlines and comparing the difficult realities of our life with the highlight reel of other's lives through social media.

IN AWE reminds us how magnificent our life is. It provides significant research on how our expectations can become our realities, teaches how we own them, and provides emotional, honest and inspiring stories of what happens when we do.

**Q. In today's cancel culture, how might reigniting a sense of belonging alleviate the harm caused by canceling out one another, while also making us better together?**

A. I had just finished a speaking engagement when I felt a tug on my jacket sleeve. A little boy looked up and said, "We are the same."

I knelt to his level, looked into his eyes, and responded playfully, "We are?"

He nodded and repeated himself: "We are the same!"

He then held up his right hand and revealed that, like me, he didn't have any fingers on it. He came closer, gave me a hug, and introduced himself as Caleb. And one more time he said, "We are the same."

On a surface level, we seemed nothing alike. He was no more than nine years old. I was approaching forty. He was African American. My ancestors came from southern Ireland. He was born in an urban environment and had limited resources. I was born in the Midwest and into a life of privilege. He was wearing a T-shirt and a pair of athletic shorts, ready for a day of summer camp fun. I was wearing a dark suit, a long-sleeved shirt, and dress shoes, totally overdressed for the day.

And yet, looking into his eyes, seeing his joy, observing his hand—and his heart—I realized he saw what many of us too frequently miss.

The very things we feel make us undesirable, or different, or broken, are in reality the very things that pull us closest together. They are the things that remind us of our shared stories and the larger truth that we're not alone.

Cancel culture emphasizes what makes us different and gives us reasons for hatred, walls, anger, and silence. Seeing life through the lens of a child, though, reminds us of the reasons to unite, heal, elevate, connect and live together.

There is so much that brings us together. It's an important reminder the cancel culture misse

**Q. You have a popular weekly podcast called *Live Inspired* that has been downloaded over 2 million times. How did that come about and what's your favorite part of doing the podcast?**

A. As a speaker and author, I wanted an opportunity to engage with my audience after they heard me speak or read my books. The *Live Inspired* podcast provides the platform and opportunity to continue the conversation we began. I have the pleasure of introducing our audience to friends I respect and discussing their life story and what it means for our listeners.

My favorite part of the podcast is that in visiting with these historically important individuals who have created breathtaking art, produced beautiful music, traveled to the moon, overcome some mighty adversity, played at the highest levels athletically or discovered a better way to do life that I get to connect with them not as celebrities, but as friends. Far from being arrogant and better than others, I've learned we all desire to be loved, we all have a story, and it's frequently not the one we broadcast to the world.

The *Live Inspired* podcast has given others permission to share their stories. And it has given our listeners permission, fuel and ideas on how better to live theirs.

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