

HOW TO SPEAK UP, SHOW UP, AND OWN YOUR  
AMBITION IN A WORLD THAT WANTS YOU QUIET

# GOOD GIRL, BE BAD



BOLD. AMBITIOUS. DETERMINED  
**ERICA PERRY BRIODY**

# **Good Girl, Be BAD**

**Erica Perry Briody**



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# Dedication

For my daughters, Ashley and Emma—you are my heartbeat, my courage, and my “why.”

Every page of this book is woven with the hope that you, and women everywhere, will never shrink from who you are or what you are meant to become.

May you always be bold enough to dream, ambitious enough to chase those dreams, and determined enough to see them through.

This book is my gift to you, and my promise: that you will never walk this journey alone.

With all my love,

Mum.

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And to my daughters, Ashley and Emma—you are my daily wellspring of strength and inspiration. You are the reason I chose to be bold, ambitious, and determined. This book is my gift to you, as much as it is to every woman who reads it.

With abiding gratitude,

Erica.

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# Chapter 1

## Be Bold

The phone call came at 8:47 PM on a Tuesday.

I was reviewing resumes for a VP position at our London office when my phone buzzed. The name on the screen made me smile: Sofia, one of my former mentees from São Paulo, now a director at a major tech company.

"Erica," she said, her voice shaking with excitement, "I got the promotion. Senior Director of Global Operations. They said what sealed it was how I handled the board presentation last month—how confident and clear I was."

I remembered that board presentation. Three months earlier, Sofia had called me in tears. "I can't do this," she said. "What if I mess up? What if they think I don't belong in that room?"

But she did it. She walked into that boardroom, presented her strategy for expanding into three new markets, and answered every challenging question with authority.

Here's what Sofia learned—and what every successful woman I've mentored across five continents eventually discovers: boldness isn't a personality trait you're born with. It's a skill you can develop, practice, and master.

Being bold means having the courage to take risks, speak your mind, and step out of your comfort zone. It's about making your presence known and not being afraid to go after what you want. In today's world, being bold sets you apart from the crowd and propels you toward success.

But here's the secret most career advice won't tell you: there's a difference between being bold, being reckless, and being obnoxious. Understanding that difference will change everything about how you show up in the world.

Being reckless means acting without thinking through consequences. Being obnoxious means demanding attention without adding value. Being bold means speaking up strategically, taking calculated risks, and advocating for yourself and others with purpose.

The women who change the world aren't the loudest ones in the room. They're the ones who know when to speak, how to speak, and what's worth speaking up for.

## **When Silence Costs More Than Speaking Up**

Let me tell you about Mia, a young woman I met during a college speaking event in Chicago. After my presentation, she approached me with tears in her eyes.

"I wish I'd heard this two months ago," she said. "I had the perfect solution for our team project, but I kept quiet because I didn't want to seem pushy. We ended up failing because no one spoke up about the obvious problems."

Mia's story isn't unusual. In my years mentoring young professionals, I've heard this same regret countless times: "I knew what to say, but I didn't say it."

The next semester, Mia enrolled in a debate class. Her heart pounded so hard during her first presentation that she thought everyone could hear it. But she remembered our conversation. She stood up, shared her point of view clearly and confidently, and won the round.

Later, she told me: "I realized that staying small wasn't protecting anyone—it was just wasting my ideas."

Sometimes, the boldest thing you can do is open your mouth when every part of you wants to stay silent.

But before we go further, I want you to think about your own relationship with boldness. What's your Mia moment? When did staying quiet cost you something important—an opportunity, a friendship, respect, or just peace of mind?

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Here's what I've learned from mentoring hundreds of young women: we all have a voice. The question isn't whether you have something valuable to say. The question is whether you'll trust yourself enough to say it.

## **The Anatomy of a Bold Move**

Real boldness isn't about grand gestures or dramatic moments. It's about small, strategic choices that compound over time. It's about speaking up in meetings when you have a better idea. It's about applying for opportunities even when you don't meet every qualification. It's about having difficult conversations instead of hoping problems will resolve themselves.

Let me show you what this looks like in practice.

## **Three Bold Strategies That Actually Work**

I've tested these strategies across cultures, industries, and career stages. They work because they're based on a simple principle: boldness with purpose gets results.

### **1. Speak Up Strategically—Not Just Loudly**

Last year, I was facilitating a strategy meeting for a marketing team in Mumbai. Twenty minutes in, I noticed one team member—Priya, a junior analyst—shifting in her seat every time the conversation hit a dead end. She clearly had something to say but kept hesitating.

Finally, during a particularly tense moment when the team was stuck on budget allocation, I asked directly: "Priya, what are you thinking?"

She took a breath and said, "I've been analyzing our competitor's campaigns, and I think we're missing a huge opportunity with micro-influencers. The data shows..."

Her insight completely shifted the strategy. The campaign she proposed ended up exceeding targets by 40%.

After the meeting, I asked Priya why she'd waited so long to speak. "I thought maybe I was wrong," she said. "I'm just an analyst."

Here's what I told her—and what I'm telling you: when you have valuable input, staying quiet isn't humble. It's wasteful.

The key is framing your contributions strategically. Instead of saying "This might be wrong, but..." try "I have a suggestion that could improve this project." Instead of "Sorry, but..." try

"Here's another perspective." You're not apologizing for taking up space—you're adding value.

## **2. Raise Your Hand When You're 70% Ready**

When I was building my first international recruitment team, I had a choice to make. We needed someone to lead our expansion into the South African market. I had two candidates: James, who had all the traditional qualifications but was hesitant to take on the challenge, and Sarah, who had 70% of the experience but was eager to learn the rest.

I chose Sarah.

Why? Because in my experience across five continents, the people who succeed aren't the ones who wait until they feel 100% ready. They're the ones who raise their hand when they're 70% prepared and figure out the rest through action.

Sarah didn't just succeed—she built the most profitable division in our company's history.

Here's the truth about readiness: if you wait until you feel completely qualified, someone else will already have the job. The gap between 70% ready and 100% ready is usually just confidence, not competence.

Look for leadership opportunities now. Run for student council. Volunteer to manage that group project. Start a club if one doesn't exist for your interests. Each time you lead—even imperfectly—you're building evidence that you can handle bigger challenges.

### **3. Ask for What You Want—Without Apologizing**

I learned this lesson the hard way.

Early in my career, I was managing talent acquisition for a growing tech company. I'd successfully filled thirty critical positions in six months, well above target. I knew I deserved a promotion, but I kept waiting for my boss to notice.

Months passed. Nothing.

Finally, a mentor told me something that changed my approach forever: "Erica, your good work speaks for you, but it doesn't speak for you. That's your job."

I scheduled a meeting with my boss, prepared a clear case showing my impact, and asked directly for the promotion I'd earned. I got it—plus a salary increase I hadn't even thought to request.

Since then, I've coached hundreds of women through similar conversations. The ones who succeed understand this: asking for what you deserve isn't aggressive—it's professional.

Don't apologize for wanting more. Whether it's a raise, a promotion, or the chance to work on an exciting project, prepare your case and ask clearly.

Here's something most people don't know: many managers expect you to negotiate. When you don't, they sometimes assume you don't understand your own value. Don't let that assumption limit your growth.

### **The Ripple Effect of Bold Choices**

Here's what I've observed mentoring young women across different cultures and industries:

boldness creates momentum. One strategic bold move leads to another opportunity, which leads to increased confidence, which leads to bigger bold moves.

Take Sofia, the woman I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Her journey to that board presentation didn't start there. It started two years earlier when she spoke up in a team meeting about a process inefficiency. That led to her being asked to join a cross-functional task force. That experience gave her the confidence to volunteer for a high-visibility project. Each bold step prepared her for the next one.

The same pattern works for everyone. You don't start by giving keynote speeches at international conferences. You start by asking a thoughtful question in class. You don't begin by negotiating six-figure salaries. You start by advocating for a small budget increase for your student organization.

Every bold action—no matter how small—is practice for the bigger bold moves your future self will need to make.

## **Your First Bold Move**

Right now, I want you to identify one situation where you've been staying quiet when you should speak up. Maybe it's a group project where you have a better approach. Maybe it's a part-time job where you've noticed an inefficiency. Maybe it's a friendship where you need to address something that's been bothering you.

Choose something that matters but feels manageable. Something that would make a positive difference if you acted on it.

Now, make a plan. When will you speak up? How will you frame your input? What's the worst thing that could realistically happen? What's the best thing that could happen?

Most importantly: what's the cost of continuing to stay silent?

Here's what I know from years of experience: the regret of not speaking up almost always outweighs the temporary discomfort of speaking up.

## **Building Your Bold Foundation**

Throughout this book, we're going to build on this foundation of strategic boldness. In the coming chapters, you'll learn how to be ambitious without being ruthless, how to be determined without being inflexible, and how to integrate all of these qualities into a career strategy that reflects your values and goals.

But it all starts here, with the decision to trust your voice.

The women who change industries, lead organizations, and create positive change in the world all started with one thing: the belief that their voice mattered.

Your voice matters too.

The question isn't whether you have something valuable to contribute. You do.

The question is: are you bold enough to let the world hear it?

## **What Bold Looks Like for You**

Your bold journey won't look exactly like Sofia's or Priya's or mine. Maybe your first bold move is asking a question in your next class. Maybe it's applying for a leadership position in a student organization. Maybe it's having an honest conversation with someone who's been taking advantage of your kindness.

The specific action doesn't matter. What matters is taking that first step.

Here's what I want you to remember: being bold isn't about becoming someone you're not. It's about becoming more fully who you already are. It's about trusting that your ideas, your perspective, and your voice have value.

Because they do.

## **A Lesson in Standing Up**

I want to end this chapter by sharing a story that shaped how I think about boldness—not because it was particularly dramatic,

but because it taught me that sometimes the most important bold moves happen in the smallest moments.

In eighth grade, I was part of our school's Battle of the Books team, competing nationally in literature trivia. Our teacher announced that whoever answered the most questions correctly during practice would become team captain—a role that included representing us on television.

After weeks of intense studying, the results were in: I tied with one of the boys on the team. But when it came time to name the captain, my teacher chose him instead. "It will look stronger on television," she said.

My heart sank. I had worked just as hard, memorized just as many books. But at that moment, I had a choice: accept the unfair decision or speak up.

I raised my hand. "Miss Cook, we're tied. I want to challenge him to a final round—ten questions. Whoever gets more right becomes captain."

The room grew quiet. A few teammates snickered. But something inside me refused to back down.

"Fine," I said. "Give me the ten hardest questions. If I get every one right, I've earned the right to be captain."

Ten questions. Ten perfect answers.

That day, I didn't just win a competition. I learned that being bold isn't about being the loudest person in the room. It's about believing in your worth enough to advocate for yourself, even when it's uncomfortable.

I went on to lead our team to victory on television. More importantly, I learned that speaking up for fairness—for myself and others—wasn't selfish or pushy. It was necessary.

## **Your Bold Future Starts Now**

Throughout this book, we're going to build on this foundation of strategic boldness. In Chapter 4, you'll learn how to channel

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this bold energy into ambitious goal-setting. In Chapter 5, we'll explore how to pair boldness with determination to overcome obstacles and setbacks.

But everything begins here, with the understanding that your voice has value and your ideas deserve to be heard.

The women who change industries, lead organizations, and create lasting impact all started with the same realization: they stopped waiting for permission to contribute and started giving themselves permission to lead.

Your bold journey begins with a single question: What's the first bold step you're going to take?

Don't wait for tomorrow. Don't wait until you feel ready. Don't wait for the perfect moment.

The world needs what you have to offer. It's time to be bold enough to share it.

## What if being "good" is holding you back?

You've been taught to be agreeable, patient, and grateful. The "good girl" who works hard and waits to be noticed.

In *Good Girl, Be BAD*, global executive Erica Perry Briody shares what she's learned mentoring hundreds of young women across five continents: success requires you to be **BOLD, AMBITIOUS, and DETERMINED.**

You'll learn how to:

- Speak up in meetings with confidence
- Ask for raises, promotions, and opportunities you deserve
- Build a LinkedIn presence that gets you noticed
- Network like you belong in every room
- Set boundaries without guilt

From your first internship to your first leadership role, this book gives you permission to want more and the tools to get it.

The world has enough "good girls" who stay quiet.  
It's your time to be **BAD.**

## About The Author:



Erica is a Global Talent Acquisition Leader and award-winning Career Coach, recognized as one of the 2025 Women of Influence - for her work empowering the next generation of female leaders.

With a career spanning five continents, she has guided hundreds of professionals to build fearless, fulfilling careers and master the art of interviewing with authenticity and self-belief.

Inspired by her two daughters, Ashley and Emma, Erica wrote *Good Girl, Be BAD* to help young women everywhere find their voices, embrace their worth, and boldly claim their place in the world.