

[PDF] Control The Crazy: My Plan To Stop Stressing, Avoid Drama, And Maintain Inner Cool

Samantha Rose, Vinny Guadagnino - pdf download free book



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Description:

About the Author Vinny Guadagnino was born and raised in Staten Island, New York, and comes from a traditional Italian-American family. He graduated from CUNY College of Staten Island with honors and was a political aide for a State Assemblyman before joining *Jersey Shore* in 2009, MTV's

top-rated series of all time. When he's not appearing on reality and scripted television, Vinny focuses on pro-social issues. He's a spokesman for MTV's "A Thin Line" campaign preventing bullying; MTV's "GYT," Get Yourself Tested, and is a regular commentator on MTV Act, a blog that highlights young people, celebrities, and organizations that take positive social action. Additionally, he's a spokesman for the JED foundation, working to protect the emotional health of teenagers and college students. He's also affiliated with and lends support to the "It Gets Better Project," GLAAD, and Dosomething.org.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. The Story Behind the Story

You may have seen me recently and very publicly hit my emotional "breaking point" during season 5 of Jersey Shore. I bailed from the Seaside house, setting off rumors that I may have left the show for good. Yet, regardless of what you've seen on TV or read, trust me when I say--no one knows the story I'm about to share with you.

To fully understand my behavior, it's important you know what led up to it. So, let's go back several years to when this story really began.

It was 2009. I was a twenty-two-year-old kid, living the life--partying in Seaside Heights, sharing a coed beach house with seven tanned and toned guidos and guidettes, and hooking up with super hot girls on a national TV show. Yet, two weeks into the filming of the premiere season of Jersey Shore--BOOM!--I awoke one night out of a dead sleep short of breath. I couldn't get enough air; I felt like I was friggin' suffocating. My heart began to race, and I was seized by feelings of dread and doom. I was having an anxiety attack.

I'm trapped. I have to get out of here.

All my roommates were nervous to some degree. On a reality TV set, cameras follow you around day and night, and it's no surprise their constant 24/7 presence can create some stress. But that's not what was bothering me. The dark, oppressive cloud that was closing in around me had nothing to do with cameras, crews, or craft services. Rather it had everything to do with what was going on inside me.

Thankfully, I'd scored one of the few single rooms in the house, so when the attack hit I was removed from my seven roommates. They had no clue that I was wide awake, pacing the floors and freaking out. I spent most of the late-night hours feeling trapped in my single bedroom, convinced I was losing it and my head was going to burst. My mind was spinning on high speed, as if my thoughts had been thrown into an industrial-strength washing machine.

On a reality TV set, you're basically cut off from the sounds of the outside world--no phone, Internet, TV, or radio. Besides the noise we make, it's relatively quiet. When I'm at home on Staten Island, I usually fall asleep with the TV on, but when I'm shooting Jersey Shore there's nothing like that to distract me from my thoughts. And trust me, the crazy, doomsday thoughts I was having that night were not the kind you want to be left alone in bed with.

Because I'd been picked for the show to fill the role of the authentic and fun-loving guido who liked to fist-pump on camera, I was afraid to tell anyone about what was going on in my head. Being on the show was a huge opportunity, and I didn't want to blow it. So for the next several days I tried to ignore my anxiety, push through, and fake it for the cameras. I pretended I was having a good time, but the truth was that I felt disconnected and alone. Every minute of every hour, I felt like an outcast standing outside a house party watching everyone inside having fun. I went through the motions,

playing the class clown, but my mind was in a dark place. I feared that the fun-loving Vinny that the MTV producers were counting on had disappeared. If I didn't quickly snap out of my funk during the brief six weeks we were filming, I was going to come off looking like a major head case on national TV. Problem was--I'd been in this low-down place before, and that hell ride had lasted several months. What was I going to do? The world was watching. I was on a locked set. This was the worst possible scenario for someone like me--someone who suffers from chronic anxiety.

My battle with anxiety first reared its ugly head when I was a freshman in high school. I'd always been a pretty likable and funny kid, though I had my share of insecurities that sometimes tripped me up. For example, in the looks department, I battled with pimples, braces, and a mess of thick hair that made me look like a white Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. My hair looked, and felt, like a friggin' Brillo pad. Add to that, my family never had a lot of money, so I was always struggling to "fit" the part. I definitely didn't have the freshest sneakers. I certainly didn't drive the nicest car. And to top it off, I tried out for the high school basketball team my freshman year but didn't make it unless you count benchwarmer as a position. I was bullied by the popular jocks, and girls weren't all that interested in talking to me. I always felt a little bit awkward, like I was on the outside of life, you know? Regardless, I had a group of friends who seemed to think I was pretty cool, so all in all, I considered myself pretty normal.

Until . . .

One day, I was sitting in English class when from out of nowhere my heart started pounding, my vision went blurry, I became dizzy and light headed, and my teacher's voice sounded muddled and distorted. It was like what Charlie Brown hears whenever a grown-up is speaking to him: "Whaa-whaa-whaa." I was paralyzed; the classroom walls felt like they were closing in around me, and I was physically unable to move. I had no idea what was happening, and I certainly wasn't going to tell the gangster Spanish kid with the neck tattoo sitting behind me, "Hey, I think I'm having a heart attack. Call an ambulance." He would've definitely looked at me like I had ten heads. So I just sat still for what felt like forever and prayed for the feeling to pass. The entire episode probably only lasted for twenty seconds, but it felt like a lifetime. What the hell was that? I couldn't think of anything specific that would have caused me to freak out like that. It was just an ordinary day in English class.

I didn't have a name for it at the time, but I later came to understand that I'd suffered my first anxiety attack. After that, similar attacks became somewhat regular. Since they didn't seem to be triggered by anything specific, I lived in constant fear of being hit with one. Just knowing that it might happen was sometimes all it would take to set one in motion. My heart would start pounding, I'd begin to sweat, and my head would go into spin mode. I'd grip the sides of my school desk, afraid to move, speak, or breathe until my anxiety passed.

I was sure I was the only fourteen-year-old in the world who suffered like this, so I was embarrassed to tell anyone what was going on. I didn't want my friends to think I was weird or to worry anyone--my mom, especially--so I learned how to wait out the attacks. It worked. By my senior year at Susan E. Wagner High School on Staten Island, my anxiety had almost completely disappeared. In fact, I'd nearly forgotten about it until my first year of college, when the attacks returned with renewed force, knocking me into my first deep depression.

Hold Up

Too Much, Too Soon

If you're thinking, Vinny's a mess! I can't relate to this guy. He slips into dark places I've never

fallen into--hold on right there. While the dark holes I've crawled out of have been very dark indeed, you don't have to be someone who suffers from anxiety, depression, or anything "diagnosable" to benefit from this book. The tools I roll out for you in the chapters ahead can be used to manage any stressful situation, tough ordeal, or unexpected dark day. For sure, you can relate to that, right?

What the Funk?

I was seventeen when I started college at the State University of New York (SUNY) at New Paltz. I was young, and to be honest, I was a little nervous to leave the mother's nest on Staten Island, but I was also excited to party and study away at college. I'd gotten a pretty sweet scholarship thanks to my high grade point average in high school and extracurricular activities outside of school. Also, I'd written a pretty dope college essay about growing up in a full-on Italian family that started with: "So, I'm eating meatballs with my Uncle Nino . . ." I was nervy for sure, but felt ready to jump into the college experience one hundred percent. And I was sure I was prepared for it.

On a late-summer day, my mother, my father, my big sister, my cousins, and my aunt helped me move into the dorms. No joke, I was the only kid moving into college who brought nearly ten relatives along for the ride. It took a caravan of three cars to transport all of us and all of my stuff to the school. As soon as we arrived, Mom began hauling in boxes of homemade bread, chicken cutlets, meatballs, and marinara sauce, along with Easy Mac, Devil Dogs, Yodels, and enough potato chips to feed everyone on my floor. I could have easily run a high-class moneymaking food ring out of my dorm room, and in fact, it soon gained a reputation as the place to go when the cafeteria was closed. In addition to all the food, Mom made sure to bring along a year's worth of cleaning supplies, an industrial-strength floor fan, and a fire extinguisher that she insisted I mount on the wall "just in case." Mom--really?

If you've seen my mother, Paola, in any of her cameo appearances on Jersey Shore, you know that what I'm describing is absolutely true to her character. She's the nurturing, loving mother who lives for taking care of people. She's not just my mom--she's everybody's mom.

I'd moved into a triple room with two other guys--one who arrived with a single backpack and the other whose big-ticket item was a TV. Both of my new roommates watched my crazy Italian family fussing all over me and were totally amused, and it didn't take long before my mom took both my roomies in like they were her own. After several hours of getting me settled and situated, my aunt and cousin had to physically remove my mother from my dorm room. She was all tears. "Ma," I told her, &ldquo...

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