

"IF YOU WANT TO CREATE YOUR OWN FREEDOM AND STOP LIVING A LIFE OF SERVITUDE, THIS POWERFUL LITTLE BOOK WILL HELP YOU LIVE ON YOUR OWN TERMS."

-JONATHAN MEAD

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# PERSONAL FREEDOM

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**7 BLOGGERS  
DAYS  
WAYS**

FEATURING 7 OF THE LEADING BLOGGERS  
ON PERSONAL FREEDOM INCLUDING:  
MIKE ROUTEN, PAIGE BURKES, JENNY  
BLAKE, FABIAN KRUSE, CARA STEIN,  
DOUG GROOTVELD AND SEAN OGLE.

PRESENTED BY

**ROUTE TO FREEDOM**

Adventure starts here

# Personal Freedom

7 Bloggers / 7 Days / 7 Ways

Presented by Mike Routen

at [Route To Freedom](http://www.routetofreedom.net)

The information provided in this book is for informational purposes only.

This book is a compilation of information from various authors. The views and information provided by each contributor is solely their own.

We all hope that you find this information helpful in finding your own personal freedom.

*This book is dedicated to the hard working people in the world that are longing for their personal freedom but don't know how to achieve it.*

# Introduction

It is my hope that in this book you will find a spark. The spark that will start the wildfire of freedom that is missing from so many today.

Towards that goal, we have brought together seven different bloggers to provide their view of freedom and what you can do to find it.

Because freedom is as personal and unique as each of us, the chapters in this book differ widely.

This book is not meant to be read from beginning to end. Rather it is a collection of short essays on freedom and some of the many ways you can work towards achieving your own.

As you read through the chapters in this book, some may seem foreign to you. Some may seem almost familiar, and hopefully at least one will resonate with you, lighting the spark of a new idea. The idea that you can find the freedom that you are seeking.

When you find the view that resonates with you, I encourage you to visit the website of that author. You are likely to find more fuel to feed the idea that was sparked here.

It is our genuine hope that at least in some small way we can help you to find your own personal freedom.

Mike Routen

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# Make Freedom Your Reality

By Mike Routen of [Route To Freedom](#)

## *Personal Freedom*

Freedom is a very subjective topic. You will find as many definitions as people you ask.

One of the main tenets of my blog is helping families that are looking for more freedom and adventure in their lives. To do so, required a clear definition of freedom.

It is easy to simply quote some dictionary or wiki, but this wasn't enough for me. I had to really find a definition that resonated with me.

What I was able to put together is that freedom is the ability to live where and how we want to, without the undue influence of societal expectations and without the need to meet external obligations.



## *Live where and how we want*

To be able to live in a house, an apartment, a mobile home, travel trailer, or even a tepee. How you shelter yourself from the elements should be your own decision. My family and I are working towards selling our house and buying a sailboat that will be our home as we explore the coasts of North America and beyond.

Where we live should have no bearing on how we are viewed. It should have no bearing on our perceived value. Yet so many of us are judged by where we live.

## *The influence of societal expectations*

Why is it that only those people that are driving the latest automobiles, living in large homes and paying interest on huge amounts of debt are considered “successful” in our society? Is it because we have been trained from an early age that material acquisition is the only measure of success?

Have the marketing agencies done that good of a job, or does it go deeper? Are schools working hard at creating obedient little consumers that will keep the financial machine spinning?



Happiness is the best measure of success. I recently talked with someone that told me of her uncle that was a “ski bum” who worked and saved during the summer months so that he could ski all winter long. He was an outcast in her family, but he was happy.

He wasn't hurting anyone. He wasn't breaking any laws. Yet his family viewed him as less than successful because he chose a different path than they did. Fortunately for him he didn't succumb to their pressures and get a “real job” or a “career”. There should be a lot more people like him, that choose their own path.

### *Without the need to meet external obligations*

The term external here means that these are obligations that we have not chosen for ourselves. These are the expectations of our parents, family and friends to live a life that they are comfortable with.

How many parents live vicariously through their children? How many kids go to college because their parents are determined that someone in their family has a college degree?

Higher education is appropriate for certain careers. For many others though, it makes no sense at all. Especially if that education is wasted on a job or career that isn't even related to the degree.

How many people are in a job that they hate because of family or peer pressure? Why do they choose to stay in that position? They feel obligated to those around them or fear keeps them from stepping out and trying something new.

There is no longer a need to stay in a job that sucks the soul out of you. There are an abundance of opportunities out there. It is up to you to discover them and then relentlessly chase them until you find your own success.

### *The unspoken side of freedom*

One aspect of personal freedom that many people do not understand is that with increasing freedom comes increasing responsibility. As we have the ability to make more of our own decisions, the consequences of those decisions become our responsibility, either good or bad.

Once we start down the road of freedom, we can no longer find others to blame when things do not go as expected. What we do have is the opportunity to decide how we react to each situation and what steps we take in response to them.

Each day I work on accepting more of the responsibility for achieving my freedom. I no longer blame my job or where I live or my education level for where I am in life. Instead I work on investing my time and energy into building my online business that will allow

## Personal Freedom: 7 Bloggers / 7 Days / 7 Ways

my family and I to travel where the wind takes us.

I study the things that I do not already know. We do what we can to stay healthy. I keep our dream alive by discussing it frequently with my family. We work together taking small steps to get from where we are now to sailing on our boat and living a life of adventure.

**Find your definition of freedom. What can you do today to make it your reality?**

# Simple Steps To Create More Freedom For Yourself

By Paige Burkes of [Simple Mindfulness](#)

Date: 02/09/2012 Author: Paige Burkes

In [my last post](#), I asked what freedom means for you and how much you may be limiting your own expression of your freedoms. In this post, we'll review specific areas of your life and identify steps you can take to feel more free every day.

Think about how all of your lifestyle choices either support or hold back your freedom:

## Friends

Do the friends that you've chosen support you when you come up with crazy, [bold ideas](#)? Are they open to you [living your life on your own terms](#)?

Or do they tell you to "get real" and get off your high horse and join them back in their comfortable mediocrity?

We are the sum of the five people we spend the most time with so choose your five people wisely.

## Home

Think about your home. We've been brainwashed into thinking that a big home with a big, fat mortgage provides investment and tax "advantages." In most of the country, those investment advantages just don't exist anymore. The home we bought over 12 years ago is worth very little more today than what we bought it for back then.

And that "tax advantage?" Sure, I get to pay tens of thousands of dollars in interest to the bank each year so I can reduce my taxes by a third or less of that. What a deal. Would you trade me a dollar for \$0.25 back? That's the tax advantage.

Suddenly renting doesn't seem so bad. We've been told that rent is sunk money. Well so is 75% of the mortgage interest you're paying every year. And most of your monthly payments are interest.





With renting you're not so tied to where you live. You can leave on pretty short notice without worrying about how long it will take to sell your place. You don't have to worry about how you'll pay for those big repairs when they sneak up on you (a new roof, water heater, siding, heating or air conditioning system, etc.).

Think renting can restrict what you can do in your home? Think about the crazy restrictions placed on homeowners in subdivisions. It's nuts.

What are the three highest values in your life? Does the home you live in support those values? What kind of home does?

## *Children*

If you have kids, do you feel stuck sometimes because there are just things you "can't" do with kids? Think you can't **travel the world** because they're supposed to be in school?

I've met a number of people using the world as their classroom as they **homeschool their kids (yes, even little ones) as they travel**, sail or RV the world.

Don't blame your kids for slowing you down. Take them along for the ride.

## *Finances*

How much are you sacrificing your freedom with your financial choices and how you spend your money?

## *Planning for retirement*

Think you need \$2 million in the bank in order to retire? It's time to rethink the notion of retirement that was established back in the 1920's – yes, that's about 100 years ago. Things have changed a little since then.

The eligible age for social security was set around 65 years of age because that's about when men started to die shortly after they retired. Their lives and sense of self were so tied up in their jobs and they basically had nothing to do when they retired so they had nothing to live for and literally died.

You don't need \$2 million to live out your life on. Find something you're passionate about and generate some money from it. Create an asset that generates money for you. Simplify your life so you don't need so much.

Do what you're passionate about until you die. You'll die happy.

## *Financial habits*

Is how you're spending your money and possibly generating debt sabotaging your freedom? Every dollar of debt you accumulate robs you of the ability to do something great in the future. Are you selling out your future freedom for a nick-nack or a little fun today?

I unwittingly made that choice for years racking up tens of thousands of dollars in debt. Just when I wondered how the hell I would ever pay it off, I got a big bonus at my job that wiped it out. Sure it was nice to suddenly have no debt but I didn't learn anything in the process and proceeded to rack up more debt. And I think back at all the awesome things I could have done with that money and kick myself – hard. The stuff I accumulated that created the debt was hardly worth it.

After digging myself out again and doing something I always considered unthinkable, especially for me, like declaring bankruptcy, I've finally learned my lessons. I'll never have another credit card again. I'll never have reserve lines of credit to tap into "just in case." Having no safety net made of debt used to freak me out. Now I know it's the best thing for me. I've accepted it and am creating a life of abundance for myself and my family.

I have to create my own safety net of savings and I've had to make some hard choices in how I spend my money in order to do that. It's a process I'm working on, learning and growing from.

I had to hit rock bottom, after repeating the debt cycle a few times before I finally realized all the little, **daily habits** that got me in trouble. I've become much more mindful of those little habits so I can change them and change my future.

Don't rob yourself of your future. You deserve that freedom.

## *Find and live your passion*

What do you have to live for today and for the rest of your life? Your job? Or things you're truly passionate about?

I personally think that each one of us was placed on this earth to help others (people, animals, the planet, you choose) with the unique passions and talents we were born with. It's up to us to find out what those passions and talents are and start expressing them to the world. The world is waiting for you. That's what I'm doing here on this blog and with the coaching and products I'm offering.

Most of us have lots of old programming that tells us to stifle our true selves **in order to fit in**. It may be difficult to get out there and discover what our passions and talents are. Those passions and talents may be something that has nothing to do with what

we went to school for or what our jobs and careers have been about. **Get creative** and experiment. You'll never know what lights your fire until you try.

For example, I'm now a writer. I never thought I could write. When I started writing my blog, I still didn't consider myself a writer. I was just putting information out there that might hopefully help other people (my passion). And none of this had anything to do with being an accountant or a finance executive.

Think about how you want to spend the rest of your life. Do you want to stay tied to a job that offers no real security now or in the future? Or do you want to **take your future into your own hands** and be happy and free?

How do you define freedom?

How are you living it every day?

# On Freedom: The Counter-intuitive Way To Fly

By Jenny Blake of [Life After College](#)



I'm a dream junkie.

There's nothing I love more than remembering a crazy dream and analyzing it the next day with my trusty [Element Encyclopedia of 20,000 Dreams](#), discussing all the possible meanings with friends.

The other night after [returning from Mexico](#) during a series of otherwise scattered dreams, I remembered seeing an extremely vivid, three-dimensional Avatar-style cobalt blue butterfly flying straight toward my face. It was crystal clear and extremely memorable.

## According to my dream book:

*“To see a butterfly in your dream denotes creativity, romance, joy and spirituality. You may be undergoing a transformation or rebirth in your way of thinking. To see a beautiful colorful butterfly in your dream denotes the positive impression you hope to make at a future social gathering or in some aspect of your life. It may also indicate your love of freedom and a refusal to be tied down. For Jung, the butterfly was a symbol of the whole psyche — as it was for the Greeks, to whom the word “psyche” meant both butterfly and soul.”*

## What does freedom mean to you?

Freedom is defined as “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without

hindrance or restraint.”

It is no small coincidence that my words of 2011 were Freedom and [Fly](#). Hello dream! Freedom is one of my core values, and is a driving force behind almost every decision I make.

But freedom does not have to mean that you are self-employed, single, or a stuff-eschewing minimalist; freedom can mean many things:

- Freedom from shackles of the mind: self-doubt, fear, limiting beliefs
- [Freedom from financial worry](#)
- Freedom from shoulds and [social-self constructions](#)
- Freedom to think, speak and act with truth, integrity and authenticity
- Freedom to make decisions that serve your highest good, and that of those around you

### In commitment we find freedom

*“The irony of commitment is that it’s deeply liberating — in work, in play, in love. The act frees you from the tyranny of your internal critic, from the fear that likes to dress itself up and parade around as rational hesitation. To commit is to remove your head as the barrier to your life.”*  
—Anne Morriss

A fallacy of freedom is that we must not allow ourselves to be tied-down, lest we lock the cage on our ability to fly. However, as the quote states, oftentimes it is in those very commitments that we truly find freedom:

- Commitment to a giant goal gives us the freedom to pursue it even on our worst days
- Commitment to our friends and romantic partners allows us the space to speak hard truths in service of strengthening the bond
- Commitment to our values grounds us and roots our decisions in what really matters
- Commitment to living in the moment, gratitude and forgiveness gives us freedom from mental suffocation, as we learn to let go of worry, stress and regret and focus on the gifts in front of us instead
- Commitment to ourselves allows us to play big in the world, to create and serve others in our highest form

Freedom is the exhilaration that comes from our ability to fly, made possible by the commitments we make to what really matters in our lives.

## Personal Freedom: 7 Bloggers / 7 Days / 7 Ways

What does freedom mean to you?

What commitments allow you to find that freedom?



# From Serfdom To Freedom

By Fabian Kruse of [The Friendly Anarchist](#)

by FABIAN on FEBRUARY 12, 2012

The terrorists. The government. The opposition. The corporations. The protestors. The system. The censors. The religions. The neighbor's horrible music that doesn't let us sleep: There are many suspects when it comes to identifying enemies of freedom.

Unfortunately, for those of us who are lucky to live in the richer parts of the world, the biggest enemy of freedom can be found right inside of us. He isn't so hard to get rid of because he's superior – but because of the powerful tactics he uses: Fear and ignorance.

Fear and ignorance are what keep us in serfdom.

## Guarantees

“Lose 10 pounds in 10 weeks – or your money back.”

We all love guarantees.

Freedom doesn't come with one.

Even in a free society, your neighbor may go nuts and shoot you at some point.<sup>1</sup> He may kiss your wife. He may steal your car.

This is why we long for guarantees. As long as our fear controls us, we won't accept anything less.

- “Hmm, I'm in this job and it sucks. But who guarantees me that I'll find anything better if I quit?”
- “All right, I'll meditate with you, but only if you guarantee me that I'll walk away enlightened.”
- “I'll only marry you if you guarantee me eternal love and happiness.”

The truth is, there are no guarantees. We may enjoy the perfect life today and have a grand piano fall on our heads tomorrow. The universe can be ironic at times.

## Ignorance and Its Discontents

To be sure, fear is only one part of the problem. It's not that we simply have to get rid of our fears and everything will be fine.

Because it's not just that we're unable to make a concrete plan for traveling the world or asking that awesome girl out. Or even that we're unable to execute that plan once we have it.

It's that we don't even think it's possible!

It's not that we consciously decide against doing interesting things in our lives. It's that we're not even aware of all the great things we could do!

These, then, are the enemies: Fear and ignorance. And if I had to define freedom, I would say that freedom is what we get once we overcome our ignorance and fear. In this sense, freedom is a process, not a status quo. This also means that it's something that we should never take for granted.

## *The Antidote*

Maybe it's no wonder that German, supposed to be the language of poets and thinkers, doesn't have an equivalent for one of the most beautiful English words. It's a word that goes beyond the stereotypical German desire to plan and control, to completely understand and order the world we live in.

That word is serendipity.2

Serendipity means not knowing what we're looking for. And still being open to find it. It means unlocking our natural gift to make fortunate and totally unexpected discoveries in our daily life. And it's an antidote to a life without freedom, because it helps us to overcome our fear and ignorance.

I know this may sound weird to many. And still, there's a serendipitous notion to freedom: It's something anybody can experience, but that's somehow still beyond our control. If you think that's bullshit, remember the last time you were in love. The last time you smelled fresh coffee while observing a sunrise. The last time you met an old friend on your way home and ended up talking until 3am. Do you think these moments can be forced?

Serendipity itself can be easily ignored. It'll then be mistaken for simple chance or for divine intervention – merely confirming our beliefs. But serendipity can take us further: It lowers our ignorance because it leads us to unexpected discoveries. It also reduces our fear: We simply don't expect anything, but remain open to get precisely what we need.

In this sense, embracing serendipity means embracing freedom.

## *Join the Freedom Fighters: Flâneurs, Idlers, and other Troublemakers*

Evgeny Morozov recently wrote about the “[death of the cyberflâneur](#)”. He was worried about how the modern web could lead to a “tyranny of the social”, showing us only the content that performs well with the average audience, while skipping anything weird and eclectic. If this happened, serendipitous findings would become a rarity. Freedom would be reduced.

The [flâneur](#) is a classical figure embracing serendipitous freedom: Walking on the streets of Paris until he gets lost, he will encounter surprising and unexpected freedoms – just like his modern digital sibling, the cyberflâneur.

How about the other misfits who enjoy this kind of freedom? Think of the idler who seizes a day and relaxes at the beach. He will discover new thoughts and ideas that could easily change the direction of his life.

Think of the raver who meets friends and strangers at unplanned techno parties. He will feel this freedom at 180bpm, deep inside of him.

The painter who paints just to paint;  
the writer who writes just to write;  
the dancer who dances just to dance: They all will experience freedom in what they do, no matter if they're dilettantes or professionals.

Calmness and community, festivity and friendship, creativity and creation are all manifestations of freedom. And they all can be found in serendipitous ways, because they are somehow beyond our control. While they can be experienced by anyone, they cannot be forced: We can trust in finding friends, but we won't be able to decide about their actions. We can [prepare for celebrations](#), but we rely on serendipity to make the party great.

## *What You Can Do*

If you'd like to explore a new side of freedom, give yourself the chance to have some serendipitous encounters:

- Be late. Or be early. Put your alarm clock at a different time than you're used to, and enjoy the pleasure of a slow breakfast. Or the adrenaline of a quick cold shower and a rush to your meeting.
- Take a different route to work. And a different means of transport. Leave your car at home. Skip the subway. Instead, take the bike or walk, or ask a colleague to take you.

- Seize a day. Bribe your doctor with a chocolate cake or tell your employers that the husband of your cousin's sister-in-law has just passed away and you need to attend the funeral. Or be honest and tell your boss that he owes you this Monday and you won't show up.
- Get on the same train that you always take. But don't get off at your usual station. Instead, drive all the way to the end of line. Walk around there for at least one hour and talk to three strangers.
- Invite one of the strangers on a drink. Or to ride the carrousel with you. To climb on a mountain. Document your adventure with an old camera and send him the undeveloped film as a memory.
- Buy a different newspaper. Subscribe to 10 quality blogs that are written to cater an audience you are opposed to. Visit a temple of another religion. Try to understand the point Richard Dawkins makes. Then, read the Quran or the Bible and try to understand the point the prophets make.
- Walk with flowers. Go on a monthly adventure. Do impossible things. Join the 1% club. This is your life, so if you want freedom, dare to take it. And dare to make it.
- Ultimately, freedom isn't something to be taken for granted. Nor is it independent of our environment. While freedom starts in the mind, too many people are still living in conditions that don't allow for freedom on the outside. If you're better off, use the power you have to build a world of freedom and mutual respect: Support freedom fighters everywhere, get engaged in your community, help the people you meet during your day – be they friends or foes, colleagues or family members, casual acquaintances or total strangers. Smiles, food, political, practical, moral and financial support are all things that can contribute to bring freedom to the world.

## Finding Your Freedom In Everyday Life

By Kara Stein of [17,000 Days](#)

[ 10 ] February 13, 2012 | [Cara Stein](#)

Image by pcullen on Flickr. Creative Commons license.

What would it be like to be totally confident that you'll be ok, no matter what happens?

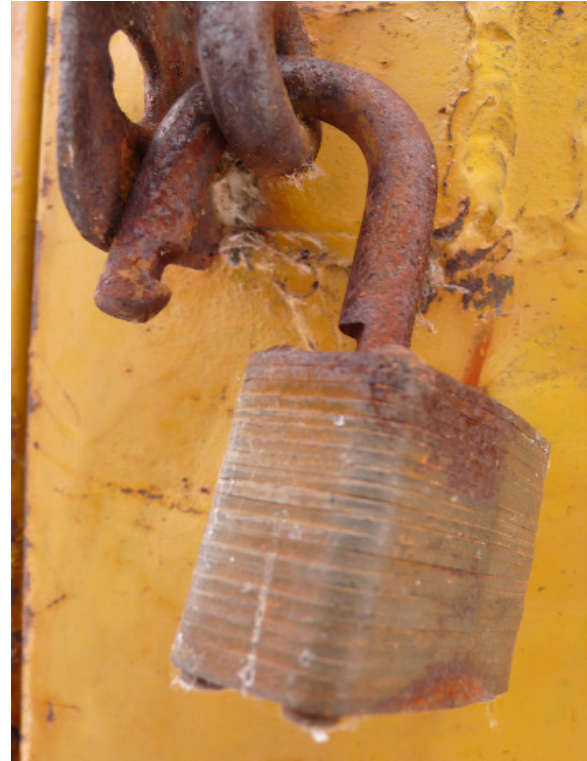
Frankly, I have no idea. But it sounds great! To me, that would be the ultimate freedom. Freedom from anxiety, freedom from worry, freedom from fear. I don't know if anyone really achieves it in this lifetime, but we can work toward getting closer to it.

For most people, it's hard enough to even achieve a more basic level of freedom of thought where we know ourselves and do what we would do. Instead, we do what we think our parents, our friends, our bosses, or society dictate.

As much as people say we love freedom, and as angry as we get when someone tries to take away our rights and choices, we often act as if it's more of a burden than a pleasure. When your options are open and what you do is up to you, that's a lot of responsibility, and a lot of thinking. Sometimes it's easier to let others choose for you.

Or, we take the path of least resistance. Go to the school that offers the best financial package. Pick the major that comes easily to you, rather than the most interesting. Join a religion that will define the rules of living for you. Get married, buy a house, settle down. There are good reasons to do these things, but often, we just do them so we have one less thing to decide or think about. I've certainly done that myself. It's easier to follow the expected path and do what "everybody" does than to think out what your ideal life would look like, and then have to figure out how to make it happen.

Even in the smaller picture, we create structures and rules for ourselves in all kinds of situations. It helps us feel safe. For example, do green ways really need to specify bike vs. pedestrian lanes? Where I live, the paved paths all have lines and pictures to indicate where people should walk and where they should bike. Heaven forbid we all had to figure that out for ourselves—anarchy would reign!



This need for structure pervades our lives, and most of the time, we don't even notice it. When I quit my job, the most common advice I got was to create as much structure for myself as I could. Schedules, office hours, routines... most blog posts about working from home are adamant that you'll do better if you dress up as if you were going to the office. One book I read actually advised me to put on a full face of makeup every day so that I'd feel professional.

Is it really our khakis and mascara that make us productive? Of course not. But apparently, for many people, the terror of going feral is too strong to allow them to concentrate, even if it's just going feral in mild-mannered pajama pants kind of way.

When it comes down to it, we're afraid our lives will fall apart. We may not like the way they are now, but we know we can handle it, so we cling to what we know, even if it's not what we think we'd choose.

For me, it was also a fear of not being good enough that kept me far from freedom. I had all these rules for what a good person would do (many of them helpfully provided for me by religion). In my imagined world, good people do as much as they can to help others, and they get a selfless joy from doing so. When I tried to do that and it usually left me more frustrated and exhausted than joyful, I assumed something was wrong with me, so I tried harder.

I always tried to serve and please others. I strove to be humble, reliable, prepared, and probably any other Boy Scout virtue you can think of. In fact, I tried to be perfect.

What I learned is that seeking approval is the opposite of being free.

I began my journey toward freedom when I realized that it's not a crime to take care of yourself. I used to think being selfish was the worst thing anyone could be, but selfishness gets a bad rap. No, I don't recommend being greedy, stepping on others, or being a selfish jerk, just the healthy level of selfishness that says "put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others."

It starts there: with valuing yourself, taking care of yourself, and listening to yourself enough to know what you need and want.

Sometimes that's the scariest part of all. I used to be so afraid of what might be inside my head, I did everything I could to avoid knowing myself, what I was like, or what I thought about my life. That's the terror of freedom: when you know, then you're responsible. You can choose not to act, not to go after what you want, but you can't escape knowing it was a choice. Many times, we choose to stay oblivious instead.



Life is full of things we think we “should” and “have to” do, but if you look closely, most of them are artificial constraints that keep us from freedom. We see things this way in attempt to keep ourselves in check, or to keep from having to face the void of endless possibilities. But we could choose otherwise if we wanted. If you look at why you do what you do, there’s usually another way to achieve the same outcome, if that’s what you want.

For example, I always assumed I had to work full time at a regular desk job. That’s what adults do—who questions that? But one day, I was reading the university staff manual, and I discovered the option of cutting back to 80% of full time but keeping full benefits. I realized I’d still have enough money at that rate, and by working noon to 6 pm four days a week with one normal full-time day, I’d buy myself four mornings a week to use as I liked. To my amazement, my boss was fine with this plan. I felt like I’d bought my life back!

Later, I went even farther in the realm of the “impossible” by quitting altogether. Freedom can be pretty awesome once you get used to it!

Anyone can have freedom. It starts with knowing yourself and being yourself as fully as you can. The more congruent you are within yourself, the less you have to worry about what other people think of you. No secrets, no worries.

Someday, maybe we can even stop worrying what we think of ourselves. Being that free from judgment seems to be the key to ultimate freedom. If we can accept ourselves and life, no matter what happens, what is there to fear? That’s what I aspire to.

# Go Do Something So Freaking Awesome That It Completely Overrides All Your Fears And Insecurities

By Doug Grootveld of [Wellness Renegade](#)

Posted in [All Other Wellness](#), [Mind and Spirit](#) on February 14, 2012



Do you feel like a caged tiger pacing back and forth? Maybe you're so tired and depressed that nothing excites you anymore; you would rather sleep all day or retreat into a book. Or maybe you just feel like there has to be more to life than this. How can it be that we are put on this earth for such a short time just to grind our wheels day in and day out?

## *The Quest for Personal Freedom – 11 Years In the Trenches*

This is how I felt at the ripe old age of 26 years old. I had just finished my master's degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (my 8th year of college). My marriage to my high school sweetheart began a 2-year dissent to divorce. My uncle died. I was fixing up the house I was living in. And, I was starting a new acupuncture clinic that involved buying and renovating a commercial building.

**As a previously happy-go-lucky type of guy, my world was rocked to the core. I**

**was totally wiped out and was an anxious mess.**

On top of this, I started treating patients. Everyday I saw sick, hurt, and unhappy people. They would often tell me things like,

- “Enjoy your youth while you can.”
- “The time just goes by so fast.”
- “He died 2 months after retiring.”
- “I worked hard all my life for what?”

By age 28, I had pretty much resigned myself that this is just how life is. It was time to grow up. You work hard during the day, you head to the bar after work and drink some beers to unwind, you go to bed, and you start again the next day.

Then I started dating a young woman named Alison. She was awesome. She was smart and funny, and so much fun. While this did help my mood some, I was still very anxious and bummed out about life.

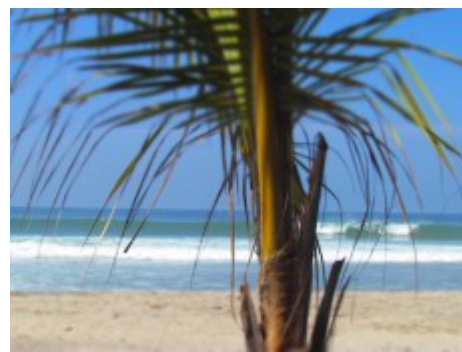
Alison often told me about her plans to travel after she got done with school. She had always wanted to learn how to surf and to live in a tropical location.

I right away said in an envious and slightly indignant tone (like I so often hear from people now), **“I wish I could do something like that.”**

But then something amazing happened, a few simple words that changed my life forever, **“You know, I think I could do something like that.”**

***“If you will it, it is no dream.” –Theodor Herzl***

And that was it. A whole new world had opened up. I finished fixing up my house and sold it to make some extra money. I moved into the basement of my clinic and got rid of most of my things to keep expenses low.



I arranged a six-month sabbatical with my business partner. And finally, I talked Alison into taking a six-month road trip throughout Mexico.

**This was the vacation of a lifetime, but it was also so much more than that.**

I learned how to relax – which was surprisingly difficult. Despite being crammed in a 1980 Datsun pick-up together for many hours a day and living in a palm-frond hut with no amenities, I fell in love with Alison (we are now happily married). We both began our dream to learn to surf.

We also got the chance to **see what is possible in life**. We met many ex-pats and travelers from around the world. We learned that you don't have to be rich to be happy and confident.

After we returned to the US, we knew we had to get back down to Mexico (to our favorite little town on the Pacific) the next winter. So we completely restructured how we worked to make it happen.

Alison took flexible bar tending and waitress jobs. I started making house calls and filling in for other acupuncturists taking vacations. We took Alison's design skills and my house remodeling skills and started buying houses, fixing them up, and selling them.

From there it just snowballed, and serendipitously our dream began to take shape. I ended up buying a lot and having a house built in Mexico just a block and half from the ocean.

We continued "flipping" houses in the summer in lovely Portland, Oregon. We both got work visas in Mexico to pay for our expenses while we are here (Alison is a waitress and I have an acupuncture clinic).



We now spend six months in Portland and six months in Pacific Mexico. I tell you all this not to brag, but to just tell you that it is possible.

**What do you want from your life?** There is a way to make it happen. You just have to believe that it is possible and start taking action in that direction. It probably won't happen overnight, and it won't happen exactly as you planned, but it's likely that it will lead to something **more amazing** than you ever could have imagined anyway!



## *The Renegade Guide to Personal Freedom*

### 1) Act Confident

The road to personal freedom is not always an easy one. You need to move out of your comfort zone and this will require the ability to act confidently.

The bottom line is **we all have fears, negative emotions, limiting beliefs, and insecurities**. It is critical to learn how to identify these feelings as they are happening.

You can then [name your demons](#) and recognize them for what they are – a figment of your imagination. Even though these thoughts and feelings feel very real, they are not.

Here is the tough pill to swallow though (and the one no one else is telling you); **these feelings will never totally go away**. Also, and depending on how shitty of hand you were dealt in life, these feelings may be particularly intense and prolific.

Don't bother with all that "self-love" and "self-esteem" bullshit. It's a road to nowhere or at best a band-aid. We as humans will always have negative feelings and self-critical thoughts. It's the nature of our brains.

Your better bet is to recognize these feelings and then ask yourself, "How can I act confidently right now?" or "What would a confident person do right now?"

Acting confidently begets confidence. Looking into a mirror and telling yourself, "I'm good enough, I'm smart enough, and dog-gone-it people like me" will just make you **feel like a douche bag**.

### 2) Get Healthy and Stay Healthy

Heed the advise of all the old and infirm, **take care of yourself**. You will be sorry when it's gone, and it will be one day. It's true, it will take some discipline at times, but it **need not be that hard** either.

Also, if you feel **energetic**, rested, strong, and relaxed, you will feel more inspired to take on the world.

### 3) Don't Let Yourself Get Complacent

Complacency in life will keep you from starting a new



adventure in the first place and it can also bite you in the ass later down the road. I say this from experience.

After the housing market crashed, I kept cruising along with it assuming that it would all just work out. Unfortunately it hasn't and I now find myself scrambling to make ends meet and start paying down a load of debt.

And while this is painful and stressful right now, the silver lining is that I'm confident I can work my way out of it doing something that inspires me. I don't have to be a hamster on the wheel going nowhere again. And, I get to figure it out barefooted, lying in my hammock, in the 85-degree weather ;-)

#### 4) Travel, Travel, Travel

Did I mention you should travel? Get out into the world. Challenge your views of how life is and should be. See new cultures. Get back to nature and explore the last remaining wild places. Let the **third-world** totally ruin your sense of order and time.



Most importantly you need to see in-person that there are others out there that **have chosen a different life than the 9-5 grind**. There are people of all ages, income levels, and those with and without families. When you travel, you see that it is possible.

Start with an extended vacation or sabbatical. I personally don't know anyone who started out as a "digital nomad" making a living completely online or remotely.

Most people just save up money, keep their expenses low, arrange a flexible work schedule, and travel. Some, like my wife and I, also figure out a way to do some work when they are abroad.

#### 5) Do Something So Freaking Awesome that it Completely Overrides all Your Fears, Negative Emotions, Limiting Beliefs, Insecurities, and So-called "Responsibilities."

This is by far the easiest route to freedom. If you find something you are passionate about, something that gets you so excited, something that will cause depression when you are not doing it, you've got it made in the shade. **Personal Freedom will be your only option!**

Living in Mexico and **surfing ruined my life in all the**





**best ways.** But, it will be different for everyone and it doesn't need to be an extreme sport either. Maybe you want to write that novel, maybe you want to move closer to the grand kids, maybe you do want to travel around the world.

Better yet, find something that combines your passions with a profession or in way that helps others. You'll truly be unstoppable then.

When you find that certain something, you'll do whatever it takes to make it happen. It might mean working long hours, it might mean selling all your stuff, it might mean some growing pains and discomfort, but the bottom line is you will be able to move confidently past all your doubts and fears and be free.

# What Does Freedom Mean To You?

By Sean Ogle of [SeanOgle.com](http://SeanOgle.com)



The other day I was helping someone out with their blog. They'd just started a new site, and while I'm far from the world's best marketer I have learned a thing or two about how to grow an audience.

The problem with their site is that they didn't have a tag line. There was no hook, and when I ended up reading a couple articles it took me the better part of ten minutes to get the general concept of the site – and figure out where the value was for me to be reading it.

When I was discussing this with them, I used my tag line as an example: "Build a Business, Live Anywhere, Achieve Freedom" – pretty straight forward right? It tells you exactly what you'll learn by coming back week after week and reading my often incoherent ramblings.

It had been awhile since I'd really sat down and thought about what that tag line meant, and I couldn't help but pause for a bit of reflection.

Build a Business – Ok, that seems easy enough. I talk about it as it relates to [Location Rebel](#) and in posts like "[How to Create Your Dream Job](#)" and "[Would You Rather Have a Beer or a Business](#)". Got that covered, I'm doing a good job of helping others build businesses.

Live Anywhere – While I’m usually in Portland, each year I’ve got a pretty hefty list of [my favorite offices from around the globe](#). Guess maybe there is something to this Live Anywhere thing.

Achieve Freedom – Once I got here, I realized things get a little more vague. What is Freedom? Is it different for everyone? How do I know if I’ve achieved it?

I found myself asking a lot of questions, and not having a lot of definitive answers.

Freedom in the broad sense of the term is very difficult to define. It’s going to mean something completely different to my friends I met in [Cuba](#) a couple weeks back, as it does to, say me.

I still have to abide by all of the same laws as everyone else; I pay taxes just like everyone else. So what exactly am I free from?

I look at freedom as being able to live the life I want to live – plain and simple. Back in the day while I was at my job, I wasn’t free. I wasn’t able to do the things that I wanted to on a regular basis. Now? I’m able to travel around, work whenever and where ever I please, and I’m generally a much happier person.

To me, that’s freedom.

I’m asking a lot of open-ended questions here, because I want to get you thinking. I want you to think long and hard about what freedom means to you, and if you’ve achieved it.

Tate just came up to me and asked what I was writing about, and I said achieving freedom. Her response: “That’s kind of ironic considering it’s Valentine’s Day.”

I thought this was interesting, because in her mind, freedom stems from relationships. Almost like in order to be free, you have to be off gallivanting around the world, like [this guy](#).

Freedom is different for everyone. By my definition you can be married with 3 kids, work 60 hours a week, and have a mortgage, and still be free as long as you get to do the things that make you happy in life on a regular basis.

I realize this is a very middle-class, white, American view point on it, as there are millions out there who don’t have freedom in any sense of the word – but this is me writing about my life, and what I relate to.

Take a few minutes today and think about what this means to you, and where you are in the path to achieving it. If you’re willing to share, I’d love to hear what you think.