

CATHERINE F. COLLAUTT, PH.D.

SUCCESS V. FREEDOM: AND HOW TO GET THEM BOTH

A FIVE-STEP GUIDE TO
REPROGRAMMING YOUR
SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

WWW.CATHERINECOLLAUTT.COM

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Success V. Freedom - And How To Get Them Both.

*Q: I've been **severely** beating myself up because I haven't made a lot of progress in my business for a very long, humiliating time. I finally discovered a **huge** reason I'm not moving forward is because I'm afraid of the "trappings" that may come along with success. I recently got clear that **freedom** is My Big Why. I'm afraid becoming successful will utterly overwhelm me and **take away** my freedom instead of giving me more - and it completely freezes me up because, though I'm not handling much right now, I'm already feeling overwhelmed and tired. Any thoughts, tips or tricks would be appreciated. — Shauna*

(Go to <http://www.marieforleo.com/2012/09/your-subconscious-mind/> to see the webisode online.)

This is a really great question. And in fact Freedom is my big Why too, so I hear you sister. More specifically, I'm about freeing others, and with them this planet, from the chains that bind; so let's dive in: burning desire for success, but afraid it will diminish your freedom and overwhelm you? Here's how we move forward.



THE POWER OF YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND. We're going to start by talking a little bit about the power of the subconscious mind. As you may or may not know, and the figures on this vary from as little as .1% to as much as 5% so we'll estimate that only about 3% of your brain's processing power, is used by your conscious mind. The other 97% say, is subconscious, unconscious, autonomic, automatic – you don't think about how you digest food, you don't normally think about breathing, all your habits go on automatic pilot, a relatively infinitesimal part of what you pick up and process from your external environment actually makes it to conscious awareness, and so on. *By far, our greatest processing powerhouse is our subconscious mind.* Scientists will tell you that the power of the subconscious is perhaps a million times greater than that of the conscious mind. The point, here, is not to turn around and consider the conscious mind weak or lacking – our will, our conscious determination and effort are *amazing and powerful in their own right.* The point is simply that powerful as our conscious mind *is and can be* – still, there exists inside us an asset that is *even more* powerful than that. (!)

This is why I work intimately with the subconscious, and why I encourage people to get their subconscious mind *onboard* with their intention and will. We normally try to make what we want to happen in our life by using our will, our conscious determination – our 'sweat, blood and tears'. This, I am sure we have all experienced, is tough going as is. But especially when it is going against something in that subconscious part, that other 97%, it becomes a task of Sisyphean proportions. You remember Sisyphus? The king in Greek mythology who was punished by the Gods to an eternity of rolling a boulder uphill then watching it roll back down again. This is a version of what Shauna is experiencing:

Her conscious mind may be saying: 'I want success!' Hopefully, also, it is saying: 'I am worthy of success.' But if something in the other 97% is saying otherwise: 'I am unworthy of success.' or 'I don't want success.' That is what she is going to be getting, or manifesting. At minimum

she will find herself stuck somewhere on that Sisyphian mountain, struggling endlessly to roll that boulder named ‘Success’ up to the top or to prevent the back-slide.

Reflecting the brilliance of the dictum engraved at the entrance to the Oracle at Delphi, ‘Know Thyself.’, Shauna unearthed the contrary beliefs (programming) she is *also* carrying, what was further away from consciousness, what was, until she revealed it, *subconscious*. Her thoughts there may run something like this: ‘Increased success means increased responsibilities, duties, and obligations on my time. I am already feeling overwhelmed and exhausted – how would greater success do anything *but* crush me? I barely have enough time for myself *as is* – greater success means moving exactly in the *opposite* direction from what I really want: freedom, joy and spontaneity. *No thank you. I want freedom!*’ And at a power a million times greater than her conscious will and determination, we all know what or who is going to win out. And so besides feeling exhausted and depleted by all her efforts, Shauna also takes it personally and even feels humiliated by her lack of progress. No more, sister – get your subconscious onboard! When you do, the Sisyphian mountain turns into a molehill.



THE POWER OF YOU. Before we get to the how, I want to make sure we understand our place or position in the dynamic. At a power a million times greater, we might be tempted to regard our subconscious as ‘the boss’ from whom we have to get approval or permission in order to get things done. This is incorrect. *You* are the boss – at least, *you’re meant to be* the boss. And part of your job *as* ‘boss’ is to give this most powerful, effective and efficient employee good and clear direction.

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(If we're going with this kind of metaphor, I prefer to think of the subconscious as an 'asset' rather than 'employee', as it sounds just that much more reverent.) Think of your subconscious as a computer: it's going to take its programming and run with it; it's *your* job to make sure that its programming is in functional, if not optimal, alignment with your goals by programming, re-programming and de-bugging, at regular intervals. *And in concert with your goals* – as they change, as new ones arise, and so on.

The process of interacting with your subconscious is less about asking permission than it is about gaining mastery. Mastery involves, first, taking up our position of power in relation to our subconscious, not by trying to out do it or by doing without it; but by realizing it's *our job* to clean up the programming and directions we have (wittingly or unwittingly) given our blessed processing powerhouse. When you make your subconscious a friend, and even a best friend, the process of creation, of manifestation, of *materializing* your dreams and desires, changes entirely. It's not your egoic will and effort that do *most* of the work, but the absurdly effective and efficient power of your subconscious mind. *The conscious part still has to do what it has to do: be congruent with the intention; show up; and say Yes.* But with the power of your subconscious beside you, actually in front of you, the doing you need to do becomes more, not completely but *more* like executing our habits. Doesn't take a lot of thought, will-power or determination right? We just do them, often mindlessly and rather effortlessly. *That* is the power of our subconscious mind. That is the asset you are born with. Your job, as president and CEO of yourself and your life, is to become the best guardian and manager of this asset you can be – to get the most out of the most dedicated and capable employee you will ever have at your disposal.

Remember there is no antagonism when it comes to your subconscious. Its power is the *asset* not the *obstacle*. Your subconscious is on your side; it *wants* to be on your side. Even when it looks like it's totally against you. As the dedicated and indefatigable employee that it

is, it's probably just working on a mission you gave it and forgot about, years ago. It's still playing for that team – which is one of *yours*, albeit one you're not, currently, consciously looking after. Often the teams and missions our subconscious is still championing are instructions and understandings we internalized somewhere in the past that are no longer useful and/or were *misunderstandings* to begin with. Becoming a good 'boss' means understanding that this, and consequently what it's doing (or resisting) now, is not actually *the subconscious*' fault. It might not even be your fault. And if your eye is actually on the prize, (whatever your prize is), it doesn't matter *whose* fault it is. *Just correct the instructions.* There are many ways to do this; I offer one way to get started below.



GETTING YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS ONBOARD. The impulse to be thorough forces me to point out the obvious: if you're not even aware that there is resistance, you're not going to do anything about it. **So step one is always awareness: recognize resistance.** You need to be aware of it to consciously and deliberately negotiate it. Shauna's revelation was recognizing there was a very good reason she was having so much trouble making progress: significant conflict between her conscious goal to build a successful business, and her subconscious beliefs about how success will limit her freedom.

Once you've recognized your resistance **the next step is to be humble.** We have a tendency to invoke humility and the desire to be, or stay, humble, in the most inopportune contexts (like when it comes to believing in ourselves, our Goodness, or our dreams). This, by contrast, is a really good place to step with humility. *Don't assume you know anything*, and certainly not *everything*, about your resistance. Be humble with

your intelligence, your expertise, and your knowledge – *especially and without fail when it comes to knowing yourself*. Pretend for a moment that you don't know everything there is to know about you or your internal 'opponent'. (Maybe it's not an opponent after all.) *Trust your subconscious long enough to learn from it. Trust that it has something important and wise to say. Because it does.* Shauna's for example is reminding her of her non-negotiable desire for Freedom.

Step three is to get specific. If Shauna just keeps pushing herself she may stay stuck, or she may eventually achieve some greater measure of success, which, under the circumstances (programming) would just likely bring her exactly the kind of success she does *not* want: stress, strain, more weight on her shoulders, more to do's, and less freedom. So instead we do the work of unearthing the resistance: What *exactly* is the fear or fears? What are the associations with *getting* or *having* what you want? *What exactly is your subconscious looking out for?* Interview yourself with curiosity and compassion and let the subconscious make its case! *You want to hear its case.* There's powerful information in it that is priceless to you; I'm talking golden. Remember the magic elixir for getting this kind of precious information from yourself – or any other human being for that matter – is *genuine curiosity and compassion*. You walk in as a judgmental know-it-all and I wonder if anyone, willingly, would give up their goods. Like their fears and their insecurities. Like their hopes and dreams. Like their Truth. They'd have to be pretty desperate to share. Don't wait until you get to that point. Come correct to yourself: with a childlike curiosity that has no agenda, with a genuine desire to understand, and always with compassion.

For Shauna, it's not enough to know that she's afraid of the trappings of success, much less 'afraid of success' in general. She wants to learn more about herself and what she doesn't want by further excavating: What 'trappings' *specifically*? What freedom(s) *in particular* does she think she has to sacrifice? Is it having more people depending on her? More projects filling up her day? That she won't be able to say, 'No.', to

something else that comes her way? Is she afraid that success will hurt someone she loves? Understanding of what she doesn't want will bring her *greater clarity on what she does* want.

So step three is to get details, and applaud whatever you find. Applaud it before you judge it. Remember: you – that is, what you normally associate with 'you' – are *by far* not the smartest thing within you.

Step four is to make a promise to yourself. You want to set the intention to *work it out* with your resistance – not to *work against* it. Shauna's subconscious may be saying, 'Look, I'm afraid that if you get successful, you're going to become a slave to success, spend all your time working, be on the phone all day, have no fun, be tied to the desk, and never see anyone.' She can make her fear a non-issue – which is precisely what we want – by making a promise to herself. For example: 'Dear, dear friend, listen: if greater success means greater strain, more exhaustion, and having less freedom and space for me in my life, *I won't go for it*. I don't want that either! – And I appreciate you lookin' out. If I *have to* make a choice between success and peace of mind and heart, I'll choose the latter. I promise. I promise to choose success *only if that isn't* what it means. Cool? We can have a *look* them?' Then of course she'll want to be a trustworthy partner-in-crime for herself to rely on: i.e. to keep her promise.

This kind of promise will make Shauna, and her subconscious, more open to the idea of success and to pursuing it. Remember, our intention here is to work it out, not to work until we bleed. The more trust we cultivate here, the more the fear of being bullied or bulldozed by our ambition, desires, or ego, will become a non-issue. That's what we want to make it: a non-issue. The result is that we hop off the tumultuous, combative, and lonely road to our goal, and find a totally different stride: one with internal peace, comfort and integrity. Even more, the gesture, the declaration that *should you be forced to* you would choose self-love, over your ego, and even over your ambition, is *priceless*. It is a choice I hope you wish for every person on this planet, certainly those that you love, *which should therefore include yourself*: to trust and love *and stand by* your self.

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Step five is to find examples. Now that we have the, ‘Okay, I guess it wouldn’t hurt to have a look,’ from our resistance, we want to see what’s true. Evidently Shauna has a number of not-so positive examples of what happens with increased success. She wants to see *what else is true*. To see if her fears can also *not* be true. *Your subconscious can and will do anything that you tell it is possible*. If you tell it something is impossible, it will make that true for you too. So your job is to make sure that it, and thereby you, know that the *totality* of what you want is possible. That it is possible to satisfy both (or all) sides of your heart/mind. So you want to find examples – exemplary examples – of where this is the case. They let your subconscious know that what you want – all of what you want – *is* possible.

Shauna wants to dowse her subconscious mind with positive examples and case studies: people whose lives have been *improved*, not ruined, by success; people whose freedom has *increased* as a result of success; people who’ve done well in business and now have *more* time to do the things they love. Forleo is a great example here! – after all, it is part of the *mission statement* to help women entrepreneurs live *Rich, Happy and Hot!* (The opposite of ‘overworked, exhausted and chained to their desk’.) Shauna needs to make sure she, and her subconscious, have 1, 5, 10, or 20 examples – the more the merrier, for a plethora of examples encourages and reinforces the idea ‘this is definitely possible’ – of people whose increase in success has brought an *increase*, forget decrease, in freedom. Freedom to play and frolic, to have time for herself, to check out of work – whatever it is that she’s looking for.

Say you want to be financially wealthy, (which I hope you are allowing yourself to do), but you also want to be kind, generous and compassionate – and all your associations of wealth and riches involve cold, callous, narcissistic and materialistic individuals. This internal conflict is going to find you struggling, or at a standstill, somewhere on that Sisyphian mountain. You need to find, remember and remind yourself of examples of people who have *tons* of money *and who have*

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not lost their compassionate, generous and caring selves. *Even better, find people who have become even more* generous and selfless, as they have increased in wealth: Warren Buffett, Russell Simmons, Richard Branson – exemplary in this respect. All of a sudden your subconscious has a gateway, an opening, a picture of what it might look like to achieve *all* of your desires. And the conflict, the mutually exclusive tenor, is gone: ‘Oooohhhh, it *is* possible to be super-rich and deeply grounded, humble, generous, and intimate with your loved ones and community. Oooohhhh, okay, maybe it is safe then after all...’

Your examples can be people you know, famous people you don’t know – it doesn’t matter. The point is let your subconscious know that it is possible to satisfy all of your desires, and all of the missions you’re invested in. Remember, *your subconscious can and will do anything that you tell it is possible*. The more examples you present, the more you encourage and reinforce the idea, ‘this is *definitely* possible’, and let your subconscious know it’s working towards. Learn not to be jealous when you see someone else who ‘has’ what you want – but to be *grateful*: they’re *providing you with your example*. (P.S. If you can’t find an example, or your only examples are fictional characters – *know that you can always be the first human being to accomplish what you want*. I not only mean that, but beseech you to step up so that the rest of us aren’t searching for the missing example. Just let your subconscious know that you *will* be the first. Either your subconscious must know that it is possible because someone else has achieved what you want, or because you will be the first person in all of humanity to achieve it. As long as you don’t tell it that that’s *impossible*, it will work to make it so.)

Shauna’s concern, I’m putting some words in her mouth now, is that as one gains in success (which for me, as most everything, is an expression of power), one gains also in weight, responsibility, duties, obligations – in shackles of all kinds. She feels she’s drowning, or suffocating, or in any case being sufficiently weighed down, by the ones she’s already bearing; and therefore, very reasonably, *and functionally* I might add, is

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resisting taking on more. But if she looked at her healthy, functional, and even wise examples – which is again why it’s important to choose your examples well – she would start to see what it actually takes to cultivate and maintain power: a team. A support system. *More than just you*. Oprah does not do it on her own, nor Branson, nor Simmons: they will probably be the first to tell you, and the world, that they can only do all that they do because of their team and the support system they have built around themselves.

So, for example, as you gain in financial wealth it would actually be *dysfunctional* of you to continue to try to do all your accounting, investing, taxes, etc. on your own. As you go from \$30K, to \$80K, to \$500K, to \$5million per year – if you are healthy, wise and know how to take care of yourself and your energy (in this case financial), you employ a team of people to help you manage it: an accountant, a financial planner, someone to manage your portfolios, etc. When you are coming from a one-man or one-woman shop (as the great majority of us tend to start out from), *yes*, you *do* do it on your own. But greater power is actually *not* about endlessly doing it on your own and caring the weight of everything you have and hope to achieve on your shoulders. That is just the beginning. ;) After you learn to carry the weight, you must learn also to share it, to *depend*, rely upon, and use others *in a healthy and respectful way*. Once you’ve gained independence and autonomy, this can be even scarier. Succeeding here is the next level of power.

Shauna, finding the right examples, would immediately open up to the revelation: ‘Oooohhh, the more success I achieve the more support – personal, professional and otherwise – I will have! Oooohhhh how wonderful. And not only would it take the burden off of everything I have yet to create, and everything I am already carrying – but it will increase my freedom to use my energy more and more in just my areas of genius. And then others could do their areas of genius. And yes, I can see how I would have more time for what inspires me, for what I am good at, for what I love – and *if I let myself*, to be freeeeeeee to play, to rest, and

to enjoy my life and my creations! Oh wow... maybe not so dangerous at all. In fact I *can't wait* for that support. That's what I'm calling in when I call in success??????? – Well, bring it on!

Spend some time with your examples. *Learn* from them. Again, work some insight. That means: be humble, don't assume you already know anything – including and especially that you already know why you could never be like your examples. A word, again, on humility: ignore it when it comes to choosing the caliber of your example; invoke it in relation to every other judgment you make. What I mean by this is: it is not an act of humility to not allow yourself to use e.g. Marie, or Oprah, or Branson or Buffett, as your examples because 'Who am I to compare myself to them or pretend that I could be like them?' More often than not, that is an act of low self-esteem and self-deprecation. And precisely the wrong kind of 'food' you want to be feeding your subconscious mind to get it onboard with what you want to create. Marie, Oprah, Branson, Buffett, got to where they are *for good reason*. Trust that. And trust that 'good reason' does not mean [just] *luck*. Because it rarely if ever does. – Again, show a little humility in assuming you know all the answers before you take a good look. And then take your good look, and learn something. This is precisely why you want to choose your role models well: you want to learn from the *exemplary* – not the mediocre – they will open up the most possibilities for you.

Once you understand more about what you want and what it means to get there, **step six is to solidify and affirm**. Solidify what you have learned, gleaned, and now understand. About your fears, about the reality of how life can work, about what you want and what you're moving towards. Bathe yourself and your subconscious regularly in the new, harmonious or integrative, *and also possible* truth. Remind yourself of the road, the only road in light of your promise (above) that you are actually taking. The more ingrained your new perspective becomes in the subconscious, the more it uses its power and resources to facilitate and work towards your goal and, effectively, execute on your behalf; and the easier it will be for you to manifest or materialize it.

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Now what I am about to encourage you to do is going to sound like “affirmations” – and in a way they are. But: 1) affirmations only work if you believe them – when you don’t, they have precisely the opposite effect. All you’re projecting out there, to life, is: ‘yeah, yeah, yeah, B.S.’ – and so, B.S. it believes it to be, and B.S. it will make sure that it is. If I had started working with Shauna by asking her to simply say, affirm and re-affirm ‘Success increases my freedom in life.’ she would say it, probably not believing a word, and just project fear and disbelief – at best *wishing*, which inherently implies *doubt* – in there to her subconscious and through it, out there, into the ether.

After going through the steps above, her relationship to the sentence is different. It is more than an affirmation – and one that she now *gets*, at least kind of, at least somewhere in her intuitive, non-linear grasp of things. It becomes: 2) less of an ‘affirmation’ and more of a reminder, or *remembrance*, of what she learned *and also saw to be true and possible*. And also: 3) a integrated and peaceful point of orientation – free of the internal conflict – a light in the distance that she may not know how to get to, *but knows she doesn’t have to be afraid of getting there*. She’ll *enjoy* the ‘affirmation’ now, which I find foreign to the way we typically relate to them; before we’ve done the work of excavating what we believe, whether it’s true, whether it’s always true, what else is true, and *how* we want to navigate the unknown (i.e. life). Remember, if you can’t get behind your affirmation with *good* feeling, just leave it alone; find another one that you can get behind, a smaller one if need be. A less grandiose projection that you can believe in is better than one tainted, made ineffective, or destructive as a result of your doubt and cynicism.

Here are a few examples I would encourage Shauna to remember, to remind herself, and to enjoy knowing, as many times a day as feels good to her – especially first thing upon waking, right before sleeping, or during any meditation (these are some of the optimal times to access the subconscious):

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Success increases my freedom in life.

Increased success brings increased support – personal, professional, financial and otherwise! (Cf. Oprah)

Time is money. And money is time. The more money I have, the more time I have to do with it what I will: to play, to enjoy, and to unfold all that I am meant to be, to enjoy, and to become – personally, professionally and otherwise! (Cf. Forleo)

Power is freedom. Money, influence, reach – these are all manifestations of power. And I am free – always and eternally – to embody, wield and enjoy my power in whatever way pleases my heart and soul most. (Cf. Buffett)

These are just a few examples, hopefully you can see – and feel – how the conflict and resistance Shauna might have felt in relation to the reality of getting what she wants (success) is likely to have dissipated into excitement and eager anticipation at the totality of what success will bring. In fact, instead of needing to put it off for months or years – she probably is now playing with the idea of being ready, and maybe even over-ripe, for it tomorrow. Which brings us to ...

The final step: trust the perfection of your timing. Shauna's now psyched – arms wide open, yearning and ready. But you can't fool yourself – at least not each and every part of yourself. So while the fierce and determined Goddess/Warrior/Entrepreneur in Shauna is ready ... I'm guessing there are other, perhaps younger and more timid parts of her that are not. Here again we must let go of the impulse to bully and bulldoze over areas and aspects of ourselves and our psyche in favor of one that we are identified with, (and probably over-identified with), in a moment. Again, your ego and conscious mind – as gifted and intelligent and powerful as they are – are not the wisest part of yourself. (!) This, again, is where humility is useful, and priceless. Maybe your inner child

is not ready for good reason, maybe she knows better that your inner adult has not yet learned and acquired the muscle to hold the power your Warrior is calling in. Trust that your timing – the timing of your increase in success, in power, in wealth, health, affluence, reach and abundance – is Perfect. Perfect *for the entire system* that you are. Trust that there are internal forces – always working to your benefit – ensuring you don't get crushed by your divine ambition.

We've all heard the stories about the guy who won the lottery, only to lose it all in an unfathomably short period of time; or the gal who went for instantaneous weight-loss surgery and from loving 'the new her' to self-loathing and drug-, sex-, or whatever- addicted in two minutes flat. There are reasons for this! Your system (body, mind, soul, and everything else that is a part of the miracle of the organism you are) needs to acquire the muscle to hold, contain, and use the energy and powers it gains. The person who goes from \$50K to \$5million has not acquired the muscle to hold this much (financial) energy without it destroying them, and they lose it all. The person who goes from 80 lbs. overweight to 'ideal' body-size has not acquired the necessary 'muscle' to 'handle' and negotiate the attention she now gets from others, the different way people might treat her, what they want now want from her, and so on. It *is* overwhelming, and destroys her. Think of it like weight lifting: what is all of a sudden adding 500lbs to the bar going to do to you? *Give yourself time to build your muscles first.* It isn't 'nothing': you *are* asking for more power. Hone and develop the container it's going to go in – that is a *necessary part* of the process.

Trust that where you are right now is the perfect platform for which to build exactly the muscles you need to hold, hone, and wield the power you are calling to you. You don't even need to know what the 'best exercises' to do here are (!), life actually takes care of that: the boss you hate at work; managing whoever it is under you; having to learn the skill you find so painfully boring now. When you look back, you will be

able to see how perfect they were for your path, how you couldn't even have foreseen that you would need 'this', or how 'that' would help you later. As Steve Jobs said in his 2005 Stanford Commencement Address: '*You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them, looking backwards.*' Rightly, he added: 'So you have to trust that dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust that something – your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever – because believing that the dots will connect down the road, will give you the confidence to follow your heart even when it leads you off the well-worn path. And that will make all the difference.' Indeed.

Trust – don't resent! – your timing. Trust, on the one hand, that if what you want hasn't yet made it into your field of vision, you are being given the time you need to develop, hone and acquire the muscle you'll need when it does – not a minute more, nor a minute less. And conversely, trust that if it is standing before you, *it means you have* the resources to deal with it. Or, in other words, that Life will not hand you anything you can't deal with.

You'll get there soon enough. When you believe you'll get there soon enough, at the perfect time – i.e. not a minute too soon (before you are prepared), nor a minute too late (finding you over-ripe and rotting) – you can actually enjoy the time *beforehand*. You can enjoy the ride. And I suggest you enjoy where you are and what you have going on now because you are calling in that next level – so *this*, whatever this is for you, will not last. Even if you've been trying to 'manifest' your dream for 3 years to no avail, if I told it was scheduled to show up on the first of next month, and change your life irrevocably – as dreams tend to do – you'd feel that bittersweet twinge. You'd suddenly realize that 'this' isn't such a horrible place, in fact part of you loves it, it's a *home* you will soon be leaving. You might even start to cling. I hope you find the presence to relish and adore every last day of whatever 'it' is as the last days you are *allowed* it. Whether it's what you consider 'playing small', your last

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days on your own before you get entangled with the love of your life, the anonymity you have before you hit that audience of 1,000,000+, or walking down the street without the incessant cat-calls you'll be hearing when you lose that x amount of pounds; enjoy it *now* – because it will not last.

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a dream is half a prophecy