



**Free Yourself: A Manifesto for Letting Go of Fear and
Living Life on Your Own Terms**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Are You Free?	2
Stop Following the Rules	5
The Paradox of Good Enough.....	7
Who Really Controls Your Life?	9
Your Version of Happy is the Only One That Matters....	11
The Fear of Finding Yourself	14
Cocoon Syndrome and What to Do When People Don't Want You to Change.....	18
Living Outside the Box: The Terrifying Freedom of Becoming Who You Really Are	21
Three Negative Behaviors to Let Go of So You Can Move Forward with Your Life.....	24
How to Be in Your Power (and Stay There)	27
You Don't Have to Find Out You're Dying to Start Living	28
Resources.....	32
About the Author.....	34

INTRODUCTION

Back in 2010, I embarked on a journey to become happier in every area of my life. I decided to press the "reset" button and start over so that I could figure out what I truly wanted my life to look like. For me, that path involved going natural, quitting my job, starting my own business, becoming a minimalist and traveling the world.

Along the way, I faced resistance and confusion from friends and family who just didn't understand why I even wanted to change my life in the first place! I quickly realized that I was going to have to develop my own personal growth "toolkit" and create my own support system if I was ever going to reach my goals and be successful on my own terms.

This short ebook contains some of my best ideas about letting go of fear and finding the courage to walk your own path. It's a collection of 11 articles I've written over the past four years that have inspired and motivated women all over the world to pursue their big dreams. You might want to print out this manifesto, make a cup of tea (my favorite is Earl Grey with a bit of almond milk and brown sugar) and begin thinking about how you can free yourself from your own fears and start living the life you really want. I hope it's useful to you in your journey to happiness and success.

In support of your freedom,

Rosetta Thurman

ARE YOU FREE?

On Independence Day in the United States, the entire country celebrates our so-called freedom. I say "so-called" because even though many of us live in a wealthy country, sometimes we allow the societal norms and values we have here to impede our personal freedom and happiness.

So much of what we're brought up to do and be can be summed up this way:

Go to college > Get a job > Get married > Have kids > Buy a house > Work until you die

With each milestone you reach in the American Dream, you are duly rewarded. You get congratulations from your family and friends. You earn the admiration of society. Each accomplishment makes you feel successful, like you've finally "made it."

Obviously, if this path is the one you truly want, the payoff is great! You get to pursue your goals and at the same time, you get the external validation that comes with your achievements.

But what happens when you don't want to follow the socially-accepted aspirational path?

You are ridiculed and questioned. If you don't go to college, you're doomed. If you don't get married, you'll die bitter and lonely. If you don't want to have kids, people call you selfish. If you quit your job to start your own business, you're taking a crazy risk in "this

economy." If you cut off all your hair and go natural, [your mom tells you that you look like Miss Cleo](#).

The common denominator in all of these scenarios is the external factor.

What do people say about the choices you make for your life? And how much do you care?

For me, part of personal freedom is being able to do what feels right for you, regardless of what other people think. If it falls in line with the norm, fine. But if it's outside of the commonly-held ideal, are you strong enough to withstand the pressure to conform?

When you care too much about what other people think, you can become imprisoned in [their version of what happy looks like for you](#). But when you realize that you have lots of choices, that you can do anything you want with your life - you become invincible.

What does freedom look like to you?

For me:

- Freedom is knowing who I am and what I want.
- Freedom is being able to let go of the pain from my past, enjoy the present and pursue the opportunities I have for my future.
- Freedom is not having to work a job I hate just so I can buy, keep and maintain more "stuff."

I am free.

Most of us, in fact, are already free. We just don't know it.

You are free to live the life you've always wanted.

All you have to do now is step out of your imaginary shackles and out into the warmth of the sun. Now is the time to free yourself from everything that does not affirm you. Turn off the channel(s) that tell you, over and over: you are not enough.

STOP FOLLOWING THE RULES

When I look at the lives and accomplishments of the women I most admire either for their business acumen or just the amazing lives they've been able to create for themselves, I realize they all have one thing in common.

They broke all The Rules.

And yes, I purposefully capitalized "The Rules" to emphasize their existence as this huge entity that tries to run our lives.

You know, all the "you can't do that because" Rules like:

- You're too young.
- You're too old.
- You're too black.
- You're too poor.
- You're too late.
- You're not pretty enough.
- You're too pretty.
- You're too strong.
- You're not strong enough.
- You're not qualified.

Not to mention all The Rules that tell you that you have to do it just like *this* and don't skip a step or it won't work and oh make sure you don't start until you've got all your ducks in a row and all the "what ifs" worked out and by the way you might as well wait until you're 30 or 40 because that's when you'll *really* know what you want out of life.

Just think about how different their lives would've turned out if Oprah or B. Smith or Tyra Banks or Holly Robinson Peete or Ursula Burns had actually followed any of The Rules laid out for them.

Because contrary to what we've been taught over and over in school, success does not come automatically to those who simply follow The Rules.

Just because you go to college and get good grades doesn't necessarily mean you'll land your dream job. Ask all the unemployed college grads and they will tell you. Just because you go on to get a Master's degree and your own condo and a nice car still does not guarantee you happiness in life. And we all know that even if you follow The Rules in any dating book or manual to the "T", you are not guaranteed love for a lifetime.

Yet even though they really don't work, The Rules will always be with us.

That's because The Rules were created for all the people who are satisfied with ["good enough."](#) They are perfect for the people who are fine with someone else telling them what to do with their lives and how to do it. The Rules are for people who are willing to settle for a mediocre life because they *aren't* willing to put in the time or effort to create an amazing one.

But for those of us who want more out of life, The Rules are useless. We see that they can only take us so far and then we have to figure out the rest ourselves. We realize that we're actually sick and tired of playing by The Rules anyway. And then we decide to create our own.

THE PARADOX OF GOOD ENOUGH

Sometimes change can seem so hard, so daunting, that we just stick to the status quo in our lives. "Oh, it's good enough," we'll say. Or: "It's not the best, but hey, it could be worse."

Does any of this sound familiar?

Your job? *It's good enough for now. I mean, I wish I was doing something else, but at least I'm working when so many people are unemployed.*

Your current boyfriend/jumpoff? *He's all right for now. He's got issues, but it's just something to do until the right one comes along.*

Each of us probably has one or two or ten things in our lives that's "just OK." Even though we know it can be so much better. [We even dream of the possibilities](#) . . . until [that damn lizard brain](#) shows up to rain on our parade. The lizard brain asks dumb questions like:

Who are you to want something more?

Why are you so high maintenance?

Why can't you just be happy with what you have?

With all of its insistent curiosity, though, the lizard brain never asks the really important questions that need to be answered as we move forward in our life journey.

What truly amazing relationship are you keeping yourself from by settling for one that's just "good

enough?"

What are you missing out on by staying in a dead-end job?

How are you limiting yourself by pretending to be content with your current state of being?

On its face, "good enough" seems like something to be happy about. But when you allow yourself to think about what you *really* want, you might find that you're just settling out of fear that you won't get it. Let's keep it real with ourselves, shall we? If given a choice between good and great, most of us would probably choose the latter.

WHO REALLY CONTROLS YOUR LIFE?

Who controls your life?

Pose this question to any person over the age of 21 and the answer will likely be: "Me! Of course. Silly girl."

On the surface, that answer makes perfect sense. If you are considered an adult by society, you technically have the right to make your own decisions and therefore control your own life.

But when it comes time to actually *make* those specific decisions that YOU are supposed to control...well, that's often an entirely different story. As an adult, you can do whatever your heart desires. Provided you don't break the law and go to jail, you have [unlimited freedom to move about the world in your own way](#).

Why, then, is it [so difficult to live the life of your dreams?](#)

For one thing, we waste a lot of time using other people as an excuse for why we can't do what we want to do.

- I can't take off work for a week because **MY BOSS** won't let me.
- I can't travel because **MY KIDS** are too young.
- I can't save money because **MY JOB** doesn't pay me enough.
- I can't go natural because **MEN** will no longer find me attractive.

- I can't date a man without a college degree because **MY FRIENDS** won't think he's good enough for me.
- I can't quit my "good" job and start my own business because **MY FAMILY** will think I'm crazy.

Think about it.

Be honest about the excuses you give for NOT pursuing certain goals. You may be putting unnecessary limitations on yourself by allowing other people to hold you back from [living your version of happy](#).

Who really controls your life? Your boss, your kids, your job, your family, your friends, men, or...you?

YOUR VERSION OF HAPPY IS THE ONLY ONE THAT MATTERS

"We should all do what, in the long run, gives us joy, even if it is only picking grapes or sorting the laundry." - E.B. White

There are a lot of people in your life that, for whatever reason, see fit to tell you what you should be striving for in life. Most of the time, they mean well.

They actually want you to be happy, they just don't know how to help you besides offer [advice that you probably don't need](#).

My mom (especially as she gets older) seems to think I will be happy when I finally settle down with a husband and kids. Although she is supportive of my current lifestyle, I think she views it as a phase that I'll grow out of, kinda like when I was 12 and would only eat Trix cereal for breakfast. Maybe she's right. But what she may not see is that I'm pretty happy with how my life is right now.

My aunt liked to have a heart attack when she came to visit in January and saw that I had [big-chopped my natural hair](#). Again. "But it was getting so long and pretty," she said sadly, stroking my hair in nostalgia.

My sister freaks out as usual when I tell her I'll be moving to [Charlottesville, VA](#) for a month after I leave Baltimore. Charlottesville is one of my favorite cities and I've been there to visit for the [Virginia](#)

[Festival of the Book](#) every year for the last 10 years. This year, I figured I might as well see if I could stay a while longer and I'm happy it all worked out. "Why do you keep moving around so much?" my sister asks. "Because I want to," is all I say now. It's all there is TO say, really.

If I lived my family's version of happy, I would be working full-time for someone else; have long, relaxed hair; be married to a tall man with a good government job; working on my first baby and be living in one place for the rest of my life.

The danger in living someone else's version of happy though, is that while it may feel good to have their approval, you can end up following all the steps they tell you to follow and then wonder why you still don't feel fulfilled in your life. You might make choices [based on someone else's hopes and dreams for you](#), then end up resenting them once you realize that those choices only [sidetracked your life](#) and took you further away from your hopes and dreams.

I don't know what's best for you, but I do know that it's hard to go wrong when you trust yourself. When you [design your own vision](#) for how you want your life to be, you're able to tap into desires that you may not have been able to see or feel before. You're also better able to [release your attachment to other people's approval](#) by taking responsibility for your own goals.

Maybe your life is just fine the way it is now. Maybe you really don't want to find a husband or go back to school or get a "real" job, like everyone is saying you should. Maybe your only goal in the world is to wake up every morning with gratitude that you've

been blessed to live another day. Maybe, for now, you want to just be.

And maybe that's OK.

Whatever makes you happy is what's right for you. It's important to remember that. It's important to remember that your version of happy is the only one that matters.

THE FEAR OF FINDING YOURSELF

Right now, [I'm in Santorini, Greece](#). I'm writing this post at a cafe in the town of Perissa, famous for its black sand beaches. I woke up this morning thinking: *how is this my life?*

This time three years ago, I was working downtown in Washington, DC - enjoying my nonprofit job but itching for something new, searching for my Next Step. A few months later, [I made the decision to leave my organization to work for myself](#). And [my life has been a whirlwind ever since](#).

Almost a year ago, [I chose to get rid of my expensive studio apartment in DC](#) and experience living in different places without a lease, mostly through sublets. That decision freed up a lot of money to save for long-term travel, including [a three 1/2 week trip to Honolulu, Hawaii](#) and my current [month-long trip in Europe](#).

Throughout this journey, [I've also gotten rid of most of my personal belongings](#). It's been so freeing to let go of my things that I now embrace the concept of living with less. Without having to worry about the acquisition, storage and maintenance of material possessions, I have found that I can have more experiences instead. I have lost a lot of my former desire to accumulate all the "stuff" I used to lust after - clothes, shoes, furniture. I buy only the things I need and keep only the things I really love. In this way, I have released attachment to much of what kept me from being able to just get up and go whenever I want.

The downside to this process (if there is one) is that when you release attachment to everything, the only thing left to focus on is *yourself*.

And for most people, that is the scariest.shit.ever. It's been terrifying for me. I've been [writing through the fear](#) here on the blog, hoping to share what I've learned along the way and encourage other women to live life on their own terms. But I'd be shortchanging the journey if I didn't also talk about [how scary it can be to pursue your ideal life](#).

When you turn off the TV, close the magazine, unplug from the drama, shut out the negativity, stop the mindless shopping, get rid of all the stuff you don't need and quit [letting other people control your life](#), there's literally NOTHING left to distract you.

So...now what? You look at yourself in the mirror and start asking questions.

1. *Who am I?*
2. *Who have I been pretending to be this whole time?*
3. *Who do I want to be now?*

The answers, when they hit you, can be overwhelming. Self-discovery can be an elevator dropping right on top of your head. It can make you want to run to the edge of the cliff and jump back into your old life.

Except that now, you can't go back. There's NO WAY you can go back. You'd have to unlearn everything you now know about yourself, about the world.

No.

At this point, your task is to fall deeply in love with your new self, to embrace this wide-eyed woman in all her naked glory. To softly sweep up the dust she kicked up when she burst through the door, dazed and confused.

Then figure out what to do with her.

When you begin to discover who you really are after so many years of procrastinating on your desires, of [burying your dreams in the sand](#), it's as if a veil gets lifted. You become a baby learning how to walk. You realize that YOU HAVE LEGS and they can take you ANYWHERE YOU WANT TO GO.

But a big part of you doesn't want to learn. You don't want to be a baby, after all this time you spent [learning how to be an adult](#). So, you decide to stand up in defiance. It's time to shake it off, this feeling of imbalance. You take two steps forward and fall. You stand back up, taking three steps now. But you just fall down again. And again.

You start crying because the falling feels so lonely. When you fall, you're down there on the ground by yourself, looking up at the people who seem like they already know how to walk. Falling feels like failure, so you want to stand. You would give anything to stand. To be able to walk like everyone else.

But you can't walk when you're in the process of finding yourself.

Now is the time to crawl and fall. After a while, the universe will send you angels who will help you learn to

walk. They will show up in the form of strangers or friends or lovers who are meant to teach you how to see yourself in a new light. This is so that you can finally accept the uncomfortable truth that there is actually nothing to "find."

You are already the person you've been looking for.

COCOON SYNDROME AND WHAT TO DO WHEN PEOPLE DON'T WANT YOU TO CHANGE

*"The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are."
- Joseph Campbell*

I'm writing this post from my favorite cafe in Northern Virginia: [Panera Bread](#). I've fallen in love with their soups (their bagels are pretty amazing, too). Tonight, I'm slurping my way through a bowl of garden vegetable, served hot with pesto and crusty French bread. I'm drinking ginger peach tea and listening to [Rosie Thomas](#), because her music makes me go inward. It makes me sit still and think.

Tonight, I'm thinking about what it means to be transformed.

We all say we want to improve our lives, but in reality, very few of us actually go beyond the [self-help junkie stage](#) to achieve true transformation.

What's up with that?

In the last two years, I've [gone natural](#), [quit my job](#) to work for myself, [became a vegan](#) (then transitioned to being a vegetarian after I lost too much weight as a vegan) and [gave up my apartment](#) to save money for travel. Along the way, I've also been able to cultivate [a new outlook on the world](#), one filled with more hope and possibility.

The other day on the phone, my sister said that

sometimes she feels as if she doesn't know me anymore. To be completely honest, **sometimes even I feel like I don't know myself anymore.** I've challenged and questioned everything I've known to be true over the past two years that I've been writing this blog, [conducting lifestyle experiments](#) and [resetting my life](#). The result? Right now, I feel more aligned than ever in my life and work. It's like I've finally come out of my cocoon.

What I've learned is that transformation itself is not difficult. Whenever I let go of my attachment to concepts, things and people that no longer serve me, I am able to open myself up to what the universe really has in store for my growth.

What I've learned (especially when I decided to [cut off all my hair, big chop-style](#)) is that I wasn't really afraid of change in the first place. **I was afraid of how other people would react to the new me.**

People have, of course, [reacted in various ways](#) as I have gone through these various changes in my life. That's what people do. We react. We all have our own worldviews and comfort zones, and when someone steps outside of them - even someone we love - our stuff starts coming out. For me, the changes I've been making in my life have been exciting and liberating. For others looking on from the outside, it might feel disorienting. So they often lash out. How now shall they interact with this new Rosetta?

(My aunt said to me recently, "It's no fun to go out to eat with you anymore now that you're a vegetarian. No chicken? No ribs? Where's the Rosetta that used to throw down with us at the family barbecue?" She's

still here, I thought. Just not so . . . meaty.)

When this happens, I've found that it's helpful to remember a few truths to ground myself in my own experience, not the experiences of others:

1. **I am responsible for my own stuff.** This life is mine alone to live and my happiness is mine alone to determine. Whether or not other people approve of my choices is never a good measuring stick for success or fulfillment.
2. **I am not responsible for other people's stuff.** (And by "stuff" I mean other people's desires, hangups, frustrations, or opinions.)

People will react. Expect them to. But don't let it keep you from making the changes in your life that you know you need to make. Don't let it keep you in a cocoon for too long.

[Yes, transformation can be terrifying](#), especially when your family and friends don't (and can't) understand your journey. But perhaps what we should be more afraid of is **the regret of not ever becoming who we really are.**

LIVING OUTSIDE THE BOX: THE TERRIFYING FREEDOM OF BECOMING WHO YOU REALLY ARE

When I was a kid, I was the little girl who lived in the projects. I was one of many who stood in the free lunch line at school. I was a fatherless child being raised by a teenage mom.

When I was a teenager, I was the smart, geeky girl with Coke bottle glasses. I was the one all the boys made fun of. I was the teacher's pet. I was the student all the popular girls wanted to cheat off of. Later on, I ditched the glasses for contacts and became the leggy hoochie mama wearing mini-skirts to class, ignoring all the boys. Payback!

When I was in college, I was the writer. I was the poet. I was the President of the English Club. I was a girlfriend and a future wife. I was a young black woman on her way UP.

After grad school, I was the nonprofit professional extraordinaire, on track to becoming a CEO of an organization sooner than I thought. I was an expert fundraiser, helping to raise over \$1 million every year for the nonprofit I worked for. Then I left my job and became a consultant, working for myself.

There have been many things that have defined me over my short 28 years - or rather, that I have LET define me. My poverty, my pain, my relationships, my education, my clothes, my body, my salary, my job title.

Now, I am entering into a new stage of my life where none of those boxes are big enough or sufficient enough to hold [the person I am becoming](#). None of those things are able to truly define me. Not anymore.

Getting Rid of the Boxes

Sometimes, when you're unsure of your next step in life, boxes can be useful. Following [all the rules that have been laid out for you](#) is often easier than figuring out your own path. But after a while, a sort of disappointment sinks in. Is this it? Is this really the "good" life? Going to school, getting a job, then working my ass off my whole life just to wait for my freedom when I retire at 70? Being pressured by society to hurry up and get married by 30 and have kids before my eggs dry up? Postponing my dreams of travel and adventure for a more "secure" lifestyle?

Evolution is Terrifying

Over the past two years, I've learned a lot about myself and [the possibilities for a different life](#). And the more I learn, the more I end up living outside of all the boxes that have been set up for me as a young black woman in America. Every time I stop playing small, I end up feeling alienated from many of the people in my life. Most do not understand. They find it difficult to support you in your new journey. That is the terrifying part. Feeling alone. But the more I embrace my true gifts, the more I see the importance of focusing on my own personal growth. I see opportunities for [living location independent](#) and taking my business on the road. Right now, I'm in the process of researching my options for extended

world travel next year. One of the items on [my bucket list](#) is to travel around the world, starting with Europe and Asia. As it turns out, the planning is not as complex as I thought. What was I waiting for?

My own evolution.

I am evolving into someone who is madly in love with herself and the world around her. I am growing into a person who is [letting go of fear and living a life of happiness and purpose](#). I am a sister in the fierce pursuit of freedom.

And maybe, what I'm really experiencing right now is the gift of realization that I am no longer bound to a box. I have finally given myself permission to shed the shallow definitions of the past and become who I really am: a woman open to love.

What boxes have you let define you in your life? Which ones have been necessary for you to shed in your personal growth journey?

THREE NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS TO LET GO OF SO YOU CAN MOVE FORWARD WITH YOUR LIFE

"Even though you may want to move forward in your life, you may have one foot on the brakes. In order to be free, we must learn how to let go. Release the hurt. Release the fear. Refuse to entertain your old pain. The energy it takes to hang onto the past is holding you back from a new life. What is it you would let go of today?"
— Mary Manin Morrissey

I'm a big believer in letting go in order to move forward. My interpretation of Mary's inspiring quote is that getting rid of your pain and perceived failures from the past can make space for new, better experiences. Of course, that doesn't mean you do away with all the lessons you learned from your mistakes. You just don't have to stay in that depressing place, mentally.

And you don't have to keep repeating these same negative behaviors that are holding you back from living the life you really want.

Blaming Others for Your Circumstances

I spent so many years of my life being angry about things that other people had done to me. Not so long ago, I was the total opposite of a happy black woman. I was mad as hell. I was mad at my mom [for not knowing how to be a mom](#). I was mad at my father [for committing suicide](#). I felt that if I hadn't been raised by a teen mom or if my biological father had

been around to help, my life would have been better somehow. I carried around a lot of resentment about what "should have been" but wasn't. Thankfully, I began to see how unhealthy it was for me to focus so much on the past, something I couldn't change. What I realized was that *blame doesn't change anything*. Blaming others just gives you a false sense of control over your life. But it doesn't do anything to change it.

Telling Yourself You "Can't"

It can be really scary to talk about possibility, even though you know you want to explore new options for your life. A friend, family member or even your coach might suggest something for you to pursue, maybe something that has worked for them or someone they know. Right away, [your lizard brain](#) wakes up and starts throwing out all these reasons why this path might work for someone else, but it's just not possible for YOU. The lizard brain loves limiting words like "I can't," even though it stops possibility in its tracks. Constantly telling yourself that you "can't" do something prevents you from coming up with ideas that will actually help you reach your goals. Instead of constantly focusing on all the reasons why you *can't*, what if you just sat down and brainstormed how you *can*?

Sabotaging Your Own Success

Many ladies swear up and down that their ultimate goal is to quit that dead end job so they can finally run their own business. You might be one of them. Yet, every night, instead of working on your dream, you sit in front of the TV to watch Real Housewives of Atlanta or waste time on Twitter. The result: you end up perpetuating the lie that [you don't have any "extra](#)

[time](#)" to make progress on your business ideas. Then, when opportunities *do* come up, you don't feel ready or prepared to take advantage of them. It becomes a vicious cycle and you never get anything accomplished.

There is a spiritual saying, "pray until something happens" but I would modify that a bit to encourage you to take action on your dreams. Yes, by all means, pray. But then, DO SOMETHING. **Do something until something happens.**

You have to take action FIRST. Then, the universe will respond and your blessings will begin to manifest themselves.

HOW TO BE IN YOUR POWER (AND STAY THERE)

I've recently fallen in love with the phrase **"stay in your power."** I think I heard it on a teleseminar somewhere a while ago, and it has stuck with me ever since. For me, staying in your power means not letting your fear or any naysayers distract you from using your gifts to fulfill your true purpose.

But I think for most women who know what their purpose is, I'm probably preaching to the choir. You already know what I mean when I say to STAY in your power. It's all well and good if you've already figured out how to access your inner wisdom at this stage of your life journey.

But what if you've never even experienced BEING in your power in the first place?

If you're in that group, then this is where I'd like to focus you today. Most of the challenging situations we experience in life are challenging only because they leave us feeling frustrated, confused or powerless. But what if we were able to approach any obstacle with the confidence that we already have the power to overcome it? Well, then we would surely experience success in all areas of our lives.

Here's what it means to be in your power, plus what that might look like for you in action.

Being in your power means:

Owning your ability to do whatever it is you want

to accomplish in your life and business.

What that looks like in action:

- Not blaming other people for why you're not getting ahead.
- Not making lame excuses about not having enough time or money to do what you need to do.
- Taking the steps needed to achieve the goals you've set for yourself.

Being in your power means:

Trusting yourself and the choices that are truly made for you, by you.

What that looks like in action:

- Not getting caught up in your need for other people's approval.
- Doing what makes you happy, regardless of what other people say or think about it.
- Examining all of your choices to see if it's really what YOU want or what someone else wants FOR you.

Being in your power is an amazing path to personal freedom. Staying there means remembering these simple concepts and putting them into action in your life. The ultimate truth is that you are beautiful, powerful and free. Everything else is a lie.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIND OUT YOU'RE DYING TO START LIVING

"Many people die with their music still in them. Why is this so? Too often it is because they are always getting ready to live. Before they know it, time runs out." - Oliver Wendell Holmes

Look around and you will see how many people spend more time "getting ready" to live than they do actually living their ideal lives. We often spend our time playing it safe instead of doing exactly what we want to do. Fear causes us to make never-ending excuses for not going for it. But what if you were more conscious of the fact that you're going to die soon?

Rainn Wilson's [Soul Pancake](#) has [a video series](#) called "My Last Days" where they document the struggles and uplifting stories of terminal illness. Last night, I watched [the story of Zach Sobiech](#), a teenager diagnosed with osteosarcoma, a rare form of bone cancer. With only months to live, Zach used his love of music to say goodbye. (**Tissue alert:** I cried during most of this video and it was worth it to have my heart opened in such a powerful way.)

Zach passed away on May 20, 2013. But before he left this earth, he spent his time sharing his life and music with the world, inspiring millions of people with his song, ["Clouds."](#)

Would you make different decisions in your life if you were more present to your own mortality? Unlike Zach,

you probably don't know exactly how long you have left to live, but at least you understand the truth that none of us will live forever. Looking at the big picture, you can see that you have a very limited amount of time to accomplish and experience the things you desire. This awareness is a very freeing state to be in.

If you can remember that [you're going to die](#), possibly sooner than you think, you might be more likely to:

Stop engaging in petty arguments and gossip. Ask yourself if this situation would matter if you only had a few months left to live. If the answer is no, why let it bother you now? Why waste any more moments of your life stuck in anger and negativity? Instead, spend that time doing something that actually makes you happy!

Stop working at a job you hate and put in the effort to find one you like. We spend at least 25% of our lives working, so why not give yourself the gift of enjoying what you do? Or at least find a way to authentically connect to the people you encounter at work, making a crappy job seem much more tolerable.

Start doing the things you've always wanted to do. Go to the places you've always wanted to go. Do the things you wrote down on your "bucket list" years ago when you were feeling optimistic and brave. Remember that you don't have to wait until you have the right friend or partner to take that cross-country road trip with. You can go now and experience the adventure all by yourself!

Start taking more risks on yourself. Instead of choosing "security" over uncertainty, you have the power to take

a chance and step outside of your comfort zone. Ask yourself what's more important to you - not failing/looking stupid OR seeing yourself achieve something that deep down, you already know you're capable of doing.

Whenever you feel paralyzed by the fear of doing something different with your life, call forward the truth that these are, indeed, your last days and it's up to you how you will spend them. It won't be too long from now when you will close your eyes for the last time.

Maybe all the best moments of your life will flash by like a movie and you'll remember how beautiful the moon looked that night in Paris or the way the audience gave you a standing ovation after hearing you sing your song.

Or maybe you won't remember anything at all.

Are you living the life you want right now or are you still "getting ready" to live it? How would you be spending your time if you knew you only had a few months left to live?

RESOURCES

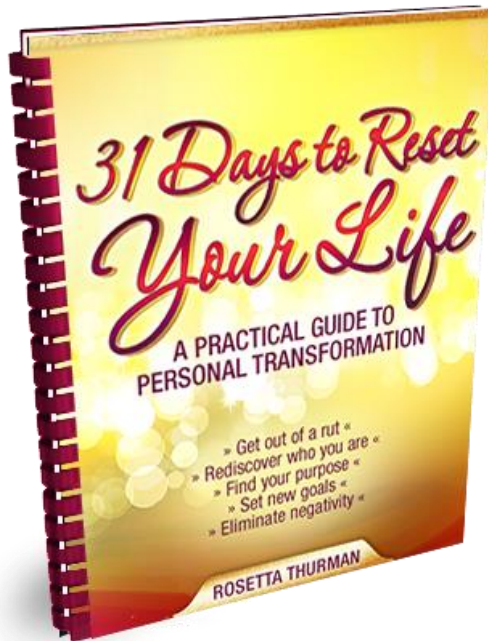
Is your inner voice telling you that it's time for a change? If you realize that your life is out of whack with the dreams you know you have for yourself, commit to take action TODAY. My books, events and courses are for women who are ready to create their ideal lives through leadership, personal development and entrepreneurship. The concepts and strategies that I teach are practical, yet they also challenge you to say YES to yourself and the dreams you have for your life.



[The 2014 Happy Black Woman Retreat in Hawaii](#)

If you've been yearning to be part of a group of like-minded women who are committed to pursuing their goals, I invite you to join me this fall in Washington, DC! I'm hosting a unique 2-day retreat that will walk you through a series of powerful strategies designed to

equip you with all the tools you need to live the life you really want. This retreat will especially be of benefit to you if you've felt stagnant or stuck in a rut over the past year.



31 Days to Reset Your Life: A Practical Guide to Personal Transformation

31 Days to Reset Your Life is a month-long personal transformation experience presented in a simple format for daily reflection. Each day, you will be given an exercise that will help you become a better, happier, more successful person. The core workbook is a 60-page PDF with all 31 daily assignments in one place as well as colorful, printable worksheets to supplement the material. And for 31 days, you'll receive daily email reminders with each assignment sent to your inbox.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rosetta Thurman is a nationally-recognized author, speaker and coach dedicated to helping women become the leaders of their own lives.

Over the past five years, Rosetta's books, courses, workshops and coaching programs have motivated thousands of women to:

- Discover their true purpose in life
- Build meaningful and rewarding careers
- Start businesses doing what they love
- Develop valuable leadership skills
- Take action on their goals and dreams
- Live with greater authenticity
- Become happier and more fulfilled

Rosetta's lifelong desire to help others was born out of humble beginnings. Originally from the Midwest, Rosetta grew up in the public housing projects near Cleveland, Ohio, where she was raised by a single teenage mom and a very protective grandmother. Her father was a drug dealer who died before he had the chance to teach her how to ride a bike. Despite these challenges, Rosetta was able to attend good schools and enrichment programs (including the Girl Scouts; she was a Brownie!), benefiting from many kind teachers and mentors along the way. As a result, Rosetta became the first person in her family to graduate from college.

Rosetta's childhood experiences fueled a passion for social change and volunteerism, leading her to work in the nonprofit sector for 10 years as a fundraising professional and leadership development practitioner. After more than a decade of working in the nonprofit field, Rosetta founded [Happy Black Woman](#), a training company that empowers women to create their ideal lives through leadership, personal development and entrepreneurship. Rosetta's work is guided by her belief in *infinite possibility*, the idea that you can have absolutely anything you want in every area of your life.

Rosetta is the author of [31 Days to Reset Your Life: A Practical Guide to Personal Transformation](#) and co-author of [How to Become a Nonprofit Rockstar, 50 Ways to Accelerate Your Career](#), an accessible, do-it-yourself guide for how to build a successful career in the nonprofit field. She is also the creator of several popular online courses, including [The Blogging School](#), a step-by-step program that teaches people how to create a professional blog to promote their brand, grow their business and accelerate their career.

Rosetta is a professional coach with a certificate in personal development coaching from The CAPP Institute. She holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Management from Trinity Washington University and a Bachelor's Degree in English from Virginia Commonwealth University. Rosetta has also taught leadership, business and management courses as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Professional Studies at Trinity Washington University.

Rosetta has been featured in numerous media outlets such as JET Magazine, BBC London, The Washington Post, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Forbes Woman. She is a member of the Young Entrepreneurs Council and has been recognized as a Top 25 Urban Entrepreneur to Follow, Top 25 Online Influencer in Leadership, Top 100 Most Desirable Mentor, and a New Leader in Philanthropy.

When she's not writing or teaching, Rosetta enjoys good food, good bourbon and good music. Preferably all at the same time. You can find Rosetta on Twitter [@rosettathurman](https://twitter.com/rosettathurman).

Get Rosetta's FREE Life Mapping Workbook at: happyblackwoman.com.