

THE SET FREE LIFE

3... 2... 1... LIFTOFF

January is always the month to write about transitions and changes and resolutions, and that's as it should be. A fresh year stretches in front of us and something new always makes us stop for a moment to admire the scenery (or deplore it, I suppose, and vow to change). We long to start clean, even in the small things. I love to hang up clean clothes and make a clean bed.

I now turn my attention to making a clean break. I'm inspired today by reading the February issue of *More Magazine*, dedicated to the act of reinventing one's self. Among the stories of moving to different locales, losing belly fat, and welcoming a new dog is a delightful montage on women taking flight into new ventures, called "They Said I Was Crazy." A high school teacher moves to upstate New York and creates an animal sanctuary. A marketing executive ditches the office for professional barrel racing (as in horses and rodeos). An actress deep in debt bakes and sells cakes to stave off foreclosure on her home and finds the world opens its mouth to eat. The stories go on, read with those twinges of wow-I-wish-I-could-do-something-like-that envy. The animal sanctuarist comments on her joy by saying, "I've always known that if you listen to the truest part of yourself you will succeed . . . I am living a dream." The baker is about to sell her Mortgage Apple Cake on QVC. The barrel racer won \$100,000 at the Calgary Stampede a couple of years ago, and said, "When it came time to make the jump, as scary as it was, I had to decide: Did I want to settle for a good life—or did I want the best life? You've got to search your heart and take the risk."

Contemplating the risk is the thing that pulls us back, urging us to be cautious and consider everything that might go haywire. There's nothing wrong with this tendency, because the truth is that following "the truest part of our hearts" doesn't always guarantee a good outcome. There

are a lot of tales of failed ventures and piles of debt and painful learning experiences. The trick is to move forward on the positives once we've satisfied some scrutiny of what could happen, both good and bad.

Many of you do not know I've held a day job for the past 14 years and started my consulting and speaking business in the midst of building and managing a facility for a company that has been very, very good to me. My boss has been unendingly supportive of my "next life" activities; my professional organization was the first, years ago, to encourage my belief that *I can do this!* Now it is time for me to go, to follow my calling and leap out into making my "next life" a current and fulltime life. I have no fears, at least not at this moment; I know with certainty that it is time and I have something to offer. I can help people and companies become what they were meant to be. I have a unique approach that will improve the condition of my clients, and I'm excited.

My management and consulting guru, Alan Weiss, writes this in his latest book, *Thrive: Stop Wishing Your Life Away*:

"Positive baggage should weigh a lot less than negative baggage, with all its insinuation, history, and obligation. Just as you build on strength, you also build best on your best strengths. Always be clear as to what 'the point of your arrow' is, so that you have aerodynamics and not a flying barn. . . . We all carry baggage through life. The idea is to make sure it's positive, supportive, and attractive for our intent and journey."



Sue Thompson is a personality expert, etiquette trainer, and an instructor in life lessons. Her work on recognizing and developing talent, identifying personalities and working effectively with the people who possess them, responding appropriately to difficult experiences, treating others with respect, and behaving like a professional have caused companies and business organizations throughout the country to value her consulting skills as superior. She trains those entering the workforce how to present themselves with style and authority; new employees in the importance of respecting one's work and the workplace; managers in the value of understanding employees' talent and temperament; and everyone in the timeless rules of behavior that will always bespeak excellence.

Quick Links

[Adopt-A-Greyhound](#)

[Thrive: Stop Wishing Your Life Away](#)

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My bags are packed with positivity and I'm leaving on a jet plane! If the trip doesn't turn out like I expect, I will change course with no regrets. In the meantime, I plan to have fun (while fully expecting to succeed)! I ask for your help in this way: visit my website, www.SetFreeLifeSeminars.com. Look at what I do. Tell everyone you know who might need what I offer that I'm here. Write me for a promotional kit you can put in someone's hands and tell them, "This woman has your answer." Sign up for my workshop, "Image is Everything Except When it's Not," or encourage a friend or coworker or employee to take advantage of the opportunity it will afford them to reinvent and start clean. Pass my newsletter on to others and tell them they *must* subscribe! Wish me a happy liftoff! 🐾

Sierra on The Excellent Life



Teddy Bear said I should write an article, and so I'm going to share this space with her by telling you what I think you should do to live a life of excellence. She is all about manners and proper behavior; I'm all about comfort and fun. This doesn't mean I'm not well-mannered—Miss Teddy is always watching! She is teaching me how to become an excellent etiquette dog!

I want to remind you of the importance of doing things to the best of your abilities and doing them with gusto and excitement! Because I'm always excited! Except when I'm sleeping! (Or when I've had dental surgery, as happened a couple of weeks ago. It was terrible not being able to feel excited!) It doesn't take much to be heads and shoulders above the crowd—just jump straight up! That's what I do, and I get noticed!

Jump straight up—don't wait for permission! Jump at the things your instincts tell you to do, such as learning new skills or developing new habits or chasing important experiences! When I came to live with the

Quotable

May your trails be crooked, winding, lonesome, dangerous, leading to the most amazing view. May your mountains rise into and above the clouds.

Edward Abbey, naturalist and author (1927-1989)

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Thompsons, I jumped at discovering their routine so I could fit in and be super happy, which I am! When I'm on a walk and meet new people, I jump at showing how interesting I am so that people will say, "What a great little dog!" And they do! Because I am!

You have to find out what your strengths are and jump with them! Lots of humans don't know what they do best and they don't know how to live in those best things. Pups have an advantage because we don't even have to think about what we do well—it's a part of us and we just do it, no apologies! Basset Hounds follow scents, Greyhounds sprint, Yorkies yap, Goldens retrieve, and my tribe, Bedlington Terriers, takes on the world with a fierce sense of fun and adventure! Something wonderful might be just around the next corner! WOW!

When you know what you were made to do, you can jump above those who are mixed up and wondering what they're supposed to be. That's what the excellent life is all about, because jumping above the rest means you're using all your muscles to do what you love! And it's fun! And here's an added bonus: you can see all the other jumpers who are excited about their stuff and you can make friends with them! Then you surround yourself with other excellent adventurers and jumpers! WOW!

If you don't know what you do best, you have to FIND OUT! Maybe you do know what you do best, but you don't know how to jump. TAKE LESSONS! Become an excellent jumper! Show the world what a great dog you are! Attack life with energy and excitement! BE EXCELLENT!!! 🐾

Image is Everything Except When it's Not

You've got the education and background, and you continue to develop your skills. But unless you know how to package these assets, few will be interested in looking beyond what they can see to find out what's inside!

Employers are looking for—and hold onto—quality and excellence.

Do they know you possess it? How?

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