FOR THE MAN WHO'S DONE BEING USED UP

YOU'RE ALLOWED *to Go*

You did everything right.
You're allowed to live the years you have left.

RICH IN LIFE

You're Allowed to Go

For the man who did everything right, has nothing left to prove, and is quietly ready to live the years he has left — somewhere he's still somebody.

FIRST EDITION

An honest note, before we begin.

This book tells the truth the way the men who lived it told it to me — the good and the hard, both. Where it gives you numbers — what a life costs, what a visa requires, how the healthcare works — those were accurate when it was written, but rules and prices change, and your situation is your own. Treat every figure in these pages as a reason to go find out for yourself, not as the final word. This is a book, not legal, medical, or financial advice. Before you move a single step, check the things that matter with people who do this for a living. I'd rather you trust the truth than the brochure — the truth is the only thing that'll still be standing when you need it.

Contents

PART 1

The Life That Used You Up

Naming the wound: the system, the invisibility, the discarding. Pure emotion — no figures yet; the proof comes in Parts 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 1

The Marathon Nobody Lets You Finish

I didn't set out to write a book. I set out to ask questions.

A few years ago I started noticing the same man in the same kind of place — down in the comment sections under videos about people who'd moved to the far side of the world and started their lives over. He was usually somewhere in his fifties or sixties. He didn't write much; often just a line. *I'm tired.* Or: *I work until my body aches and it never ends.* Or the one that stopped me cold the first time I read it, sitting there with no likes and no replies under a stranger's video: *Is this really all there is?*

So I went and found the men who'd stopped writing comments and bought the plane ticket. I wanted to know what they knew. I expected to meet runaways — adventurers, dreamers, men chasing something shiny. What I mostly met were men who were, finally, just *tired.* And who had worked out something about that tiredness that I suspect you already half-know but have never let yourself say.

Here it is.

You were sold a race with a finish line. Do the work, the story went, and one day you cross it. You get to stop. You get to rest, and be proud, and be looked after, and turn around and see the distance you covered. That promise is what kept your legs moving through decades you are never getting back. It's a good promise. It's the reason you did everything right.

But somewhere in your fifties, you started to suspect the truth, even if it never made it past your teeth: there is no finish line. There was never going to be one. The race just keeps going. The bills keep coming. The number you need keeps moving a little further out every time you get close, the way a horizon does. And here's the part that wakes you at 3 a.m. — you can't even slow down to catch your breath, because slowing down costs money you don't have, so you keep running a marathon that quietly took down its own finish line while you weren't looking.

Your body figured it out before you did. There were years that ached — you know the ones. The mornings that took a little longer to get going. The work that used to cost you nothing and started costing you something. Nobody else saw that tally being kept. But you felt every mark.

One of the men I talked to — I'll keep his name to myself, because a man who's been overlooked his whole life is entitled to a little privacy — described the moment he understood. He was sixty-one, sitting in his truck in a parking lot after a shift, and he realized he was doing the math on whether he could afford to retire at the exact same time he was doing the math on whether he could afford to keep working. Both columns came up short. "That's when it hit me," he said. "I wasn't behind. The race was rigged. I'd just been too busy running it to look up."

I want to be careful here, because this is the first chapter and I'm not going to lie to you to keep you turning pages. I'm not going to tell you the tiredness is in your head, or that the right attitude fixes it. It isn't, and it doesn't. The tiredness is real. It's earned. You came by it honestly, one ached-through year at a time.

But the men I met found something, and it wasn't a trick or a hack or a sunny thought taped to the bathroom mirror. It was simpler and stranger

than that. The marathon only has no finish line *in the place where you've been running it.* Pick the race up and set it down somewhere else — somewhere your money goes further than you've ever seen it go, somewhere a gray-haired man is treated like he's worth something, somewhere you're allowed to stop without the floor falling out from under you — and the finish line reappears. Nobody hands it to you. But it's there. Reachable. Real.

That's all this book is. Not a fantasy, and not a brochure for a country I want you to fall in love with. It's a long, honest look at a question you've been too tired and too ashamed to ask out loud:

What if I'm allowed to stop running — and just live?

You are. Stay with me, and let me show you how I know.

CHAPTER 2

You Kept Your End of the Bargain. They Didn't.

There's a particular kind of 3 a.m. The house is quiet. You're not in pain, exactly — nothing's wrong that you could name to a doctor. But you're awake, and there's a weight sitting on your chest you've never quite found the words for. The closest you've come is this: *I think I got cheated. And I couldn't tell you exactly where, or by whom.*

I'll keep saying this, because it's the only way I know to earn your trust: I'm not going to sell you a fantasy. But of all those men I went looking for — the ones who'd actually left — almost every one of them, somewhere in the conversation, got quiet and said a version of the same thing. *I did everything I was supposed to do. So why did it feel like the floor kept moving?*

You know the bargain. Nobody ever wrote it down, but you knew it by heart. Work hard. Show up. Don't complain. Pay what you owe, and a little more. Put your head down through the years that ached — and there were years that ached, weren't there, the ones where your body started keeping a tally your boss never saw. Do all of that, the bargain said, and the other end would hold. There'd be a place for you. A little dignity at the finish. Some ground under your feet that nobody could move.

You kept your end.

And somewhere along the way, the other end stopped holding. Not in one dramatic moment — that's part of why it's so hard to point to. It

happened the way water gets into a basement. The rent crept. The savings that were supposed to feel like a wall started to feel like a few months. The number you needed kept drifting further away the closer you got to it, like a horizon. And the work — the thing you gave your best years to — turned out not to love you back. You learned that the way most men do: quietly, somewhere around sixty, when you realized the marathon had no finish line. It just had a point where the world stopped clapping and started looking past you.

That's the part nobody warns you about. Not the money, even. The *invisible* part. The day you understood that something out there had quietly decided it was finished with you — that you'd gone from somebody to a kind of nobody, a man it was easier to look past than to look at. You hadn't changed. You were still in there, all of you. But something in the way you got treated had, and you felt it like a draft under a door.

One of the men I talked to put it better than I can. Decent man — worked mostly one trade his whole life, raised his kids, buried his wife. He said: *"I wasn't asking to be rich. I was asking not to be afraid of the mailbox."* He said it without bitterness, which somehow made it land harder. He'd kept every promise he ever made to that bargain. The bargain just hadn't been keeping its side for a long time — and he'd spent years quietly assuming that was his fault.

Here is the thing I most want you to hear in this chapter, and it's the reason it comes so early in the book.

That feeling at 3 a.m. — the cheated feeling — is not a character flaw. It isn't weakness, or ingratitude, or you having a "bad attitude" about a life plenty of other people would be glad to have. It's accurate. You kept your end of a bargain, and for an enormous number of men your age, the other end simply did not hold. Saying that out loud is not

self-pity. It's the opposite. Self-pity says *something is wrong with me.* The truth says *I did the work, and the arithmetic stopped adding up the way I was promised — and that part was never mine to fix alone.*

You are not broken. You did not fail. You were handed a story about how this was supposed to go, the story had a hole in it, and you've spent a long time trying to climb out of that hole by working harder at the very thing that was never going to fill it.

I'm not going to call that a tragedy, because the men I met didn't treat it like one. They treated it like a piece of information. And once they stopped believing the feeling was their fault, something loosened. They got curious instead of ashamed. They started asking a different question — not *what did I do wrong*, but *what am I actually allowed to do now?*

That question is what the rest of this book is about. Not running away from your life. Walking — clear-eyed, on purpose — toward one that holds up its end of the deal. There is more of it left than you think. And you are allowed to want it.

But first you had to put the 3 a.m. feeling into plain words and stop apologizing for it. So here it is, plainly: you kept your end of the bargain. They didn't.

Now turn the page — because that sentence isn't where your story stops. It's where it finally gets to start.

CHAPTER 3

Becoming Invisible at Sixty

There's a day you become invisible. You can't circle it on a calendar, but you'll know the one I mean.

Maybe it was the waiter who looked straight through you to the younger table. Maybe it was the third job application that vanished into silence, and the slow understanding of why. Maybe it was subtler — the way a room used to turn a little toward you when you spoke, and one day didn't. The way your opinion stopped being asked for. The way the world began handling you a bit faster, a bit more impatiently, the way you handle something you've already decided isn't going to be around much longer.

It's not that anyone announced it. Nobody sat you down and said *we're done seeing you now*. It just happened, the way dusk happens — no single moment you could point to, and then it's dark.

I heard about this from almost every man I talked to, and it surprised me how much it mattered to them — more than the money, sometimes. These were not vain men. They weren't asking to be famous or fussed over. They were describing something more basic than that, something I think every human being needs and nobody likes to admit needing: to be *seen*. To matter to the people around you. To walk into a room and have it register that you exist — that you're somebody, not nobody.

Because that's the real demotion, isn't it. Not from rich to poor. From somebody to nobody. You spent a lifetime being a man who counted — a worker they relied on, a father they came to, a husband, a neighbor, a name people knew. And then, somewhere around sixty, the world

quietly reclassified you. Not as a bad man. As a *finished* one. A man it was easier to look past than to look at.

You hadn't changed. That's the part that makes it ache. You were still all in there — every year of you, every thing you'd learned, every bit of you that still had something to give. But the mirror the world held up stopped showing you back, and after a while a man starts to wonder if the problem is him.

It isn't.

One man told me about his first weeks in the place he'd moved to. He'd been bracing for the usual — to be overlooked, talked over, treated like a relic. Instead, he said, an old man walking down the street was *somebody*. People greeted him. Made room for him. Asked his opinion and waited for the answer. Younger people called him sir and meant it as respect, not as a polite way of filing him away as past it. "I felt visible again," he said. "I'd forgotten what that felt like. I'd been the opposite of invisible for about a week before I realized I'd been invisible for ten years."

I'm not going to romanticize it, and neither did he. People are people everywhere; nowhere is heaven. But he'd stumbled onto something true, and it's the thing I want to leave you with in this chapter.

You did not become less of a man. Your dignity didn't evaporate, and you didn't do something to lose it. What happened is that the particular patch of the world you've been standing in stopped reflecting you back — and a man can come to believe a thing like that is permanent, written into him, when really it's just *local*. There are places on this earth where a gray-haired man who's lived a full life is treated as exactly what he is: someone worth seeing. Worth asking. Worth keeping around.

Your dignity isn't gone. It turns out some of it is geographic. And that should make you feel less broken — and a good deal more free.

CHAPTER 4

Running Away, or Finally Running Toward

Sooner or later, someone is going to say it to you. Maybe out loud. Maybe just behind their eyes. Maybe it'll be your own voice, at 3 a.m., in the tone your father used.

You're running away.

It's worth sitting with, because it has teeth. Running away is what cowards do. What quitters do. What men who can't face their problems do. And you've spent your whole life being the opposite of that — the man who stayed, who showed up, who didn't bail. So the accusation lands somewhere tender, and most men, when they feel it land, quietly put the whole idea of leaving back in the drawer.

So let's be honest, the way I promised I'd be. Sometimes leaving *is* running away. Sometimes a man moves across the world to outrun a thing that's going to follow him right onto the plane — a grief he won't face, a bottle, a version of himself he's hoping a new climate will fix. That's real. And if that's the engine under your wish to go, a new country won't save you, and I'd be doing you no favors to pretend otherwise.

But here's the distinction the men I met had figured out, and it changes everything.

There is a difference between running *from* and walking *toward.*

Running from is about the thing behind you. It's panic with a passport. You're not choosing a destination; you're just trying to get away, and any door will do. Walking toward is the opposite. It isn't about what you're escaping. It's about what you've decided you still want — and being awake enough, and honest enough, to go get it before the clock runs out.

Almost none of the men I talked to were running from. By the time I met them, the running was over. What they were doing was choosing — calmly, with their eyes open, often after years of weighing it — to walk toward a life that fit them better than the one they'd been issued. They'd looked at the years they had left, counted them honestly, and decided those years were worth spending on purpose.

That's not cowardice. I'd argue it's the bravest thing a man can do at this stage of life, and far braver than the alternative everyone calls "responsible." Because staying numb is easy. Staying because you're afraid of what people will say is easy. Staying because the wish feels too big and too late and too much to admit — that's the path of least resistance, and we dress it up as virtue because it lets us off the hook.

One man put it to me plainly. He said the hardest part wasn't the leaving. It was giving himself permission to want it — to admit, after sixty years of doing what he was supposed to, that he wanted something for himself, and that wanting it didn't make him selfish or foolish or ungrateful. "Once I stopped apologizing for wanting a life," he said, "the decision pretty much made itself."

There's a question buried in all this that we'll come back to in its own chapter — what about the people you'd be leaving, the ones who love you and won't understand. That one deserves real care, and it'll get it. But it is not the same question as *am I running away,* and men tend to tangle the two together until neither one gets answered.

For now, just this. Wanting more is not the same as running. Choosing a life is not the same as abandoning one. And walking toward something — clear-eyed, on purpose, while you still have the legs for it — might be the most awake thing you will ever do.

You're not running away. You're finally facing front.

CHAPTER 5

What's Waiting for You If You Stay

I've spent four chapters on the life behind you. This one asks the question almost nobody makes you answer, and I'm going to ask it gently, because it isn't a threat — it's just a question you deserve to look at squarely.

What does staying actually look like? Not today. Five years on. Ten.

We don't ask it because it feels morbid, and because the honest answer is uncomfortable, and discomfort is easy to avoid when you're already tired. So the question stays unasked, the years go by on a kind of autopilot, and one day you look up.

Let me be fair before I'm honest, because I'm not here to scare you out of your own house. Staying is a legitimate choice. Some men should stay, and have every reason to — grandchildren they'd never trade, roots that run too deep to pull up, a partner who can't or won't go, work that still means something. If that's you, this book isn't an accusation, and there's no shame in it. The only thing I'd ask is that you make staying a *choice* — something you decided, with your eyes open — and not a default you backed into because the alternative felt too frightening or too late to look at.

Because here's what staying tends to look like when it's a default instead of a decision. It looks like more of the same, just with a little less in the tank. The same marathon, run on older legs. The rent a little higher next year, and the year after. The savings a little thinner. The invisibility we talked about settling in deeper, until being looked-past stops feeling like an insult and starts feeling like the weather. And the

wish — the one that wakes you at 3 a.m., the one that made you pick up this book — gets quietly filed away in the drawer where men your age keep the things they've decided they're no longer allowed to want.

It isn't a catastrophe. That's almost the hardest part. Nobody's life falls off a cliff. It just keeps being "fine." Fine, and a little smaller every year. Fine, while the part of you that wanted something more goes quiet, and then quieter, and then stops speaking up at all.

The real cost of staying isn't dramatic. It's not poverty or ruin. The real cost is the question you never let yourself answer — going all the way to the end without ever finding out whether the other life was possible for a man like you. Lying in a bed someday, doing the arithmetic one last time, and landing on the saddest sum there is: *I wonder.*

I met men who'd come within an inch of that. Who'd carried the wish for a decade, told themselves it was a fantasy, talked themselves out of it a hundred times — and then, late, almost too late, did it anyway. To a man, the thing they said afterward wasn't *I wish I'd known sooner.* They'd known. The thing they said was: *I wish I hadn't been so afraid of wanting it.*

You don't have to decide anything today. I mean that. Nothing in this book asks you to do something rash, or sell something you'll regret, or leap before you've looked — in fact, the chapters ahead are mostly about looking, hard and honestly, before you move a single step. So put the decision down for now if you need to.

But you do have to stop pretending that staying is free. It isn't. Every path has a price, including the one that looks like doing nothing. Once you can hold that honestly — once "stay" and "go" are both real choices on the table, each with a real cost — something shifts. You stop drifting. You start deciding.

And the first thing standing between you and that other life isn't a visa, or a plane ticket, or your age. It's a lie. A lie you've been told your whole life about money — about what "enough" even means, and about who decided how much of it a man needs before he's allowed to rest.

That lie is where we go next.

PART 2

The Lie You Were Told About "Enough"

Money and dignity; what "rich in life" actually means. This is where the real numbers arrive — as proof, woven into the emotion, never as a spreadsheet. Chapter 8 answers the skeptic head-on.

CHAPTER 6

The Lie of "Just a Little More"

Let me ask you something, and I want you to actually try to answer it. How much would be enough?

Take a second with it. Most men can't land on a number. Or they land on one, and then a quieter voice immediately says *well, to be safe, a little more than that.* And there it is — the lie you've lived under your whole working life, in five words.

Just a little more.

Just a few more years and you'll be safe. Just a bigger cushion and you'll be able to relax. Just a little more in the account, the 401(k), the pension, and then — *then* — you'll have earned the right to stop bracing. That's the promise you ran on. It's why you put your head down. It's why you didn't take the trip, didn't slow down, told yourself *later*.

But you've started to notice something, haven't you. The number moves. It always moves. Every time you get close, the cost of being "safe" has crept up to meet you — the rent, the groceries, the insurance, the thing that broke. The horizon walks backward at exactly your pace. You can run at it your whole life and never once arrive, because "enough" was never a fixed place. It was a feeling, and you were quietly being kept from it on purpose.

I don't mean a conspiracy. Nobody's in a room plotting against you by name. It's simpler and more ordinary than that. You live inside an economy that runs on you wanting a little more and being a little afraid

— that needs you working, spending, never quite arriving. The fear isn't a malfunction. For somebody, it's the product working exactly as designed.

One of the men I talked to had chased the number for forty years. Smart man, careful man, saved more than most. And he told me the strangest thing happened the day he finally hit a figure he'd once sworn would make him feel secure. He didn't feel secure. He felt the goalpost slide, automatically, the way it always had. "That was the day I understood," he said. "There was no number. There was never going to be a number. I'd spent my whole life trying to fill a bucket with a hole in the bottom, and calling the water 'responsibility.'"

Here's what he figured out, and it's the hinge this whole book turns on.

You don't only get to "enough" by adding to the pile. You can also get there by changing what the pile has to cover. "Enough" is just the moment your life costs less than what you have. You've spent decades trying to reach that moment from one direction — pile higher, pile higher — in a place engineered to keep the moment out of reach. There is another direction. And the men in this book found it.

That's where we're going. But first I have to take down the lie underneath the lie — the one about what "rich" even means.

CHAPTER 7

Rich in Life, Not Rich in Money

There's a sentence I heard so many times, in so many accents, that I started writing it down word for word. A man would get to the end of telling me about his life now, and he'd pause, almost embarrassed, and say some version of:

"I'm not rich. But I'm rich in life now."

I'll be honest — the first few times, it sounded like something you'd put on a coffee mug. But I kept hearing it from men who had no reason to perform for me, men who'd been wrung out by the same machine you're in, and I started to understand they meant something specific. Not a slogan. A discovery.

Because we only ever get taught one kind of rich. The money kind. And we measure a life by it so automatically that we never stop to ask whether it's the kind that actually makes a life worth living.

Think about the richest-in-money man you've ever known who was poor in life. You know one. The fellow with the full account and the empty week. Savings stacked high and not one morning he looked forward to. Secure, by every number on the page, and still bracing — still afraid, still unseen, still grinding toward a "later" that the grinding made impossible. That's not a man I want you to envy. That's the trailer park at the end of the long road, the one where the rent goes up and nobody knows your name, except this version has money in it and is somehow lonelier for it.

Now the other kind. Rich in life. The men who said that sentence to me were describing days, not balances. Time that belonged to them. Mornings without dread. Being known by the people around them. Slowness that didn't cost them anything. The ordinary, almost embarrassing luxuries of a human life — a long breakfast, a real conversation, sun, the sense of being part of a place — that no amount of money buys you in a life arranged to keep you running.

Now, I'm not going to insult you with *money doesn't matter*. It does. You need enough — and in the next chapter I'm going to put real, honest numbers in front of you, the kind nobody in this business likes to show you. Money matters right up to the point where the fear stops. What I'm telling you is that past that point, more of it buys far less than you were promised — and the things that actually make a life rich are mostly not for sale at any price.

So the question was never *how do I get rich.* You were running the wrong race again. The real question is *how do I get rich in life* — and the surprising, almost funny answer the men in this book stumbled onto is that it turns out to be a lot more affordable than being rich in money ever was.

Let me show you the numbers. The honest ones.

CHAPTER 8

What $1,000 a Month Looks Like When You're Valued

Right about here, a voice in you speaks up. A good voice. A sensible one. It says: *I've heard this pitch before. I've seen the videos. Nobody lives like a king in a beach town on a Social Security check, and anyone who says so is selling something.*

You're right. Listen to that voice — it's going to keep you safe. And I'm going to do something the brochure people never do: I'm going to agree with it.

You will not live like a king. You will not live like a millionaire on a modest pension. The men who told you that were lying, and the worst part is they made the truth sound disappointing by comparison — when the truth is actually better, because it's real and it'll still be standing when the fantasy falls apart.

So here is the honest version. Not the brochure number. The real one, from men who are actually living it.

A clean, modern place of your own — not shabby, not a hovel, a place you'd be glad to have someone visit — runs somewhere in the range of a few hundred dollars a month. In a town like Dumaguete, plenty of men land a comfortable home for around four or five hundred, and less than that if they live simply. A full month — rent, food, power, getting around, a life — comes in for many of them somewhere between eight hundred and twelve hundred dollars, depending on where they settle and how they like to live. Two of you can eat a proper Western dinner

out, with drinks, for about what you'd have left as a tip back home — call it ten dollars.

Sit with what that arithmetic actually does. The same Social Security check, the same modest pension, that left you doing anxious math at 3 a.m. — the one that had you afraid of the mailbox — covers a life here with room left over to breathe. The fear isn't managed. It's *gone*. Not because you got richer. Because you moved the race to a track where the finish line is reachable.

Now I'm going to keep my promise and tell you the parts the videos skip, because if I don't, that sensible voice of yours is right to throw this book across the room.

It is not free, and it is not paradise. Costs vary — a tourist island or the capital will run you more; the deep province, less. You need a real cushion, not your last dollar, because things go wrong everywhere and an ocean is a long way from help. And there is one cost that genuinely matters, the one every honest man brought up unprompted: healthcare. Your Medicare does not cross the ocean with you, and I am not going to wave that away. It's the single most important thing to get right, and it gets its own chapter, told straight, a little further on. Anyone who tells you the medical side is nothing is the same person who told you you'd live like a king. Don't trust either sentence.

But here is the honest answer to the question that's kept you up — *can a man actually live with dignity on what I have, or is it just a story they tell online?*

Yes. Not like a king. Like a man who isn't afraid anymore. A man with his own clean place, food he likes, time that's his, and a little left at the end of the month instead of a little owed. That's not a story they tell online. It's arithmetic, and arithmetic doesn't care whether you believe it.

And it turns out that being a man who isn't afraid is worth a great deal more than being a king ever was.

CHAPTER 9

Go Where You're Valued

There's another phrase I kept hearing, shorter than the last one, and it carried more in it than it first appears.

Go where you're valued.

The men who said it usually meant it two ways at once, and they were both true.

The first way is the one we just did the math on. Your money is valued more. The dollar that buys you fear and a small life in one place buys you a full one somewhere else. That's not magic; it's just the honest difference between economies, and there's no shame in standing where what you have is finally worth something. You spent your whole life being told to earn more. Nobody ever told you that you could simply go stand where the money you already have counts for more. That's not cheating. That's just looking up from the race long enough to notice the track.

But the second way is the one that gets men in the chest, and it's the answer to a wound I named back in Chapter 3.

You are valued more.

Remember becoming invisible? The waiter looking through you, the world handling you faster, the slow demotion from somebody to nobody? The men I talked to walked into places where that simply runs the other way. Where a gray-haired man is not a relic to be managed but someone worth greeting, worth asking, worth making room for. Where age reads as something closer to standing than to expiration. Where a

young person calling you sir means *I respect you*, not *I've filed you under finished.*

I won't gild it, because the gilding is exactly what you'd be right to distrust. People are people everywhere. Nowhere on this earth is heaven, and a man who shows up expecting to be worshipped will make a fool of himself and deserve it. You'll be a guest. You'll have things to learn, a culture to respect, manners that aren't yours to pick up. The men who thrived were the ones who came humble — who understood they were being welcomed, not crowned. That matters, and we'll come back to the not-naive parts.

But strip all that away and the core of it stands: you have spent decades somewhere that had quietly stopped valuing you — your money, or your self, or by the end, both. And the simplest, least dramatic truth in this whole book is that you are allowed to take both somewhere they're worth more.

That's not running. That's not greed. That's a man, late in the game, deciding to go stand where he counts.

CHAPTER 10

The Price of Staying Where You're Not Wanted

By now someone in your life — or that cautious voice in your own head — has a word ready for everything I've just said. The word is *realistic.* As in, *let's be realistic.* As in, *that's a nice dream, but be realistic and stay put.*

I want to look hard at that word, because it does a lot of quiet damage.

Being realistic is good. I've spent this whole part trying to be exactly that — honest numbers, real caveats, the healthcare warning, the reminder that nowhere is heaven. Real realism is your friend. It's what keeps you from doing something foolish.

But there's a counterfeit version, and you've been handed it your whole life, and it isn't realism at all. It's resignation wearing realism's coat. It's the voice that uses "be realistic" to mean *lower what you let yourself want, and stay where you're not wanted.* That voice isn't protecting you. It's just afraid, and it would like you to be afraid too, because your staying makes its own staying feel less like a choice it never examined.

Here's what that counterfeit never makes you tally: the price of staying. Because there is one, and it comes due whether you choose it or not.

You pay it in money — the pile that's never enough, the fear that never lifts, the arithmetic at 3 a.m. that always comes up short in a place built to keep it that way. And you pay it in something harder to name and worse to lose — in dignity. In years of being looked past. In the slow quiet of a man learning to want less and less until he's forgotten he was

allowed to want anything at all. Staying isn't the safe option with no cost. It's just the option whose cost is easy to ignore because you're already paying it and have stopped feeling the deduction.

I met men who almost stayed "to be realistic." Who had the wish and the means and talked themselves out of it, year after year, in the name of sensible. The ones who finally went didn't regret going. Not one. The regret all ran the other way — toward the years they'd handed over to a counterfeit caution that called itself wisdom.

So here's where we've arrived, you and I. The lie about "enough" was the wall — the belief that you needed more than you'll ever have before you were allowed to rest. That wall is down now. You've seen the honest numbers. You know what rich in life means, and roughly what it costs, and that it's reachable on what's already in your hands.

Which leaves only one question worth asking, and it's a bigger one, and a lot of men never let themselves get this far: *all right — but is the way out actually real, for a man like me? At my age? With my fears?*

Yes. And in the next part I'm going to prove it — including by showing some of you a door you've already paid for, and don't yet know is yours.

PART 3

The Way Out

Permission plus proof it's possible. The veteran visa and the honest healthcare answer land here — dignity made concrete — and the part closes on the permission itself.

CHAPTER 11

Too Old, or Just Too Afraid?

Here's the question that stops more men than money ever did. Quieter than the money one, and heavier.

Isn't it too late for me?

Let me be honest with you before I'm encouraging, because you've earned honesty and you'd see through anything else. Sometimes the answer is yes, and I won't pretend otherwise. If you're genuinely frail, if your health needs more than a distant country can give, if you're at a stage where an ocean between you and familiar care is a real danger and not just a fear — then age and health are facts, not excuses, and a good life close to home may be the braver, wiser choice. I'm not in the business of talking sick men onto airplanes. Real limits are real.

But that's not most men who ask the question. For most men, "too late" isn't a fact at all. It's a feeling wearing a fact's clothes.

Because here's what I noticed. *Too old* is a respectable thing to say. Nobody argues with it. It closes the conversation cleanly and lets you off the hook with your dignity intact. *Too afraid* is the thing you'd never say out loud — it sounds like weakness, and you've spent a lifetime not being weak. So the fear quietly borrows your age as a disguise. It walks around in your body saying *I'm too old for this* when what it actually means is *I'm scared, and I don't know how to admit it at my age.*

I know this because of the men I talked to. They went at sixty. At sixty-eight. At seventy-four. I talked to men who started a whole new chapter in their late seventies and looked at me like I was slow for

asking whether they thought they'd left it too late. One of them — well into his seventies — told me the only thing he regretted about the timing was all the years he'd spent telling himself he was too old, back when he was a decade younger and even more able than he was the day he finally went. "I wasn't too old at sixty-five," he said. "I was too scared. I just had the good manners to call it old."

And I'll tell you what those men kept calling the thing that finally moved them. Not a plan. Not a windfall. *Courage.* The plain old-fashioned kind. They found a little, and then a little more, and the "too late" dissolved — because it was never made of years. It was made of fear, and fear can't survive being named.

I'm not telling you to be reckless. Courage isn't a leap in the dark, and the chapters right after this one are going to put real footing under your feet — a real door, an honest answer about your health, the people you love. So that when you do find your courage, you're not jumping blind. You're stepping somewhere solid.

But first, the honest question. Not *am I too old.* That one mostly answers itself, and for most of you the answer is no. The real one is: *how much longer am I going to let fear keep wearing my age as a costume?*

Let me show you the solid ground. Starting with a door some of you have already paid for.

CHAPTER 12

$1,500 and a Discharge Paper: The Door You Already Earned

Some of you reading this wore the uniform.

I want to slow down here, because this chapter is for you, and you specifically have an ache the other men don't quite have. You gave something. Years, maybe your body, maybe pieces of yourself you've never fully talked about. You came home. And somewhere along the way you got handed the same discarding as everybody else in this book — looked past, used up, told there wasn't quite enough for you at the end. Except yours came with a particular sting, the sting of *I served, and this is what it bought me.*

So let me tell you about a door. One that you, specifically, already paid for — in a currency a lot more expensive than money.

The country you're dreaming about has a residency visa, and most foreigners who want it have to put down a deposit somewhere in the range of fifteen to thirty thousand dollars to qualify. A real wall, for a lot of men. But there's a separate track — they call it the Expanded Courtesy version — and for a retired military veteran it works very differently. The deposit drops to around fifteen hundred dollars. Refundable, if you ever leave. And the thing that unlocks it is the honorable discharge sitting in a drawer somewhere in your house.

You don't need to have done twenty years. You don't have to be "retired" in the formal sense at all. Even disabled veterans have qualified. You'll need to show a modest monthly pension — on the

order of a thousand dollars — and there's a processing fee in roughly the same neighborhood as the deposit, and a token annual reporting fee that comes to about the price of a sandwich. That's the shape of it.

Sit with what that actually means for a second, because it's the closest thing to justice in this whole book.

The service your country quietly forgot — the thing it used up and set aside — is the exact thing that swings the door open to a place where you'll be valued. That discharge paper you maybe haven't looked at in years isn't a relic. It's a key. The proof that you gave, which the world stopped honoring, turns out to be worth something real after all — just somewhere else, in a country that takes one look at it and lowers the wall for you.

Now I'm going to do the thing I keep doing, because if I stop doing it you should stop trusting me. This is real, but it is not a promise I can make on your behalf. The whole program was overhauled in 2025; the figures and the fine print can shift; eligibility has specifics, and documents have to be done properly. It's run by the Philippine Retirement Authority, and before you count on a single number I've given you, you go and confirm the current rules for *your* situation — with the PRA directly, or a reputable specialist who does this for a living. Take this chapter not as the final word, but as the reason to go get the final word. A refundable fifteen hundred dollars and an afternoon of real homework is a small price to find out whether a door you already earned is standing open.

And if you didn't serve — if you're reading this and the uniform was never yours — the door is still there. It just costs more to open: the larger deposit, the one most foreigners put down. Still refundable. In many cases it can even convert into the place you'll live. The point of this chapter was never the discount. The point is that the door is real for

everyone, and for some of you it was paid for a long time ago, at a price you're still carrying.

Either way, there's one fear left that's louder than visas and deposits. Let's deal with it honestly.

CHAPTER 13

Telling the People You Love You're Leaving

Of every obstacle in this book, this is the one that stops the most good men. Not the money. Not the visa. Not even the fear of the unknown.

Telling the people you love.

You can already hear it. Your daughter's face. Your son going quiet on the phone. *You're going where? At your age? Have you lost your mind?* The fear that they'll be hurt. The fear that they'll fight you. And underneath, the worst one — the fear that maybe they're right, that wanting this makes you foolish or selfish.

So let me give you the single most useful thing I learned from the men who'd already been through this conversation.

When the people who love you push back, it is almost never rejection. It's love wearing the face of fear. Your kids aren't telling you your dream is stupid. They're telling you they're scared — of losing you, of you being far away if something goes wrong, of not being able to picture your life, of a world rearranging in a way they didn't choose. That fear deserves your patience, not your defensiveness. They're not the enemy of your plan. They're people who don't want to lose their dad.

Which means the conversation isn't an announcement. It's not you informing them of a verdict. It's you letting them see the man behind the decision. Tell them the truth — the real truth, the 3 a.m. truth. Tell them you've been tired in a way you never said. Tell them you've felt

invisible. Tell them you don't want to spend the years you have left bracing, and that you found a way not to, and that it matters to you more than you know how to say. Let them meet that man. Most kids have never seen him — they've only seen Dad being fine. The honesty does more than any argument could.

And then listen to their fear without handing them your life to hold. Those are two different things, and the whole trick is keeping them separate. You can take their worry seriously — answer it, plan around it, reassure them — without letting it become the reason you quietly fold the dream back into the drawer.

Here's the part that takes the sting out of it, and it's true: the distance is not what it was a generation ago. You are not sailing off the edge of the map, gone for good. There's a screen in your pocket that puts your grandkids' faces in front of you for free, any morning you like. They can come — and they will, once they see you happy somewhere with a spare room and a beach down the road. You can come back. The goal was never to leave them behind. The goal is to stop disappearing in place — to stop being the half-present, worn-down version of yourself — and become a man with an actual life, one his family is glad to watch him live.

I won't pretend it's clean. Some of them won't come around right away. One man told me his daughter barely spoke to him for months — and then she flew out, saw his life, saw him *lit up* in a way she hadn't seen since before her mother died, and cried at his kitchen table and said she got it now. Not everyone gets that ending. Some grief in this is real, and you don't get to skip it. But their discomfort is not the same thing as your wrongness. And a life lived entirely to keep everyone else comfortable was never actually a life — it was just a long apology.

You can love them and still go. You can go and still love them. Those two things were never opposites, no matter who told you they were.

CHAPTER 14

But What Happens When You're Sick?

Here's the question sitting underneath all the others. The one that actually wakes you. Money you can rationalize, loneliness you can talk yourself through, but this one has teeth:

All right — but what happens when I get sick?

It's the right question. It might be the most important one in the book, and any man who waves it away is lying to you the same way the "live like a king" crowd lied to you. So I'm going to answer it straight, the good and the hard both.

Start with the hard, because you need to hear it without a cushion: your Medicare does not come with you. It covers the United States and its territories, and nothing past them. Cross the ocean and it simply stops. There's no soft version of that sentence, and any salesman who gives you one is the last man you should trust.

Now the part the doom-mongers skip. There is a real system, and the men who did this right built a real plan around it.

As a resident, you can join the national health insurance — they call it PhilHealth — and it runs you somewhere around two hundred and sixty dollars a year. It helps. But it pays in fixed amounts and it will not cover everything, so nobody sensible leans on it alone. The men who did this well carried private or international health cover on top of it — figure roughly eight hundred to twelve hundred a year, depending on your age and what you want — or an HMO plan for the day-to-day. And the care itself? In the cities, the good private hospitals are

genuinely good. Filipino doctors and nurses are some of the best in the world — so good the rest of the world hires them away by the planeload. Out in the deep province it thins out, which is exactly why *where* you settle matters more once your health is part of the equation. And your medications: don't improvise. Have a real plan, get proper advice on what you take and how you'll keep taking it, and sort it before you go, not after.

Here's the honest bottom line. Healthcare abroad is not free, and it is not nothing. It's a cost and a plan — not a dealbreaker — *if* you take it as seriously as it deserves. The men who got hurt out there were almost always the ones who pretended this part away. The men who did fine treated it as the first thing to solve, not the last. There's even a quiet irony a lot of them found: planned for properly, the attention they could afford — the private room, the unhurried doctor, the actual nursing — was better and calmer than the rushed, ruinously expensive machine they'd left behind. But that's only true for the men who planned. It is a punishment for the men who didn't.

And once more, plainly: I am not your doctor and I am not your insurance agent. Your health is yours, your situation is specific, and you go get real, current, professional advice before you make a move. Let this chapter be the reason you build the plan — not the plan itself.

Because here's where that leaves us. With the money lie down, the "too late" fear named, the people you love brought into it honestly, and your health handled like the serious thing it is — the last wall isn't out there in the world anymore. There's only one left, and it's the one inside you.

CHAPTER 15

Nobody's Coming to Give You Permission

Look at what we've cleared, you and I.

The lie that you needed more than you'll ever have before you were allowed to rest — down. The fear that you're too old — named for what it mostly is. The conversation with the people you love — hard, but possible, and survivable. Your health — not a dealbreaker, just a plan you take seriously. One by one, the walls you thought were made of stone turned out to be made mostly of fear and bad information.

So what's actually left standing between you and the other life?

One thing. The permission.

Here is the truth I've been walking you toward this whole book, and it's the simplest and hardest one in it. You have spent your entire life waiting for someone to tell you it's okay. A boss to say you've done enough. A number to say you're safe now. The world to look up and say *good job, you've earned your rest.* Your own kids, maybe, to say *go on, Dad, we'll be fine.* You've been standing at a door your whole life with your hand on the knob, waiting for an authority to appear and sign off on you opening it.

Nobody's coming.

There's no official who's going to arrive and grant it. No form that gets stamped. No voice from the sky. And for one second that sounds like the bleakest sentence in the book — and then, if you let it land, it turns

into the most freeing one you'll ever read. Because if nobody's coming to give you permission, then it was never theirs to give. It was always yours. You've been waiting on a signature from a person who doesn't exist, when the only signature that was ever required was your own.

So here it is. Consider it given, by the only authority that counts.

You're allowed. Allowed to want more than the small, braced, invisible life you were handed. Allowed to spend the years you have left on purpose instead of in apology. Allowed to be tired of running and to set the race down. Allowed to go.

Now — permission is not a plane ticket bought tonight in a fit of feeling. I've spent three parts keeping you honest and I'm not going to drop it on the last page of this one. This isn't recklessness, and it isn't a dare. Permission is just the inner thing that has to come first — the moment you stop apologizing for wanting a life. Everything practical follows from it, in its own time, with your eyes open, the way the men in this book did it. The permission isn't the leap. It's the ground you finally stand on before you decide.

Every one of those men described the same hinge. Not the visa, not the money, not the flight. The moment they stopped waiting to be allowed. To a man, when I asked what they wished they'd done differently, almost none of them said *I wish I'd known sooner*. They knew. What they said was: *I wish I hadn't been so afraid of wanting it.*

Don't be that man at the end, doing the saddest arithmetic there is. You've had the permission all along. You were just waiting for someone else to hand it to you.

So take it. It's yours.

And let me show you, in the last part, what's actually waiting on the other side of the door — not the dream of it. The real, ordinary, quietly

astonishing life of it.

PART 4

Living It

Peace, belonging, the years you have left. The payoff — kept honest. Not paradise; a real life, on the other side of the door. This part closes the book.

CHAPTER 16

The Morning You Stop Bracing for the Day

There's a particular morning the men kept describing to me, and it was never a dramatic one. No sunrise over the water, no swelling music. Just an ordinary morning, a few months in, when they woke up and noticed something was missing.

They weren't bracing.

You might not know you do it. Most men don't, because they've done it so long it stopped registering as a thing — the low hum of dread you carry before your feet even hit the floor. The instant tally: the bills, the what-ifs, the things that might go wrong today, the clench in the chest that arrives before you're fully awake. You've run that program every morning for so many years that it feels like weather. Like just how mornings are.

It isn't. It's a weight. And the men I talked to described the strange, almost disorienting experience of waking up one day and realizing they'd set it down without noticing.

The day ahead wasn't a threat. It was just a day. There was coffee, and time that belonged to them, and sun, and nowhere they urgently had to be, and no math that had to be done before they could breathe. One man — a careful, undramatic sort, not given to big feelings — told me he sat on his step one morning with a cup of coffee, a few months after he'd moved, and noticed he felt *fine*. Unclenched. And it caught him so off guard, this absence of a thing he'd carried for thirty years, that he teared

up over it, and felt foolish, and then decided he didn't.

I'm not going to tell you every morning out there is golden, because that's the fantasy, and you didn't come this far with me to be handed a fantasy on the last lap. Bad days exist everywhere. You bring yourself with you wherever you go — your moods, your history, the rainy Tuesdays of being a person. The new place doesn't erase any of that.

But the baseline moves. The floor of dread lifts. And here's the thing the men understood that I want you to carry: the peace wasn't something they found out there, lying around waiting to be picked up. It was simply what was left over once they finally set the weight down. They didn't add happiness to their lives. They subtracted a thing they'd been carrying so long they'd mistaken it for themselves.

And once the bracing stops — once there's room in you again — you start to notice you have space for things you'd half-forgotten existed. People. A place. The feeling of being part of something. Which is where the rest of this gets good.

CHAPTER 17

More Than a Foreigner: Where You Finally Belong

Even the hopeful ones had this fear, and it's a fair one, so let's not duck it. *Won't I just be a foreigner over there? A permanent tourist? Lonely in a warmer place — same isolation, better weather?*

It's a real risk, and I'd be lying to call it anything else. I met the bubble men too. The ones who'd moved across the world and somehow recreated their loneliness intact — never learned a word of the language, never knew a neighbor's name, sat around with other exiles drinking and complaining about a country none of them had actually tried to join. That's a real way to fail at this, and it has nothing to do with the place. They brought the bubble with them.

So here's the difference, and it's not a secret, and it's not for sale. The men who actually belonged did specific, ordinary, human things. They learned some of the language — not fluently, just enough to show they were trying. They showed up to the neighbors. They respected the culture instead of importing their own and expecting everyone to adjust. They came as humble guests, not as men who'd arrived to be catered to. They gave before they took. And the place opened to them, because the place could tell the difference.

One man said something I've thought about since. He'd spent time in a couple of countries before he settled. And he said that in some places, no matter how long you stay, you're always a foreigner — held politely at arm's length forever. But where he ended up, if you came the right way, with the right heart, you got *folded in.* Not made into a local —

you'll never be that, and pretending otherwise is its own kind of foolishness. But woven into a street, a neighborhood, a web of people who genuinely made room for you.

The warmth is real. I want to say that plainly, because it's the truest thing the men reported and the thing the brochures somehow make sound fake by overselling it. People who have far less than you do will share what they have, will greet you, will fold you into the life of a place — *if* you arrive as someone worth folding in. That warmth responds to humility the way a plant responds to light. It does not respond to entitlement, and it shouldn't, and a man who shows up acting owed will get exactly the cold shoulder he's earning.

So no, you won't stop being a foreigner entirely. There'll always be ways you're from somewhere else, and that's fine — belonging was never about erasing where you came from. It was about being genuinely part of a place and a people who chose to make room for you. And that is available to you, at any age, in a way it stopped being available back home a long time ago.

You just have to come humble enough to earn it. And the men who did stopped being invisible the moment they did — because a man who belongs somewhere is, by definition, somebody.

CHAPTER 18

Somebody, Not Nobody

Back in Chapter 3, I told you about the day you became invisible. The waiter looking through you. The slow demotion from somebody to nobody. The world quietly reclassifying you as a finished man, easier to look past than to look at.

This is the chapter where that wound closes. So I want you to remember exactly how that felt, because what the men described is that same thing — running backward.

The man who'd become furniture in his own country became a person again. Greeted on the street. Asked his opinion, and then — this is the part that got them — actually listened to while he answered. Made room for. His gray hair read not as an expiration date but as something closer to standing, the mark of a man who'd lived and therefore knew things worth hearing. Young people calling him sir and meaning it as respect, not as a polite way of shelving him.

One man put it about as simply as it can be put. "I forgot," he said, "what it felt like to be a person people were glad to see." He'd had years of being tolerated, managed, processed. And then he was somewhere that was *glad* he existed. He said it rearranged something in him he hadn't known was broken.

I've insisted on this all the way through the book, and I'll insist on it one more time, because our whole culture treats it as vanity and it is not. The need to be seen is not vanity. It's close to the center of what makes a human being feel alive. To matter to the people around you. To be valued — not for what you can still produce, but simply for being a

man who's here and who counts. To get that back in your later years, after you'd quietly accepted you'd never have it again, is not a small thing. It might be the whole thing.

I won't oversell it, because you'd be right not to trust me if I did. It isn't adoration. You won't be a celebrity, and you shouldn't want to be. People are still people; some days are still ordinary; nobody's throwing a parade. It's just the plain, daily dignity of being treated as someone worth seeing.

But here's what I learned: after years of being invisible, plain ordinary dignity doesn't feel plain at all. It feels like stepping out of a cold shadow you'd forgotten you were standing in. It feels like sunlight on your face.

You go from nobody back to somebody. And being somebody again isn't only about how strangers treat you on the street. It's about the people who, over time, actually become yours.

CHAPTER 19

The People Who Show Up

Here's the deepest fear of all, the one underneath "will I be lonely." It's older and quieter than that. It's the fear of being alone at the end. Of there being no one to show up for you when it counts. Of doing the last stretch with nobody beside you.

I talked to a lot of men about this, and the thing they found is the thing I most want to leave you with.

They found people who show up. Neighbors who appear at the door with food when you're sick, without being asked. A web of ordinary daily connection — someone to share a meal with, someone who notices when you're not around, the small constant fabric of being known. Not transactions. Not arrangements. Just people, woven into your days, the way human beings were meant to live and the way a lot of us quietly stopped living somewhere back in the long lonely efficiency of modern life.

And there's a dignity in how a lot of these places treat their old that the men felt in their bones. Elders aren't shipped off and stored. They're kept close, kept in the middle of things, looked in on, sat with. For a man who'd been bracing himself for a lonely, managed old age, that wasn't a luxury. It was the thing he didn't know he'd been starving for.

Now I have to say something plainly, because I'd be failing you as a friend if I didn't, and this book has tried to be an honest friend.

A man who arrives lonely and aching is, I'll just say it, a man who can be used. You will be, to some, a wallet with a heartbeat — and a few of

those some will be very good at seeming like love. It's one of the saddest, most common stories out there, and the men it happens to are not stupid; they're hungry, and hunger makes a man easy to read. So go slow. Let the real thing grow at the speed real things grow. Don't mistake being needed for being loved — they can look identical for a while, and only time tells them apart. The men who built genuine lives over there were almost never the ones who arrived in a hurry to be rescued from their loneliness. They were the ones who let belonging build honestly, brick by ordinary brick, with their eyes open and their feet on the ground. Protect your heart and your savings both — not out of fear, but out of self-respect. You did not survive everything you've survived to be somebody's mark.

But don't let that caution close you off, either, because the genuine article is real and it's most of the story. Real friendship. Real community. Real people who, when the hard day comes, actually show up. That — more than the sun, more than the cheap rent, more than the beach — is the thing that made worn-out men look at me and say, without a trace of irony, *I'm rich in life now.*

The people who show up are the difference between living somewhere and belonging somewhere. And belonging, it turns out, was what you were really after the whole time.

CHAPTER 20

The Best Years Were the Ones You Almost Didn't Take

Let's go back to where we started.

A man at a kitchen table, 3 a.m., a weight on his chest he could never quite name. A marathon with no finish line. A quiet question under everything — *is this really all there is?* That was the man I kept meeting in the comment sections. It might be the man holding this book.

Now let me tell you about the men at the far end of it. The ones who'd been living the other life for years by the time I sat down with them. Because I went in expecting them to talk about beaches and bargains, and they mostly didn't. What they talked about, almost to a man, was the same astonished thing:

The best part of my life came after I thought my life was basically over.

These were men who'd believed, the way you might believe right now, that the good years were behind them — that what was left was just managing the decline. And instead they got a second chapter that turned out to be the best one. Not because everything was perfect. Some of them had hard stretches, losses, things that didn't go to plan, the ordinary griefs that follow a man across any ocean. I'm not selling you a happily-ever-after; I haven't sold you a fantasy yet and I'm not going to start on the last page.

But here is the honest tally, and I heard it over and over. Almost none of them wished they'd stayed. The regret, when there was any, ran the

other way — toward the years they'd wasted being afraid to go. And the men who'd gone *late* — who'd carried the wish for a decade, talked themselves out of it a hundred times, nearly let it die in the drawer, and then went anyway, almost too late — those men had a particular look when they talked about it. The look of someone who'd come within an inch of missing the best thing that ever happened to him, and knew it.

One of them said the thing I can't stop hearing. "I spent ten years calling it impossible," he said. "It wasn't impossible. It was just scary. And scary and impossible are not the same word, even though I treated them like they were for ten years I'll never get back."

So here we are, you and I, at the end of the book and the start of the part that's actually yours.

The permission is given — and it was always yours to give. The way out is real; I've shown you the honest numbers and the honest costs both. The walls turned out to be made of fear and bad information, and you've watched them come down one by one. And for some of you, the door was paid for a long time ago, in a currency you're still carrying.

What's left is the smallest thing and the largest. The first real step. Not a reckless leap — I've kept you honest this whole way and I won't quit now. A step. Go find out, for *your* life. Check the visa rules for your situation, properly, with someone who knows. Build the health plan like it's the serious thing it is. Have the honest conversation with the people you love, and bring them along. Take one true step toward finding out whether the life I've described is yours to claim — because the men who are rich in life now were, every one of them, once exactly where you are tonight.

You kept your end of the bargain. You did everything you were supposed to do. Now go and collect the life you were actually owed — not the one they promised you and never delivered, but the one you're

finally allowing yourself to build.

You're allowed to go.

You always were.