

Hello again!

Here's the third installment of my free bi-weekly newsletter, *Living the Dream*, for people who are committed to living and working every moment with joy and creativity. Subscription information is available below. As a recipient of this newsletter, you're entitled to a complimentary 30 minute sample coaching session. E-mail me at CoachSoph@aol.com to learn more. If you enjoy *Living the Dream*, then share the good energy! Please forward it to your family and friends. If you're interested in making a job change, getting creative, finding balance in your life, improving your relationships or needing plain old support for your day-to-day endeavors, I'm here to help. Take care, and all my best,

Sophronia

Living the Dream

One coach's stories and tips on how to live a fulfilling, creative life

by Sophronia Scott

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QUOTE OF NOTE

"You never know what is enough, until you know what is more than enough." --William Blake

BUILD YOUR SUPERRESERVES, BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE

Once upon a time, a hot cereal called Co-Co Wheats used to be a staple in my diet. Wait a minute, that's not quite right. Let me be honest here-- I LOVED Co-Co Wheats! Okay? Some of you might not know about this wonderful product so let me explain: it's chocolate-flavored cream of wheat. And it's not sold in every part of the country. I learned this years ago when I moved to New York City for my first job at Time Magazine, and couldn't find Co-Co Wheats in any store. I couldn't believe it! That bugged me like you wouldn't believe. It was a small thing but a nagging thing, a lack which

presented itself every time I opened the cupboard each morning for breakfast. But it's little things like that which take up a certain amount of brain space. For me, it was Co-Co Wheats. For you or anyone else, it might be their favorite coffee beans, or a special kind of aftershave. Every time you're confronted with the lack of that item, you're forced into a different frame of thinking.

Well, I soon fixed that. When I traveled home to Ohio for Christmas, I made a beeline for the neighborhood Kroger where I bought some ridiculous amount, maybe six or seven boxes of Co-Co Wheats. I just remember being really happy and telling the cashier, who I thought was looking at me kinda funny, "You don't understand! They don't have this stuff where I live!"

So I packed up my Co-Co Wheats, took them back to New York and then--nothing. Yes, nothing. I had my Co-Co Wheats, ate them when I wanted to, still loved them, but I stopped thinking about them. That part of my brain that was pre-occupied with my Co-Co Wheats shortage moved on to other things, like coming up with story ideas at work and learning my how to report so I could get promoted. It's not like I wasn't doing these things before, but now I had a little more brain power to devote to the effort, a little more focus and energy that wasn't being drained on something else.

I've recently learned that what I had done was build myself a superreserve, a kind of stockpile, if you will, that allowed me to dedicate my energy to other efforts. A person can have a superreserve of anything: space, time, love, money. The point is that when you have enough time and resources to respond to the opportunities that come to you, you have a superreserve. You have more than enough.

What does that actually do for you, having more than enough? Maybe it would help to think about what it would be like to have superreserves in some of the areas I just mentioned.

Space: I've been working on this one in recent days. I was struggling with the feeling of having too much stuff in my home. Books sat on tables because our bookshelves were full, my closets and drawers stuffed with clothing, beauty products (many of them giveaways from work) filled my bedroom and bathroom shelves. There was no room for anything new to come into our home, not even a gift from a friend! So last week I packed up boxes of books and gave them to our local library, packed up clothing and donated it to Goodwill, bagged the beauty products and gave them away. Now there are empty spaces everywhere--I have a superreserve, and I feel like my home can breathe. My husband even mentioned that the apartment feels different. It's pleasant to sit in the rooms which now have a more open feeling.

Time: Let's have a look at your calendar. We're all busy, we're all stressed to keep all our appointments. But did you really have to schedule all those items for one day, back-to-back? If one appointment goes over, the stress builds as you worry about being late for the ensuing engagements. What if you were to keep a few hours open, just unscheduled everyday? What would you do with it? How would it feel? I love keeping a day or two each week appointment-free. I use the time to go to the gym if I didn't work out that morning, or to fit in lunches or drinks with friends who have come to town unexpectedly, or to accept a date with a friend who suddenly has an extra ticket to a show. With open time, I can take advantage of these opportunities.

Love: We all worry about having enough love. But in the search for that big, perfect, one love, we undervalue the love that is already around us. What if we built up and truly relished the love of our friends and relatives? On Thanksgiving Day, I spent over an hour on the phone with my young nephew John in Ohio. We were both watching the Macy's Parade on TV and discussing the different floats and balloons. Things he said made me smile for the rest of the day, and I'm still feeling pumped up by having that kind of contact with him. This is the best kind of love to nurture: it is often unconditional, and can sustain us when other aspects of our lives are difficult. How would you feel if you built a superreserve of such love?

Money: Yes, the big one! How many of us have heard that advice that we should have enough money to cover at least six months of living expenses in the bank? For years, I took that suggestion with a grain of salt. What good is it having that kind of money just sitting around? Well here it is: If I spent just a fraction of brain power thinking about not having some hot cereal, what kind of energy was I spending thinking about not having enough money? How much do you spend? What would you do with that energy if you didn't have to think about how long you could survive if you lost your job? What would it feel like if you had that money in the bank? Pretty amazing, I'm sure. Isn't that feeling worth thinking twice before you pull out the credit card? Isn't it worth the effort to put away a little something for yourself from each check before you hit the bills?

The big payoff for all of this building of superreserves? Confidence! How great is that? You worry less about what life may bring because you are prepared for any instance. You have more energy for joy, for creativity, for doing what is really important to you! So how do you start building your superreserves? Here are some tips.

MY CHALLENGE TO YOU

--First, identify and remove whatever is draining away a reserve you already have. You don't want to throw your efforts into a void. It could be huge

interest rates on credit card debt, or unnecessary engagements that keep you from spending time with people you love. Zero in on it and get rid of it.

--Pick one area in which you can develop a big reserve in a week, and build one. This is just so you get the feeling what it means to have more than enough. It could be toilet paper, canned foods, or diapers. Choose something that nags you whenever you have to restock it.

--Get your personal needs met. Why is this important? Because when you're feeling needy, it's easy to overshop, overeat or do any other unhealthy activity that can drain the reserve you're trying to build.

--Get more space. Remove the clutter. You gotta have room for your reserves.

--Reduce your lifestyle. Sometimes your lifestyle can be too big and you don't even know it. It's a common problem here in New York City, where many young people go out with friends, drop close to \$100 on drinks in a single night, and not think a thing about it because it's what everyone else is doing. Are you working hard to support your life or a lifestyle? Think about simplifying. What changes can you make, large or small, in where you live and how you live? What will such changes do for you? If you're not sure what changes to make, listen to your body or, as some put it, your gut. It will tell you what things truly make you happy and what you can do without.

--Say "no" when you need to. Reserves of time can get eaten up by activities you've been talked into doing. Then you don't feel great doing them. That's a waste of both time and energy!

--Fix your money picture. Okay, here's the money thing again. I'll give you two choices: increase your income or decrease your expenses. But before you make your choice, think about this: which of these would give you less stress, and more enjoyment? However you decide to do it, shoot for saving at least ten percent of your current income. As Coach U. founder Thomas Leonard has said, "When you've accumulated a financial reserve...you're in control. It takes courage to be this aggressive about savings. The resulting reserve is worth it." I wholeheartedly agree.

A SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Building your superreserves will take a focused effort. You might be gung-ho about it in the beginning, but sustaining that focus becomes harder as "real life" intrudes on your plans. Having a good system of support will help you maintain your commitment to building your reserves. Tell your family and friends what you're doing and let them know how they can support your efforts. A coach can also be a key member of your system. Your coach can help you develop the goals that will mean the most to you, and help you stay focused on them until they are a reality. I like to think that a coach holds your dreams and visions for you when you begin to doubt yourself. Don't you owe it to yourself to have that kind of steady, sustaining support?

Would you like to experience how coaching would benefit you? The time to find out is NOW! As a recipient of *Living the Dream*, you're entitled to a free 30 minute sample session. Then tell your friends and forward this offer! E-mail me at CoachSoph@aol.com to sign up. So many people have already taken advantage of this chance and experienced tremendous value. I'd love for you to do the same! Talk to you soon,
Sophronia

Sophronia is a writer and a career and personal development coach affiliated with Coach U., the internationally renown institution of personal and professional mentorship. Her first novel, *My Brother's House*, will be published by St. Martin's Press in 2004.

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