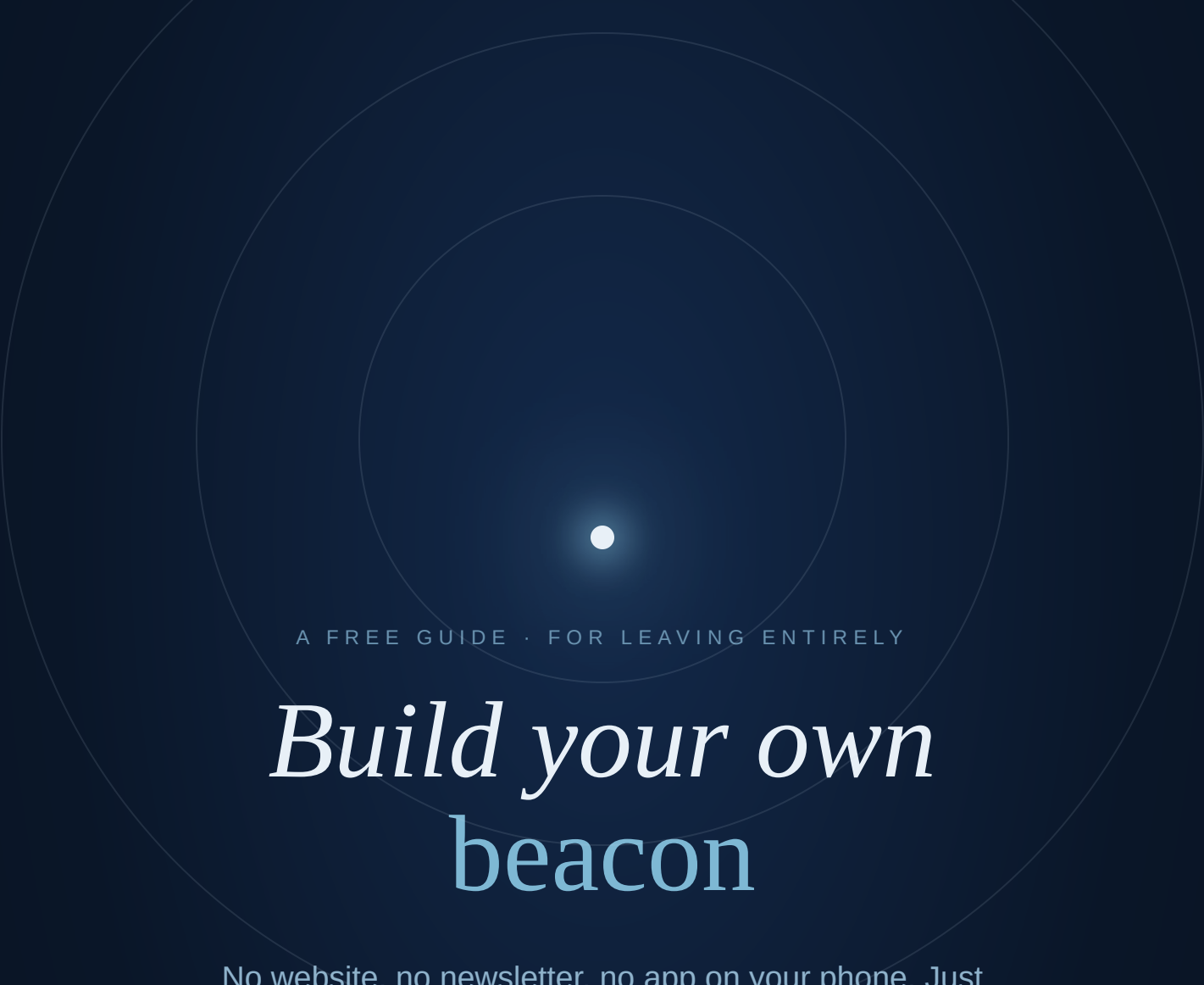




A FREE GUIDE · FOR LEAVING ENTIRELY

Build your own beacon

No website, no newsletter, no app on your phone. Just
a light left on, so the people who matter can still find
you.

BC GORDON

lifeinthemeadow.com/offline

A beacon for leaving entirely

You don't need a newsletter or a shop to leave social media well. You just need to tell people you're going, and leave them a way to find you in real life.

This guide is for people stepping off completely: no new website, nothing to promote. Your old accounts stay up, quiet, with a clear sign on the door, and once a month they send an automatic postcard inviting people to find you in the real world.

1

Your harbor

You, in person. Your porch, your table, your phone number, the places you already go.

2

Your sign

A bio line and one pinned farewell post that say you've stepped away and how people can still reach you.

3

Your postcard

An automatic monthly post: "This month I might have..." and an invitation to find you in the real world.

WHAT IT TAKES

Time	One afternoon, plus about 20 minutes once a year to refill the postcards
Cost	\$0. No website or domain needed
Tools	Your old accounts, and Buffer's free plan to send the postcards

A GOOD RULE

Don't delete the accounts. A deleted account is a dead end. A quiet account with a clear sign on the door is a beacon.

IS THIS THE RIGHT GUIDE?

Still writing a newsletter, running a shop or hosting events you want people to find? Use the companion guide, *Build your own beacon: keep building*, at lifeinthemeadow.com/offline.

Decide how people find you

Before you change a word online, decide what "find me" means. Pick one or two of these, the ones you'd actually want people to use:

- ☐ **In person:** "Come by the Saturday market," "I'm at the Thursday pickup game," or simply the places you already are.
- ☐ **A phone number or email** you're glad to share with people who already know you. Send it directly; don't post it publicly.
- ☐ **By mail:** a home or PO box address for people who'd rather write.
- ☐ **A standing thing:** a dinner, a circle, a game night that people can be invited to.

KEEP IT PRIVATE

Your accounts are public. Don't put your phone, email or address on them. The point is "if you know me, you know how to find me." The people who matter already can.

Before you go

- ☐ Save anything you want to keep: most platforms have a "download your data" option in settings.
- ☐ Collect the contacts that matter: ask a few people for their number or address before you leave.
- ☐ List every account you're leaving, with its login.

STEP TWO

Hang a sign on the door

Update every account's bio, then post and pin one farewell. These two things do most of the work.

Bio, if you're private

Living offline these days. If you know me, you know how to find me.

Bio, if your community is by invitation

Offline now. Our Thursday circle is invitation only. Ask me when you see me.

WORD IT WARMLY

"Ask me when you see me" reads as an invitation. "Members only" reads as a locked door.

Pinned farewell post

I'm stepping away from social media. I'd rather spend the time [with family / outside / making things / at the table]. I'm not disappearing, though. This account will stay up, and once a month it'll send a postcard on its own. Nobody will read messages here. If you know me, you know how to find me, and I'd love it if you did.

Pin it to the top of your profile. Then post nothing else by hand.

STEP THREE

Set up the monthly postcard



Posting "still here" on the platform you left would be backwards. Instead, once a month your old account sends a postcard: your town, the month, a seasonal "this month I might have..." line, and an invitation to find you in the real world.

It says plainly that it sent itself, so no one mistakes it for you still scrolling.

This postcard sent itself. This month I might have planted garlic, fixed something that squeaked, or read by the fire. Find me in the real world to join me.

The image

Make one simple card in any free design tool: a calm background, "A postcard from out here," your town and the month. Or use one favorite photo of your offline life and reuse it every month. Either way, the words carry the message.

Schedule ten months in one sitting

1. **Prepare Instagram.** In its settings, switch to a free Professional (Creator) account. Scheduled posting requires it.
2. **Create a free Buffer account** and connect your accounts (up to three). Instagram connects with its own login; no Facebook Page is needed.
3. **Create ten posts**, one per month, each with your card and that month's line from the next page.
4. **Schedule each for the 1st of its month**, in the morning. Buffer's free plan holds 10 queued posts per account.
5. **Set one reminder** in a paper calendar, nine months out: "Refill the postcards."

A year of "might have"

One line for each month, so every postcard fits its season. Swap in things that sound like your life. (These follow northern seasons; adjust for where you live.)

MONTH	THIS MONTH I MIGHT HAVE...
January	"This month I might have shoveled a neighbor's walk, read a seed catalog cover to cover, or made soup for someone."
February	"This month I might have hosted a game night, wrote someone a real letter, or learned a new recipe."
March	"This month I might have started seeds on a windowsill, tuned up a bike, or took a long walk in the thaw."
April	"This month I might have cleaned out the garage, planted peas, or sat on the porch for the first time this year."
May	"This month I might have planted the garden, wandered a farmers market, or played music with friends."
June	"This month I might have ate dinner outside, went fishing, or read in a hammock."
July	"This month I might have swam in a lake, grilled for a crowd, or watched fireworks with neighbors."
August	"This month I might have picked tomatoes, went camping, or stayed up for a meteor shower."
September	"This month I might have canned something, went to a county fair, or started a book club."
October	"This month I might have carved pumpkins, raked leaves into a pile, or sat around a bonfire."
November	"This month I might have planted garlic, fixed something that squeaked, or read by the fire."
December	"This month I might have baked for the neighbors, wrote cards by hand, or played board games with family."

STEP FOUR

Go dark, gently

- ☐ Publish and pin your farewell post on every account.
- ☐ Check that your first postcard is scheduled.
- ☐ Turn off all notifications.
- ☐ Log out, and delete the apps from your phone.
- ☐ Tell a few close people directly. They deserve more than a post.

STEP FIVE

Tend the light

Once a year, or whenever your calendar reminder comes up, log in to Buffer (not the social apps) for about 20 minutes and queue the next ten postcards. That's the whole job.

If you ever want to stop, delete the queue and leave the pinned farewell up. The sign on the door keeps working on its own.

COMING LATER

A shared "ring of beacons" is being planned: a directory, by town, of people who left a light on. Private lights will be able to join with no website at all, just a first name and a town.



*You don't owe the feed your attention. You don't owe
anyone a disappearance, either. Leave a light on, and go
live the life it's pointing to.*

— BC Gordon