

## ***Releasing Youth***

Releasing youth has been the theme of Freedom4U for 21 years. Often people ask what does it mean? Some even asked if we work with incarcerated youth? The answer is that we work with all youth to release them from things that hold back their ability to find their passion and purpose in life.

Overall, we allow our heart to respond to needs in our communities. We aim to help youth that are hidden or are limited in their life circumstances. We focus on removing barriers to finding their passion and purposes. We partner with parents to facilitate this discovery of growth and potential.

We desire for kids to not be limited by risky behavior, economic disadvantage, family limitations or trauma. We want to do our best to help them identify, their desires and dreams. You might say the goal is to release their inheritance. Often our dreams lie dormant with us, as life struggles, or other stressors limit the identification of our potential.

Some may also ask what is holding them back? What are they being released from? The answer is really the same things that hold adults back from reaching their potential. Fear, insecurity, being overly conscience of what other people might think, fitting in and not being different, listening to other peoples advice as their primary motivator versus listening to their own heart.

We thus focus on identifying the barriers and limitation's that hold someone captive. Firstly, we identify their talent, skills and passion. Then they build and develop their skills. Gradually, they begin to exercise confidence as they are being released.

Practically, this will be done through interviews, surveys and discussion. We then aim to provide a safe supervised environment where they can experience themselves initiating and then developing new abilities. This could be in creative arts, life skills, leadership, peer mentoring or serving others in the community.

It is very inspiring to see a young person go from being shy and timid to taking a risk trying out certain skills that they've identified within themselves. Over the months and years we get to watch them grow into a confident, capable and strong minded young adult.

They are being released into their destiny and purpose. We have seen hundreds of youth finding their calling in life and become at peace, confident, and in tune with their purpose.

Identifying, developing, expressing abilities leads to the experience of freedom. Freedom for the person who finds their passion and purpose.

*Dr. Greg Allen is a Licensed Therapist practicing in Palos Verdes Estates and San Pedro. ([drgregallen.com](http://drgregallen.com)). He is also the founder and director of Freedom4U, a non-profit that seeks to guide youth towards their life purpose and thereby reduce risky lifestyles. ([freedomcommunity.com](http://freedomcommunity.com)). He also directs the non-profit Hearts Respond, seeking to unite communities to improve LA Harbor families. ([heartsrespond.com](http://heartsrespond.com)).*

*Freedom4U & Hearts Respond provide after-school services for middle and high school students in San Pedro to socialize, do homework, receive tutoring and become leaders.*