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I am a child of the '80s, and having grown up in that era, I can't help but love some of the bands that came of age at that time. One of my favourite late-night pastimes is to get online with my friends Jennifer and Rum and look at old music videos together on YouTube.

What does this have to do with the theme of the issue? Bear with me.

One of the usual items on VJ Rum's playlist is Wham!'s "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go"—a light, upbeat hit that usually leads us to listen to more "mature" George Michael songs, like his 1990 hit, "Freedom". I can't remember all of the words to the song, but, like many fans, I can still hear the most important word ringing out loud and clear as George and the choir shout out "freedom" over and over.

I began to realize what a powerful word "free" can be. Even the overused sales pitch, *buy one, get one FREE* catches our attention. We want to be free—from harm, from debt, from stress. We like it when things are free. We seek freedom in all its forms—freedom to express ourselves, freedom to be ourselves, and, ultimately, freedom to live as we want.

Just a few keystrokes away from George Michael's videos on YouTube, lives Martin Luther King Junior, famously quoting the spiritual at the end of his historical speech: "free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, free at last". While some might call it crass to compare an artist who wants to be free from the constraints of an image fabricated by his record label with the exultation of a people oppressed for generations rejoicing in opportunities denied to them, I mean no disrespect. There is freedom to, and freedom from. I believe the idea of freedom, in every sense of the word, makes people want to sing out loud.



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Photo Credit: Myra Collins
(Yukon River, 2009; from right to left: Rosemary Ganley, Bev Assinck, Pat Parnall, Ali Farlow)

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