

Module 6: How to Quit (Gracefully)

It's pretty simple, you go to the Battle.net website and you cancel your account. And you're done!

Okay, that works to actually cancel your account, but this module is all about how to quit *gracefully*, without screwing over your guild members. While the focus is on someone quitting the game entirely, this advice can also be used if you just want to leave the guild and go elsewhere.

- Why Bother Quitting “Gracefully”?

If you've followed most of my advice in this guide, you have probably ended up with a guild that is very family-like in nature, regardless of your end goals or main guild activities. You probably have that guy you always try to somehow kill in a raid or instance (hi, Majik!) or that person with the worst computer in the guild who you tease for using an abacus to play the game (that was me for quite some time!). You have people who greet each other enthusiastically, you have people who are late to your guild events because they were busy playing another game together. Building these communities is one of the main goals of a massively multiplayer game. You play the game, you make friends, you make more friends, you continue to play with your friends.

If you have a community like the one I built in Apotheosis, like the one you'll probably end up with if you've followed the advice in this guide, you really have a *responsibility* to your guild members, your friends, when it comes to you leaving the game.

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Bear in mind that I'm not trying to stop you from quitting. Heck, as of this writing, I haven't played WoW for nearly nine months, barring thirty minutes on a trial account to test something out for **Module 2: How to Recruit**. I am not trying to prevent you from quitting. Your guild members, assuming they're adults, should not be trying to prevent you from quitting either. If they do, well, we'll talk about that in the Epic Bonus. In the meantime, let's assume that you want to quit, but you don't want to screw over people in your guild.

- Making the Decision

Deciding to quit the game is the first step. It's not an easy first step and it may take *months* for you to finally come to the realization that you're no longer enjoying yourself. For example, I first realized I wasn't really enjoying the direction the game was taking back in Firelands, in Tier 12. I knew I would continue with my guild through to the end of the expansion regardless, though, but when the time came for me to decide whether or not to continue into Mists of Pandaria, it took me about three months to actually make the decision. Even then, I put it off as long as I could. After having played the game for seven years, it was a difficult decision, but I knew I was doing what was best for me. Even more than that, since doubt did rear its ugly head on more than one occasion, I knew I couldn't do what I was doing for another two years. I just couldn't fathom the thought of three or four more tiers, more grinding for Valor Points, more criticisms and pushback, more petty arguments... I was tired. Since I knew I couldn't commit to another full expansion, I decided to step down before the expansion came out.

Once made, the decision needed to be communicated.

- Telling People

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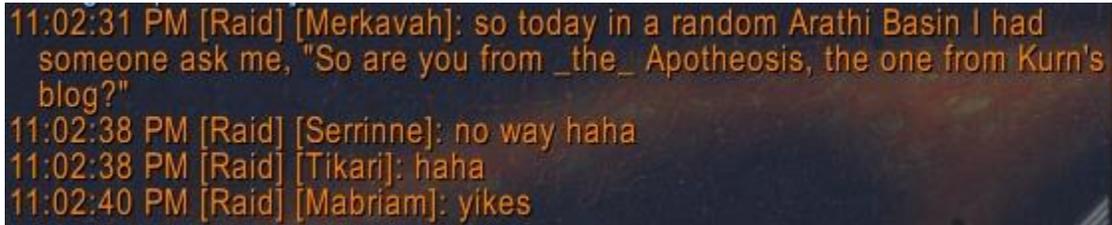
If you've read **Module 5: Expansion Planning**, you know that I collected everyone's responses about their Mists of Pandaria plans in June of 2012. When I released people's results is when I also made my announcement.

I started out with the officers. It was really difficult to tell them in particular because all of them had just let me know that they were ready, willing and able to return in the same roles for Mists of Pandaria. I felt pretty bad about just kind of dropping the bomb like that on them, when they were all probably feeling excited about the new expansion.

I wrote them a long post, in the officer forum, talking about my reasons for reforming Apotheosis for Cataclysm and how those reasons didn't really apply any longer and I wasn't thrilled with where the game was heading, so I was going to take my leave. It was a lot longer, so be glad I'm not inflicting that on you, dear reader.

Then, it was time to discuss a few things with the officers before telling the general population of the guild. The officers were a little concerned about how the guild would take it. While I consider myself at least somewhat modest, I was a bit worried about how they'd take the news, too, since I had really built the community from the ground up. People had applied to my guild because I'd played with them previously in Wrath of the Lich King. People had applied to my guild because we'd been guilded previously in the old version of Apotheosis from Burning Crusade. We had people applying to join because they read my blog or followed me on Twitter or listened to my podcast. While I had *a lot* of help over Cataclysm, I was there for just about every applicant interview and, honestly, "Apotheosis" became so synonymous with "Kurn" that this happened:

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11:02:31 PM [Raid] [Merkavah]: so today in a random Arathi Basin I had someone ask me, "So are you from _the_ Apotheosis, the one from Kurn's blog?"
11:02:38 PM [Raid] [Serrinne]: no way haha
11:02:38 PM [Raid] [Tikari]: haha
11:02:40 PM [Raid] [Mabriam]: yikes

So to say that I was a *little* worried that things might not go so well when I let people know I was going to leave was understandable, I think. On the other hand, I had worked hard to ensure that no one, not even me, was irreplaceable. I had faith in the guild's policies and workings, I had faith in the officers and I had faith in the guildies. But, as I'd learned over and over again during the expansion, people are unpredictable.

This was underlined by a note I got even before I had made my decision! We had a member who had included in their Mists of Pandaria intentions private message to me a bit about how if I chose not to continue in my current roles, that individual would reconsider sticking around. (Bold emphasis is mine.)

*I know you've been personally on the fence about continuing to raid, raid lead, or be a GM during MoP. [...] I find it difficult to believe that I'd enjoy raiding here if you were not occupying your current role(s). If you do decide to step down (which I hope will not be the case), then I'd appreciate as much warning as possible so I can re-evaluate my current plan of raiding with Apotheosis in MoP. **Just so I'm not dancing around the issue at all, a decision to devolve responsibility for the raiding aspects of the guild and related decisions to anyone else would cause me to look long and hard at staying here.***

On the one hand, it was nice to hear that this individual considered me pretty important for their own satisfaction in the guild. On the other, oh yeah, no pressure at all, right?! As it happens, they ended up staying despite my leaving, but I can only imagine that they spent some serious time reconsidering when they read the news.

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After discussing a few things with the officers, I let the guild members know with a long forum post explaining my reasons for stepping down. I also took great pains to reassure them. Here's part of what I wrote.

I did not want to sign up for another expansion without being certain that I could give you the time you all deserve. I didn't want to think "yeah, I can handle this" and then have to back out six months in. This guild deserves better; it deserves a stable leadership team with a guild master who is ready to handle the commitment.

I did sign up for the Annual Pass, so I'm stuck paying Blizzard at least until October 23rd, 2012. After that, I will likely let my subscription expire; I have little interest in playing without raiding and little interest in raiding without being part of Apotheosis. I will continue doing what I do, essentially, until we stop raiding for this expansion and I will be very active in helping with the transition of leadership, so don't worry, I'm not going anywhere yet! The officers and I are already working to make sure my responsibilities will be taken care of in the expansion.

I know that my upcoming departure will spawn a lot of questions. While some details are obviously up in the air, the fact remains that Apotheosis will continue to be a 25-man raiding guild in Mists of Pandaria. What we need to work out is who is going to step into which shoes, but by and large, things should mostly remain the same as they've gone through Cataclysm and I know that every single officer will welcome your feedback during this process.

In the forum post, as you can see, I reassured the guild that Apotheosis wasn't going to suddenly change, that things would very much be similar, that I would be there during the transition and that the officers and I were *already working* to make sure

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everything would be fine. I posted this on Thursday, June 14th, 2012, which was three and a half months before Mists of Pandaria would eventually come out. That gave everyone a lot of time to adjust to the new realities of the guild's leadership, it gave the officers a lot of time to figure out what on earth we were going to do and having so much time before the expansion meant all the *Is* could be dotted and all the *Ts* could be crossed.