



## Road Map to Self-Fulfillment

People ask me `how can I stick to my New Year's resolutions? How can I rekindle my dreams and make them happen?'

Every year, we see or hear of people who have accomplished amazing things - from publishing a book, singing in a rock band, building an empire or a small but gratifying and successful business, creating a sanctuary to help out others, and many more! Here is how it is done!

### Ask yourself: `Who am I and what my dream is?'

You are many things - a spouse or a parent or someone's beloved child or sibling or partner, a valued employee, an inspiring baker or singer or dancer, an athlete, a leader, a member of your community association or PTA, or a savvy event organizer for all occasions.

Perhaps there is another side of you that's itching to show itself, a passion or a dream;

- I don't know what I want
- I once had a dream but now the dream seems incompatible with my identity and life style
- I abandoned my dream to make ends meet
- I am overwhelmed with all the available choices out there
- I am spread so thin that it is hard to be 'selfish' and put my efforts toward something just for me
- I am scared to go after my dream
- Hobbies are indulgences that adults enjoy after all the "important stuff" is done.

#### Remember:

- Abandoning your dream is to let your aspiration and creativity slip away.
  - Over commitments make our dreams seem impractical.
  - Don't let your fears of failure or success (our life would change if you succeed) paralyze you.
  - When life is packed with "**Have-To-Do's**" and not enough "**Want-To-Do's**," you can end up with a constant, low-grade "Is this all there is?" kind of fever. Make each list and compare. Is there a balance?
- My dream is:** (say it loud, then write it!)
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## *Here's how to rekindle your passion.*

### **Step 1: Give yourself permission.**

When you think, "I should use my time for more productive things", you tell yourself that your dream activity does have a **purpose** - namely, to give you **happiness**, which will energize you as you tackle everyday tasks, from preparing dinner to leading a meeting at work.

### **Step 2: Get creative to find and make room for your dream.**

- Designate an area for your dream goal in the house, basement, garage, or an abandoned warehouse.
- Don't need a specific spot to practice your passion? Make an altar to your effort: Display items, pictures, statements, or anything that inspires you.

### **Step 3: Set a Date.**

- **Set a structure for your new goal/dream.** Construct a schedule and commit to it for 90 days.
- Decide how much time you will devote to your dream goal and block it off on a calendar.
- To commit to a new goal will need your commitment to release time and energy you devote to ordinary yearnings and bad habits.

## *Ask yourself: Am I ready to finally tackle the burden or bad habit that has been dragging me down?*

- \_\_\_ Hours/day I watch T.V./listen to radio/Internet Surfing/Games
- \_\_\_ Hours/day I spend snacking and over-eating (shopping and preparing included)
- \_\_\_ Hours/day I spend smoking (purchase time included)
- \_\_\_ Hours/day I spend on lottery/gambling/other bad habits:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_ Hours/day I spend gossiping and on unnecessary phone calls and Emails
- It is difficult to quit my bad habits and ordinary yearnings because I have tried and failed in the past.
- I am not sure if I am ready to do the hard work it requires to stop these yearnings.
- When you commit to ordinary yearnings and self-defeating thoughts, you investment energy and time that you could devote to "bigger" dreams.
- The longer you commit to bad habits, the more your self-esteem suffers.

### **Step 1: Make a vow.**

- List all the reasons why it is the right time to meet the challenge, and why it is not the right time.
- If you are ready, write a promise to yourself and place it where you will often see it.
- If it is not the time, decide when to revisit it and write it on your calendar.

## Step 2: Find your cheerleaders.

- You don't want to be left to your own devices when the going gets tough. Your support system of family, friends, a life coach or personal trainer can help you stay accountable.
- Stay in touch with your pep squad regularly via phone, email, in person for extra reinforcement or a status report.

## Step 3: Regularly Pat yourself on the back.

- Realize that working toward your dream goal is an accomplishment in and of itself.
- When there is a setback, don't beat yourself up and don't quit.
- Examine why you veered off course, figure out what you need to get on track, and remind yourself that you are the smart, capable CEO of your busy life - and you have all the tools you need to keep moving forward!
- Remember: You get to start over every day, every hour, every minute

## *Ask yourself: Am I ready to reach for something that I never thought I could accomplish?*

- My dream feels like a mountain I am not sure I can climb.
- I get tripped up by the 'how.'
- It is such a huge undertaking.
- I cannot see the end.
- I don't know how to start.

## *To jump right in, follow these steps:*

### Step 1: Hunt and gather.

- Read online, check out books, investigate courses, and talk to people who have done what you want to do.
- Don't know anyone with "connections"? Call associations on subject matters.

### Step 2: Tackle your fear.

- When you are embarking on something huge that you have never done before, it is completely natural to be scared or to shy away. You are out on a limb without a net and you don't know what the outcome will be.

**Keep your nerves under control by having an "anchor"** - a tangible reminder of your goal that you can refer to when you start to wonder why the heck you are putting yourself through all this.

That anchor could be **a mission statement** that you write in your journal or **an object** you keep on your desk, or **a significant person in your life** who encourages you.

### Step 3: Take baby steps.

- You don't need to know how to get from point A to point Z when you start.
- Write up a plan of small **To-Dos** that will take you to one milestone, and then keep repeating the process until you have reached your goal.
- **Multiple mini-goals also give you plenty of opportunities to celebrate your many accomplishments**, which will keep you motivated all along the way to the finish line!

## Step 4: Walk your walk.

***When hard work starts paying off, act like the expert you are by identifying yourself that way, which will help you take yourself seriously.***

- When introducing yourself, get in the habit of saying, "I'm a writer" or "I'm a chef".
- Order and carry business cards printed up with your new information.
- **Don't be wishy-washy about it:** Statements like "I'm trying to be an author" or "I'm sort of working on becoming a therapist" can mentally sabotage you, while treating yourself like a complete success reminds you that you will be one!

**Ask yourself: Is it time to cash in on a moneymaking idea that will make me feel more self-sufficient?**

Go back to work or open a bakery or switch careers or launch a Web-based business or...?

- On the surface, this dream has a lot to do with financial gain and security, but it really arises from a need to find a vocational career that has meaning for you - one where you're "work-self" and "true-self" can meet.
- It is not just what you do, but **who you get to be when you are doing it.**
- **The hardest part about this kind of goal is convincing yourself that you are qualified to take it on.**
- Start thinking of **an 'expert' as someone who knows how to get the answers rather than someone who knows the answer.**
- To become an expert, investigate steps you need to take to make your dream a reality - which will instantly empower you. Should you get a degree or advanced training? Does anyone else have a patent for your product idea? Information will help propel you forward.
- Seek any opportunity to experience what it takes. A volunteer or temporary involvement with a project will help you fine-tune your plan and determine your potential for success before you take big risks with your time or money.

**Ask yourself: Do I have the guts to go after the "just once" dream I have never dared to try?**

- Dreams represent deeper longings that might not even be on your radar. You may discover that achieving a goal was really a way to prove that you could fearlessly just be yourself.

*Here is how to accomplish your dream and reveal the hidden desire it can represent.*

**Step 1: Build in a "cannot flake out" clause.**

*Onetime, daring dreams take guts, so find a way to avoid chickening out.*

- Enlist a friend to join you in your adventure.
- Put down a non-refundable deposit.
- Turn your dream into a charity event or cause that you cannot get out of.
- The experience will teach you that you could be okay with being nervous and just relinquish control and go for it. After all, it will be one of the most amazing - and liberating - feelings you will ever experience!"

**Step 2: Use your skills.**

- Think of times when you used the mind-over-matter discipline your goal requires. If you went through childbirth or a tooth surgery, this is a piece of cake.
- Pitch your ideas and concepts to different groups to market your ideas and in turn, they may guide you to the right people or pick up your idea.

**Ask yourself, "Why am I doing this?"**

**Step 3: Uncover your deeper dream.**

*If it is just to have fun, great!*

*But under-the-surface reasons are worth exploring:*

- Your mountain-climbing dream might actually symbolize a desire to prove to yourself that you are brave enough to tackle another difficult obstacle in your life.
- Once you have figured out what is really behind your dream, you will be that much more motivated to give pursuits your all!
- Whatever your goal, you have already got the tools to stop dreaming and start doing.
- Once you have cut through all the baloney and the beliefs that have held you back, there is no limit to what you can achieve.
- The Bonus: Being true to yourself by following your heart's desire benefits not only you, but also the people you love.
- That is because giving to yourself recharges your spirit in turn enables you to give more of yourself as a spouse, a parent, a colleague, a leader and a friend.