
Living Your Dreams

LIVING YOUR DREAMS

by Kathleen Gage

What is the difference between people who are the doers in life and those that are the sayers? What about those who live life to the fullest and the ones who merely survive? Why is it some people appear to be motivated all the time, moving towards their goals and life's dreams and others are miserable and discontent no matter what is going on in their life? What is the difference between someone who is a victim and someone who sees life as an opportunity on a daily basis?

Perception. It's that simple. Perception of any given situation that may happen to you. The truth is that it's not what happens in life, it's our perception of a situation that matters. In today's economy, it is quite likely that anyone who works for a large corporation is subjected to the threat of layoffs, cutbacks, downsizing, right-sizing, the company going through an acquisition by a competitor and on and on. During a recent situation, I had the opportunity to witness the reactions of a couple of hundred people who went through a layoff of 15% of the workforce. The reactions were quite varied. For some the cutback came as a complete surprise. These people reacted in a way that indicated they had absolutely no idea this was going to take place. They were lost and felt very alone. Others experienced great anger. How could upper management have done this to them? They took no responsibility for the fact that each person in the company in some way, whether directly or indirectly had something to do with the current situation. Many of these people became immobilized for some period of time, regardless of whether they were the ones getting laid off or they were still employed by the company. Still others

saw the situation as an opportunity. Again, regardless of whether they were let go or invited to stay.

The circumstances that are created through our thoughts will determine so much of the outcome of any given situation. If we are not aware of this fact, then many things can and do happen in which we find blame and fault in others and don't understand why our personal situation is in its present state. In order to change what is happening around us and our reality it is essential that we change internally. Change the way we think, the way we perceive, the way we talk. Even to the point of changing the people we chose to associate with. Yes, chose.

For many people it is easier to blame all the outside forces for any given situation, rather than be willing to take any responsibility. That can be true of a job situation, relationship, health, wealth, happiness, or any thing else we may hold dear to our heart.

It is essential to find out what our values in life are. In getting clear on what our values are we are in a better position to get clear on our goals. And by having clarity on our goals we are more able to live life to the fullest and not be immobilized by life's happenings. It is important to decide what our goals are, not the goals of our partner, husband, wife, mother, father, boss or co-worker. By designing our goals by another's values we are setting ourselves up for unhappiness.

Once you determine what your goals are it is important to set a realistic time frame in which to accomplish them. Not too quickly and not too slowly. It is amazing how many people will set a goal that doesn't allow any time for growth. What would happen if you decided you wanted to have a beautiful flower garden and one day you prepared

the soil and planted the seeds. The following day you go out to the area you prepared and notice that no flowers have grown. Does that mean you did not accomplish your goal of a beautiful flower garden? Not at all. It simply means that more time is necessary for nature to take its course. In planting your garden did you pull out the old weeds? Did you fertilize and water the ground? Did you remove any unwanted debris and rocks. The secret to accomplishing our goals is to do something every day that gets us closer to the end result. Doing the footwork. Continuing to take action even when it appears we may not be getting any closer to what we really want. And paying attention to the results you are getting.

You must stay committed to the end result. I used to think that if I thought about something long enough it would miraculously happen. No work, no effort. Just think about it and people would come knocking at my door. Needless to say there was a lot of thinking and fantasizing I did and not too many of my goals became a reality. What I had to learn to do was to put my thoughts into action. Granted, thinking about your goals is a very key tool to use in accomplishing what you want, and yet, there has to be more than just thinking. Do the footwork.

The interesting thing is that things may not always work out exactly as you may have expected them to. They may turn out better. A lot of times we can think we know what is best for us in reaching our dreams, but there seems to be some greater force that knows what is really the best for us. If our intentions are clean and good, great things will come. It is the journey to a destination that makes the experiencing either fulfilling or empty, not necessarily the end result.

A key to happiness in fulfilling our dreams is to thoroughly enjoy the process along the way. That is what is often times referred to as life. Someone can

be so focused on just getting to the finish line that they miss everything great and wonderful along the way.

An expression I have used for some time is "an opportunity for growth". For many years of my life most things that were uncomfortable or took effort were a problem. I wanted everything to be easy. Through reading, studying and talking with others, I changed the word problem to challenge. After more reading, studying and talking with others the word challenge has been replaced with opportunity for growth. The words we use have a direct effect on the experience we have. Think about it. Which would you rather have, a **PROBLEM** or **AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH?**

Granted, there are more than enough people who are more than willing to let me know that we human beings have problems. There are problems at work, problems with relationships, problems with society. How different these everyday experiences would be if there was one distinction in the way we viewed any given situation. I'm not suggesting to invalidate the importance of events as they happen. What I do know is that my perspective in life changed drastically when I changed from having problems to having opportunities for growth.

When it comes to achieving your goals, you will have many opportunities for growth. Each opportunity will get you closer to where you want to be. And by viewing things in this way you will enjoy the experience far more than if everything was a problem. And when you are enjoying the process people seem to want to help you succeed as opposed to when you are miserable and people want to avoid you. No matter how independent a person thinks they are, we all need the support of others in order to accomplish what we really want in life.

You may have to ask people for things in order to accomplish your goal. Let's say you want to do a certain job for your company. So you ask your boss. Well, your boss may not have the same vision you do and says it is not possible at this time. Your boss indicates that there are other, more important tasks to be done. So you do as you have been requested, still holding your own goals in mind. A reasonable period of time passes and you again ask for what you want. Again you are told that now is not the time. Does that really mean that now is not the time. Not at all. If you are clear on your goals and purpose, it is up to you to think of other ways to accomplish what you want. It could mean asking someone else within the company, which may have political ramifications. Or even applying for another job within the company. Or it may mean it will be necessary to move toward your goal outside of the company you presently work for, whether it be in the evenings, finding a company that would be more conducive to your goals or even starting your own business. I can guarantee you, that if you are clear on what you want and are willing to put time and effort into accomplishing what you want, you will eventually get what you want. And the more you are focused on what you want and the more time and effort you are willing to put into it, the sooner you will accomplish your dreams.

If someone appears to be standing in the way of what you want let that work to your benefit. The most successful people in the world are not the kind of people who take no for an answer as a defeat. They take it as a challenge or even an opportunity. Instead of saying, "Why isn't this working out the way I want it to?" They will ask, "What do I need to do to move closer to my goal?"

There are many ways to accomplish our goals. The first step is to think about it. Nothing can happen in our lives without the thought occurring. Once we have the thought, the next step is to refine the

thought. Develop it. A very effective way to do this is to write it down. Write down exactly what it is you want to do. To some people this may seem like an unnecessary step, and yet, it is one of the most powerful tools available in getting closer to what it is you do want. The process of writing down what you want allows you to get very clear on exactly what it is you are striving for. Without writing down what you want your vision can be somewhat clear. Also, the process of writing down what you want validates the fact that you want it. When you have taken the time to put pen to paper, or as is the case quite often today, fingers to keyboard, you are opening the channels for the creation of your desires. And the more detailed you are in your description the more opportunity you will have in obtaining exactly what you want.

Desire is another extremely important part of obtaining your goals. It is absolutely necessary that you have a burning desire to obtain your true hearts yearning with as much passion as is humanly possible. It is not enough to say, "It would be nice to have a new home" or "Maybe someday I'll have a new home." You must have complete conviction behind what you want. "I WILL have a new home! I will do whatever is necessary in order to obtain the home of my dreams."

And then you must visualize yourself in possession of the very thing you desire. Each day you must see yourself with what it is you want. I was talking with a woman who is an avid runner. She has been running for quite a few years. At one point in her life she was not athletic. She was somewhat overweight and did not have much energy. She set a goal for herself to get in the best shape she could. The first step in her goal was to think about what she wanted. She then wrote down what she wanted to achieve. As a result of this process she found that walking was a good way to start her on her road to success of physical health. As time progressed she started running. Now it is a habit to

her and is in very excellent health. She did the first few steps in accomplishing her goal. Now each time she gets ready to run, the first thing she does is to get a mental picture of herself running. Then she must put on the appropriate clothing and shoes to run in. The she puts one foot in front of the other and moves each foot faster and faster until she is running.

This is the process that is necessary for obtaining any goal. You must think it, desire it, prepare for it, put one foot in front of the other (do the foot work) and then run towards your success. The footwork must continue until you obtain your goal. Half measures will not work. You must put your all into what you want.

The best way to set goals is to have a balance of what you want. There are physical goals, material goals, emotional goals and spiritual goals that you can set for yourself. There is nothing more exciting in life than to watch someone take what was originally a thought that they turned into a goal that they turned into a reality.

So, dream your dreams. Set your goals. Let the magic of determination and commitment materialize before your very eyes.

“Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all.”

Which will yours be?

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