

The Little Guide To Dreaming **BIG**

Book Sample

Part 1: Six Steps to Success

Deciding to take your dreams seriously is a lot easier said than done. Some people don't even know what exactly their dreams are at the beginning, they just know something needs to change. But no matter where you are in the process, this guide is designed to see you through with as little pain as possible.

There are two basic phases to achieving your dreams: the *discovery phase*, and the *action phase*. In Part 1 we'll address the discovery phase, which covers the research and planning necessary for success.

This section is divided into six steps. We'll uncover your guiding values as a way to really zero in on what your big dreams are. We'll get specific about the cost of your dreams in money and time, and how to free up more of both. And we'll create a plan of attack that eliminates confusion and lets you know exactly what needs to be done next to accomplish them.

Step 1: Discover your guiding values

When you think of values, you might think about being honest, or kind, or hard-working—ideals that we've all been taught to strive for. But this isn't about self-improvement: this is a question of who you *are*.

Despite the fact that we should be more familiar with ourselves than anyone else, this is still an uncomfortable topic for most people. It takes a lot of guts to look inward at what makes us tick, because we compare ourselves to the ideal of who we *think* we should be and spot every fault and failure. No one wants to feel judged like that, and so we don't like looking too deeply at ourselves. But it's vital to figure this out early. It's the foundation that a good life is built on.

Task: In the appendix of this guide is a chart of values. Find a private place where you won't be interrupted while you mull over which ones best fit you. This is a deeply personal process and no one else needs to know what you come up with if you don't want to share.

On your first pass through the list you'll probably end up with a lot of values that are derivatives of each other, but one will stand out as the truest fit. To really hone in on what's most important, you'll want to narrow it down to no more than seven or eight. Remember that you're looking for the ones that really click, not just ones that your family would be proud of or that would make you look the best to your coworkers.

Set the list aside and come back to it a few times over the course of a week to ensure your mood on one particular day doesn't make the decisions for you. It's possible that as you do the rest of the work in this book you'll end up refining your values as you learn more about yourself, but unlike goals and dreams they won't change on a regular basis. If it seems like they do, then you haven't gotten to the core and have some reflecting to do.

When you're finished, think about ways you can bring your life closer in alignment with your values. When we live according to our values, we naturally feel satisfied at the end of the day even if our circumstances aren't ideal.

The person who values Love highly but doesn't have a partner right now will be happier if they

strengthen the platonic relationships in their life in the meantime—not all love is romantic. Someone who values Diversity might feel trapped in a job that never varies from day to day, but while they look for a better fit they can change up the routine at home to increase their sense of well-being. One of my values is Adventure, and while I was saving up the funds to travel full-time I took weekend trips to fulfill that desire.

Step 2: Remember how to dream

A lot of dissatisfaction arises from the gap between what a person holds dear (their values) and what they spend the majority of their time doing (their circumstances). It's time to change that. This is a fun step: we're going to discover what you want from your life, your dreams for the future. The goal here is to bring our personal and professional lives more in line with who we are. For many people, this means dropping 'earning more money' as the priority in life, unless one of your values happens to be money-oriented.

As children, we have a lot of dreams. As we grow up, we slowly lose sight of them as we learn that one must be practical to survive in the real world. Following your heart and doing what you love is seen as a nice idea in theory, but not something that's attainable for the average person. Except, there is no rule. The only person whose permission you need to change your life is your own.

Task: It's time to take a page from childhood and remember how to dream. Take out a piece of paper or open your word processor and ask yourself what you've always wanted to do, what you want to be remembered for, and what gifts you have that you want to share with the world. Make a list of what comes to mind.

Don't be afraid of putting too many things down. This is the start of what's commonly called a bucket list, or a dream list, and it should be full of goals and dreams—enough to last a lifetime. Maybe the places you've always wanted to visit, hobbies you've been wanting to take up, the foods you've always wanted to cook.

Forget about what you think is realistic and let your heart be your guide. For some people, just learning that it's okay to dream is enough to get them started on dreaming big, but for others it may take a little time. Maybe you want to change careers, create a community with far-reaching aims, or become fluent in another language. For now, don't worry about the *how*. That will come later.

If you find you're having trouble writing down anything other than simple dreams, try writing your list somewhere away from home, or just after finishing an activity that inspires you. Get your creativity flowing and unblock your sub-conscious where you've probably already given some thought to what you really want to do with your life but told yourself you couldn't or that it wouldn't be proper. The value of a dream should be based on how good it makes you feel, not how socially acceptable it is or whether it has an outward purpose. Think of *internal* value. And yes, do get in touch with your inner child! It's possible that some of the stuff you dreamed of back then are things you still want deep down. Nothing is too small, big, or crazy to make it onto this list.

While you're working on it, give some thought to dreams that help others as well as yourself. A lot of times, people don't think about giving back until after they've attained some measure of success. This is fine, but working contribution in at the start of the process grants the opportunity to integrate it directly with your dreams. Chances are you have some gift, skill, or knowledge that you hold dear, and finding a way to share it would not only make a difference in the life of someone else, but improve yours as well. Contribution feels *good*, especially when you do it from the kindness of your heart and expect nothing in return.

Unlike your guiding values, your dreams will and should change regularly. Your dream list will evolve over time as new interests arise to replace old and completed ones, but do check for a correlation between dreams and values. That's a good sign that they are more than a whim and something you truly want. If you find you have a lot of items on your dream list that aren't related to your values, stop and take stock. You might be tempted to put things on your list like those status symbols mentioned in the introduction, or goals that will make you look good

to others, but the happiness gained won't be as lasting and meaningful.

Once you have a handle on your list, don't wait to get started. It's likely some of the simpler dreams are achievable right now. On the road to great things, small accomplishments in the beginning can have a bigger impact than the big ones we eventually get to, because the small stuff changes our outlook and gets us thinking about life in a different way.

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