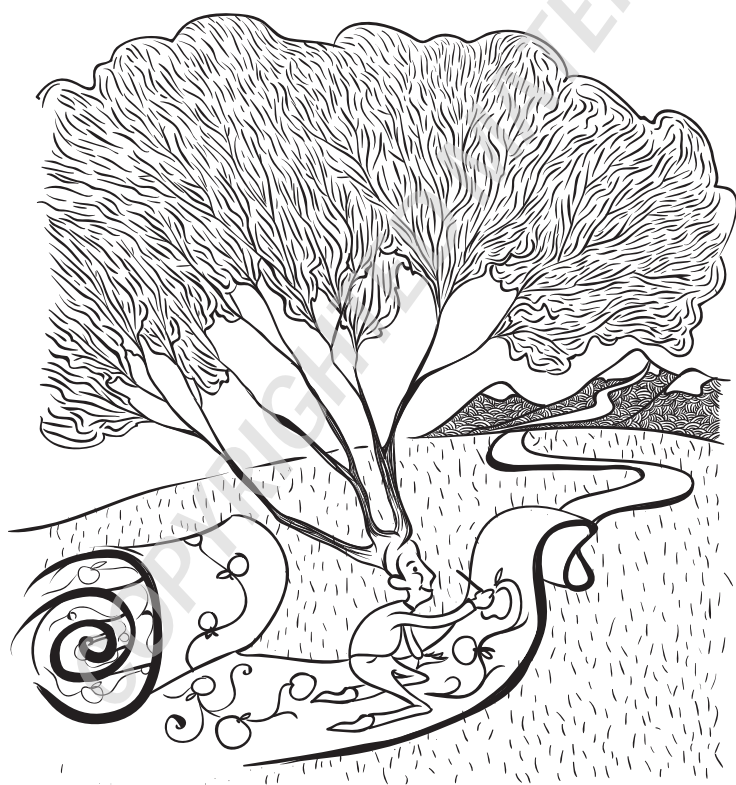


1

DREAM





“

*All our dreams can come true – if
we have the courage to pursue
them.*

Walt Disney

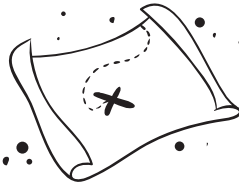


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The Goal

What do people like Steve Jobs, Mahatma Gandhi and Walt Disney have in common? As well as being icons of their generations, they were passionate, relentless dreamers. And they had a habit of turning dreams into reality. Even when a dream became reality, they did not stop there. They constantly refined dreams to make them better and closer to what they really wanted, and they kept dreaming new dreams to pursue and achieve.



The key element that gave them a shot at being successful was their dreams. In this chapter we will encourage you to dream more and help you become a focused dreamer. You too can turn your most important dreams into reality, just like Steve Jobs, Mahatma Gandhi and Walt Disney. Feeling excited?

Dreams Are Diverse

Depending on who you ask about dreams, from psychology professors to fortune tellers to the people you know, you will end up with different answers. What everyone will agree, is that dreams are diverse and can be split into many categories, based on multiple criteria. Here are some of the most common types of dreams:

- After a demanding day, we dream about what we've done, rehashing the events of the day and tying up loose ends.
- Dreams can be recurring, telling the same story over and over again. Or they may simply continue the same story they started a while ago, as if we have a story teller in our head, trying to tell us something important.



- Sometimes we dream about our past and what we could have done differently.
- We dream about things we would like to have.
- Some of us dream about colours, fantasy worlds and characters we have never met in our lives.
- Sometimes we dream about breakthrough changes that would make for an amazing life or about disasters that would turn our life into a living hell.

Looking at all these types of dreams, one can't help wonder: what do you do with them? Dreams are like a library of apparently crazy ideas of what you can do with your life. Dreaming is great and can fuel your life with inspiration on what to do next. But which dreams really matter? Which dreams are worth focusing on?

The Dreams that Matter

First of all, the dreams that will change your life for the better are always looking forward, to what can be, not what was. If some of your dreams are about changing the past, then simply don't dwell on them. They are not dreams that will help you change and become a successful person. Your future is what matters, not your past. The future is what energizes people, not the past. Thomas Jefferson once smartly said: *"I like dreams of the future better than the history of the past."*

Only a few dreams are really important. And, if you can't point them out with ease, then take some time to think and ask yourself:

- Which dreams are about things I would like to do?
- Which dreams are about what I would like to be as a professional?



- Which dreams are about who I would like to become as a person?
- Which dreams are about bringing change to the world around me?
- Which of them are the most reoccurring – older ideas and stories that have nagged me for some time?
- Which dreams, if achieved, would make me happiest?

Briefly write down the list of your dreams. While doing this, you will notice that:

- You dream a lot more than you think and that's great. Don't stop dreaming!
- Some dreams have a common theme. For example, a dream about becoming a different person may mean that you must choose a different profession and also do certain things that will help along the road – all of which you might have dreamed already.
- Some dreams are very big in the sense that they are about huge changes that seem almost impossible to turn into reality.
- Some dreams are hard to define in detail. They are strong, always sitting in the back of your head, but feel generic and hard to pin down to specifics.

While reading the list, your gut will start to tell you which dreams are important and which are not. If any of the dreams on the list don't stir up any emotions and leave you pretty much indifferent, then you just gave yourself the OK to remove them from the list. If some dreams feel scary, too big to be true and yet really exciting, that's great. Keep them on your list!

There will be dreams which fire your imagination and make it go places, adding more details to the dream, making it bigger



or better. Make sure you keep these dreams, no matter how big or how small they are.

Now that you have your list of dreams and ideas worth pursuing, you need to pick one and stick with it for a while. This book will help you achieve challenging dreams, bigger than the ones you've accomplished so far. However, if you don't feel like starting big, that's OK. It is important that you start somewhere. If you are feeling scared of starting to work on your big dreams, simply choose one which feels doable, less complicated and daunting. Once you've gone through this book and made that dream a reality, your courage will grow and you will feel like taking on bigger challenges and turning them into reality.

Stick to One Dream

People are unique beings. Some people have the same dream over and over while others have too many and switch between them with incredible ease. Other people have a few constant dreams, which stay with them for a long time.



You might argue that some people work on more than one dream at a time and that's true. If you do the same, that's great and we encourage you to keep doing that. However, to make sure you understand the model presented in this book and you achieve more than in the past, we encourage you to pick one dream and use it to experiment and learn our model. Do not worry about applying the model we propose to all of today's important dreams. Once you get the first nailed down, you can experiment and apply the model to more than one dream, and work on several in parallel.



If you are the type of person who leaps easily from dream to dream and doesn't really stick to one, we gently suggest that you pick an important dream you've identified earlier and do your best to stick to it while going through this book. As you will learn later, it is OK to refine the details of a dream, add more detail to it and make it even better. It is not OK to switch to another dream midway, or to change the direction of a dream in a dramatic way, unless it is the result of what you have learnt or you need to adapt to a changing context.

Constantly switching between dreams will end up with you achieving nothing. Therefore, try to be as disciplined as you can and stick to one dream for the whole duration of the book. If you choose your dream carefully and apply the model we are sharing, you will be successful. You will get into the habit of choosing one dream at a time and sticking to it until it gets done.

People who are widely successful might not be disciplined in the way they act and make their dreams a reality, but they are stubborn when it comes to their dreams. They stick to them and don't stop until they become reality. Do your best and try to be as stubborn as they are.

Dream the Dream

Now you are really getting close to actually working on the dream you have chosen. Before you do that, you need to do a bit more dreaming. Take that dream and think about it as often as you can. Try to imagine, feel, taste and smell the outcome. Do it until you can really visualize the dream and its outcome. This is very helpful especially with big dreams, which are usually a bit generic and not well defined.



Moving away from a generic dream of “I want to be rich”, to a well-defined dream of “I want to create my own company that makes 300,000 US dollars a year, by creating customized office furniture and equipment for companies with unusual work environments” makes a huge difference in having a shot at being successful. It is really important to know what your life will be like when you achieve this dream; understand what the outcome you desire is.

Tackling Big Dreams

Depending on your context and the type of person you are, you might choose a very big dream you want to accomplish. The kind of dream that would take years of work but, when done, would be the most amazing thing in your life. Some ambitious examples are: creating a company which earns its first million in three years, moving to a different continent and starting a completely new life, getting accepted on an MBA programme of a famous foreign university, becoming a famous scientist, movie actor or any kind of star, etc. It doesn't matter what dream it is, if it takes you more than a year to do it, then it is a big dream which you should handle differently than dreams which take a few months to accomplish.

When you focus on such a big dream, try to think about smaller elements which, when placed together, take you to where you want to be. Call them your “must do” mini-dreams, the dots that, when connected, will make your big dream come true. Let's take the example we mentioned earlier: “I want to create my own company that makes 300,000 US dollars a year, by creating customized office furniture and equipment for companies with unusual work environments”. This is a very



ambitious dream which (for most people) would take more than a year to complete. The dream is composed of at least three smaller dreams: the one of creating the company, the dream of starting the company in a successful way and the dream of getting to the yearly profit of 300,000 US dollars. Identifying these big elements that make the big dream is very important, as you need to choose the first element as being your first dream, work on getting it accomplished, then work on the second dream and finally, once the second is in place, on the third and ultimate dream.

Why do we recommend this approach for tackling big dreams? Because big dreams are scary, complex and hard to make a reality. Just thinking about them can make you paralyzed and unable to start. Identifying smaller dreams, that take you where you want to be, is a healthy exercise that:

- Will make you feel more confident. Splitting a big dream into smaller pieces, which are less complex to handle, will make you feel more relaxed about starting to work on them.
- Will increase your chances of success. Working on a smaller dream, means you will have an easier time making it come true. Also, what you learn from each small dream will come in handy when working on the ones that follow. With each small dream, you will get better at accomplishing the big one you had in the first place.
- Gives you something you can practically work on and achieve. A big dream is great, but even the biggest dreams are realized by small, tangible actions. If the dream is very big, it can be hard to break it down into actual steps you should follow. The answer is to do one bit at a time, whilst not forgetting that each smaller dream leads onto the next dream.



Have you chosen a big dream to follow? If you have, identify the smaller dreams which take you there and choose to focus on the first dream of all of them. Dream that smaller dream for a while, before you move to the next step.

How will I Know I've Done Well?



Being in a state of dreaming all the time might feel great and energizing but, if it does not lead to action in your real life and to positive change, it is worthless. It is important to identify when to stop and move to the next step: that of thinking about what you are about to do and how you will do it.

There are three important factors in identifying if dreaming is productive or not:

- **You can visualize the dream.** If you can really imagine the outcome of your dream and formulate to yourself what your life will look and feel like once you've achieved it, then you are almost done dreaming.
- **You are able to share the dream with others.** If you are able to visualize the dream, you should be able to share it with others. Talk briefly about the dream with some of the people you trust and see if they can understand it and visualize it based on what you share with them. They don't have to agree with it, just understand it. If they can, that's great. You should move immediately to the next stage. If they cannot understand it and visualize it, you should either spend more time crystallizing the dream, clarifying the bits about the outcome that are



hard to understand or, move to the next step but keep in mind that you might have a hard time getting people to follow and help out. You may need to spend more time in the next stage ironing out more details.

- **You are not spending too much time on dreaming.** If you are spending too many days dreaming, then you are in trouble. You will not get anything done and you are simply wasting your time. That can be due to choosing completely the wrong dream, one that doesn't really inspire you, lacking importance for your success and well-being. Or, it can simply be because it is too ambitious and you are not yet ready to tackle it. In both cases you should change the dream and go over again through the exercise presented in this chapter. In case you chose to focus on a very big dream that needs a lot of time to clarify, choose a smaller one to focus on for now and leave the big dream in the back of your head. As you get things done, other dreams will become clearer.

Now that you have a great dream to follow, it is time to think about what you are about to do and how. Doesn't it feel exciting? You are on your way to achieving a dream. But first, let's see how dreaming works for others. We have a few interesting people you need to meet.



What Our Heroes Say



Alex

We met with Alex in a small restaurant, close to the places where he spends most of his time: the study quarters of his university and the med-lab where he does most of his research and experimentation. Our aim was to get to know more about the way he dreams and how he chooses the dreams that matter most to him.

1. What kind of a dreamer are you?

For starters, I don't really have many dreams that stick with me for a long time. I just have a few big dreams I really want to achieve. They both evolved from a dream that started when I was in high school.

Back then, I was in a class which focused mostly on studying maths and programming. I really liked these fields of study and I was good at them. I thought at that point that it would be good for me to study IT at some big university. However, I did not have a clear dream or vision of what I really wanted to do with my life. I was simply assuming that would be a good next step for me, since everybody else thought the same.

I was lucky that I had a close relationship with a physics professor. He knew me quite well and we talked about lots of subjects, including what would be a good next step for me to go for in life. He shared with me his passion for medicine and what it means to be a doctor, both for the person who practises the profession and the patients who



benefit from it. This really got me thinking about what I should do with my life.

As I learned more about medicine, both from our conversations and the things I read up on this field, I became more drawn to it. I also analyzed myself and realized how I always tend to be the one who listens to the worries of friends and family, who tries to calm down people when they are upset or who is simply there and listening when needed. I always liked the closeness and intimacy of such moments and I realized I would love to help people by being a doctor. The more I thought about it, the more I could imagine myself doing this, much more than being the "IT guy". So here I am today, in my final years of study, learning as much as I can about medicine.

2. But what about being good at maths and programming? Did you ditch the dream of being an IT guy?

Yes . . . but not completely. Another realization I had was that I can easily learn most things I need to know related to computers and technology. I don't have to go to university for that. Today I am one of those medicine students who really understand technology and can use computers, robots, scanners and other technical devices used in medical research and analysis with relative ease. Even though I chose not to follow a career in IT, I can still use my inclinations for this field and apply them in medicine.

3. True. Sounds like you've made a good choice. Let's get back to those few big dreams you mentioned. Can you share them with us?

Yes of course. There are two big dreams which take most of my time and energy:



The first, is becoming a Medical Educator, teaching what people working in this field would call evidence-based medicine. This is a doctor who learns both by practising medicine for the benefit of his patients and by trying to teach students based on his theoretical and practical knowledge. Each patient becomes a new opportunity for study, and as such you get to know the person and propose treatments proven to be effective for his/her specific needs. As the treatment progresses, you closely monitor the patient's evolution and adjust treatment on the basis of efficacy.

The second is becoming a Physician Scientist, practising what other doctors would call bench-to-bed medicine. It is like being both a doctor but also a scientist. This is a special type of medicine that tries to integrate the newest information available with standard medical care. You get to help people not just by applying standard medical knowledge.

4. They both sound exciting. If you were to choose one to stick with and work at making it happen, which would it be?

That's my biggest problem. Why should I pick only one? No matter how much I think about it, I cannot choose one over the other and I would really love to make them both happen.

5. But would you really have the time and energy to work on them both, successfully? They are both very big, complex dreams and this doesn't sound realistic.

True, working on both these dreams in parallel would be too much. However, I really don't want to give up on one over the other. I thought about this for some time and I



think the best approach for me would be to first work on my second dream, that of becoming a Physician Scientist, and then on the first dream I shared.

Doing it in this order is best, as becoming a Physician Scientist will give me a wider range of knowledge and experiences than a standard medical career. Doing this for a few years would give me the edge required to become a very good Doctor and Medical Educator later on.

I do need to pick one first and it will be the dream of becoming a Physician Scientist. Let's see how this adventure goes.

6. Speaking of becoming a Physician Scientist – looking at where you are today, this is a big dream which will take you a few years to accomplish. Which are the most important elements (smaller dreams) that will take you there?

There are quite a few big elements I need to do first, before I can actually become a Physician Scientist. I've recently started to work on the first thing I need to get done, which is to choose a medical specialization and earn a doctoral degree in that specialization.

7. Is it OK with you to pick this dream of earning a doctoral degree and walk through it together?

Yes, that's great.



Olive

We met with Olive at her home and enjoyed sitting on her cosy red leather sofas. She read one of the first draft versions of this chapter and then we started our conversation:

1. Hi Olive. Please tell us a bit about your dreams.

There are a few big things I've dreamt about for some time:

- *First, I dream of having a new job, rather than the one I have today – multimedia coordinator for the websites owned by a media group. This is both a dream and a necessity for me, as I need to make this change if I am to have a more balanced life, with more time to focus on my other dreams, my hobbies and social life. I would like to work outside the world of mass media, being more of a strategist and manager than the one fighting in the trenches, always covering the latest “breaking news”, or handling the many crises and problems that show up every day in this line of work.*
 - *The second, and the one dearest to me, is the dream of becoming a bar singer. A few days ago I started taking canto lessons. I enjoy this a lot and, the more I think about it and also work on my lessons, the more I can see myself doing this.*
 - *A third but more distant dream is to open my own coffee bar, where I can manifest my passion for singing, creating an intimate atmosphere for people with coffee and good taste. However, I realize it is way too soon for me to work on this dream as I don't have the necessary financials, nor a favourable context to start working on it on the short term.*
2. If you were to choose one and apply the model we propose in this book, which would it be?



I think this choice is easy – the dream of being a bar singer. Ever since I was a child, I have been passionate about music. For a while I took piano lessons which I really enjoyed. Unfortunately for me, my teacher had to move and left the town where I lived. Since she was the only piano teacher in town, I couldn't resume my lessons, so I stopped working on it altogether. Next, in high school I bought a classical guitar and I learned how to play it by myself. Whenever I got together with my friends, and occasionally at parties with people my age, I used to accompany others and sing along.

Now that I am an adult, one of my hobbies is to go to karaoke bars and sing with others. Not long ago, one lucky evening, I was surprised by a canto teacher who heard me sing a few songs. She told me that I have what it takes to be a good singer and that she is willing to help me, for free.

Since then, every other week, I meet with her for rehearsals and lessons on how to breathe, diction and how to improve my voice.

3. This is a good story. If you were to envision yourself being a bar singer, how would it be?

I do not dream of being a famous singer, with albums and videos published on TV. I simply want to sing solo or with a band, in a cosy bar where people go to relax, enjoy themselves and listen to music. I want to make people feel good while they listen to my singing, have them relax and disconnect from the stress of day to day living. I dream of having a small but regular audience, coming to hear me sing every other week, simply because they enjoy my music and I enjoy sharing my music with them. I don't see myself doing this for lots of money, but for the human connection side of it.



Anna and Amelia

We met Anna and Amelia in Amelia's town house on the south coast in the UK. Their dream is different from the others in this book – they both have already had successful careers, but now they want to set up a business together. So, this is how two people can jointly achieve a dream.

They are in the process of founding a design company. When we met them, they had just finished a discussion about an upcoming trade show that they will be attending. This will be the first real event in their new business – and it's a great time for them to reflect on their dream.

1. So, tell us about your dream . . .

Anna: *Well I think a lot of our dream is subconscious. We did not explicitly say it all out loud but just naturally started working together. We have balancing skills, but we have not said to each other “this is how I see the future. This is my dream”. I suspect that to some extent we have different dreams.*

Amelia: *Yes that's true. But there is one thing we are both clear on – this is a dream with a very practical aspect, in that it is about making money. But not just making money in any way we can, it is about making money from a product that we are passionate about. That is a product that is developed from original creative insights, a high level of design, and exhibits high quality production.*

2. Then your dream is all about making a product for sale – an original and high quality product, but a product nevertheless?

Anna: *Not exactly. Although we are starting with some products, it's less about these specific products – the dream is about us building a brand which is recognized*



for a certain level and style of design. In our dream, as the brand becomes recognized, we would happily be an outlet for other individual designers and artists who share our values and outlook.

Amelia: *The brand is something we want to feel passionate and excited about. As an artist I have to feel that I can happily associate our designs with our brand. But as I said before, the dream has a very practical angle as well. Let me explain an important aspect for me. I will be retiring from my main occupation soon and my dream is that this business will at least provide me with money to bridge the gap between my pension income and my salary now. If we achieve that, then I will regard that as the first major step in a successful business.*

Anna: *But there are no constraints on what we are aiming for. We will see how it goes, and we will push this to be as successful as we can, whilst remaining true to our vision of the brand.*

3. So then, this is more about business than personal fulfilment?

Anna: *Again no, it's not that simple. We want a successful business, but it is important to both of us that the business is delivering something we really believe in. So, whilst having a successful business is critically important, if that is all we do, then it will not be our dream.*

Amelia: *The business has to be something I enjoy. Even if our first products are not as successful as we expect, I want to get something out of going through the process of running a business. We will learn, and we will have fun. At times we will be stretched, but that's all part of the enjoyment. Right now, we are investing in a stand at a trade show. This is a big investment for a business the size of ours, but it feels right – because, apart from anything else,*



it will force us to learn. So you could say that part of the dream is to learn more, to keep on progressing the dream further and further.

Anna: *We have already learnt a lot already just by starting to talk to people about our business idea. We've had some great advice already – and we've already had our fingers burnt with suppliers who have not delivered, or have delivered late. But, that's all part of the fun and learning!*

4. So, can we be clear what the business will do?

Anna: *To be precise – we are planning to start a business making and selling handmade cards. These cards will be made on high quality paper and hand embossed based on Amelia's designs. They will be offered for sale at Christmas and other holidays and throughout the year. Additionally, we will offer a bespoke service for weddings and other times when people want personalized cards. The cards will be the same quality as a small piece of art. We expect to sell them online and in art galleries. Once we have done this, we plan to expand into making prints as pictures to be hung on walls, using similar designs and similar manufacturing processes. From that – who knows? We don't know where the business will end, but we have a very clear product to start out with.*

5. It sounds great. Is there anything you would like to add?

Amelia: *One thing I want to add is that the way our business unfolds, or how we go about achieving our dream, will be driven by our experience as designers. Designers and artists don't learn by just thinking – we learn by doing – that is by actually designing and creating art. So, part of the dream is about giving us a situation in which we can do more and do different things to really drive our creative energies.*



Questions to Ask Yourself

- Am I conscious of all the good things I dream about on a regular basis?
- Have I selected just one important dream to choose to make a reality?
- What is the outcome I want to achieve?
- Can I *really* imagine that outcome clearly?
- Can I explain my dream to others in a way that they can understand it?



Summary

All of the most successful people started out with a dream. To share their success you need to identify the dreams that are most important to you. Go through and list the dreams that really matter to you. To make your dreaming achievable, you should focus on one dream at a time and spend time making it as clear and specific as you can – so select one of the dreams that is most important to you. Try to get to the point where you have a vision of what it will be like to achieve this dream that you believe in and are excited by.



