

DREAM BIG! What's The Best That Can Happen?

by Barbara Sanfilippo

(Excerpted from Barbara's latest book)

If you've ever had a pleasant daydream or seen yourself in a scene you created, you have what it takes to *dream big*. The key question is, do you *believe* and *expect* to get it? Or do you dismiss it as idle thoughts? The only difference between those who have a life of joy and those who live a life of struggle are the three words *belief*, *faith* and *action*.

ASSESS YOUR LIFE SATISFACTION

Before you can move forward in creating your dreams, let's assess where you are now. The following Life Satisfaction Index (LSI) is included to help you identify what's important. To prepare for the dream process, rate how satisfied you are with the following areas of your life on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being very satisfied and 1 being the "pits". (Circle your selection)

Life Satisfaction Index

1. Work/Career 1 2 3 4 5
2. Personal Relationships/Love 1 2 3 4 5
3. Parent/Family Life 1 2 3 4 5
4. Relaxation/Social Time 1 2 3 4 5
5. Spiritual 1 2 3 4 5
6. Physical Fitness/Health 1 2 3 4 5
7. Financial 1 2 3 4 5
8. Personal Growth/Education 1 2 3 4 5
9. Service to Others 1 2 3 4 5

Exercise: Areas for Improvement

At the top of a blank piece of paper, write the date and "Areas for Opportunity and Growth in My Life." Now look at your Life Satisfaction Index and note the most important areas you wish to improve. These may not necessarily be items with the lowest score. Next to each one, also jot down what you "expect" to happen and an action step.

CREATE CAPPUCCINO MOMENTS -- ENJOY THE JOURNEY

The greatest regret of the terminally ill is, "I made a living, but I never really lived."

--Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Are you making a living or living your life? To "live" your life implies action--movement--excitement. Unfortunately, today most of us have our calendars so full we have little time to enjoy all the courses in the feast of life. It's important that you value your precious time.

Out-source To Create Time

It's common practice for businesses to out-source certain responsibilities such as bookkeeping, publicity and marketing. There is no reason why we can't seek assistance in our personal life as well.

For example, for ten years now, Bob and I have always had help doing our errands. Twice a month Marge comes over and goes to the grocery store, dry cleaners, shoemaker and the hardware store. When she gets back, she puts everything away. This incredible time saver only costs us \$7.00 an hour. At four hours it costs us \$28.00 periodically to get help and give us time to enjoy life more. Rather than being stuck in traffic and waiting in lines doing errands, we can truly enjoy our precious weekends. As a result, our life is much less stressful. Plus, Marge is a delight who loves to provide a valuable service. I love having a "wife" to help me!

Nurture Your Soul With The Daily Joy Booster

My five minute joy booster is a great way to start each day. Keep something uplifting or spiritual to read by your bedside. In the morning, do not get out of bed until you sit back; fluff your pillows and fill yourself with words of beauty or encouragement. Ponder the words. Imagine your dreams. Say a short prayer asking for your day to be full of wonder, joy and guidance. Be selfish--take five minutes every day for yourself.

Be Willing To Be Silly

Are you silly at times? I hope so. When your favorite song comes on the radio in your car, are you able to sing along with gusto? One day driving along the I-5 in San Diego, I was worrying about a business appointment I had and feeling unprepared. All of a sudden one of my favorite songs came on the radio, "Respect", by Aretha Franklin. I got so excited, I started singing aloud and bobbing my head, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T". All of a sudden, a car pulled up on my left and the woman on the passenger side just stared at me in disbelief with her mouth gaping open. I thought, "party pooper" and just kept singing happily along, as if I was performing live with great animation.

Now a sleek BMW pulled up on my right and I realized the driver was singing along to the same song and enjoying it as much as I was. He gave me a quick thumbs up, nodded his head in approval, and drove off. I just started laughing out loud. Made my day. "Now what was I worrying about a minute ago?" My meeting was a little pimple on the journey of life. One song

put it all in perspective. Now my motto is be silly and lighten up.

DREAM BIG- EXPECT THE BEST

Now comes the exciting part. You get to imagine your wildest dreams! Right now your dreams are sitting dormant waiting to be activated.

Most people define a dream as "a fantasy event in my life never meant to occur." My definition of a dream is "a future event in my life *waiting* to occur." Imagine--a future event in your life *waiting* to occur.

Speak Your Dreams--See Your Dreams

I remember when I began to *Dream Big*. I began collecting pictures and words representing my dreams. Pictures of the Acropolis and the Greek Islands were included on my *Dream Big* Board as I dreamed of my honeymoon. At the time, I wasn't dating a soul with no one in sight. That didn't stop me from dreaming big.

"Well, if I'm going to attract my life partner, I'd love to get married in the wine country." Pictures of grape vines and vineyards went on my *Dream Big* Board with the words, *The Wine Country*. This was very hard, because I was so afraid of disappointment.

I was living in a little studio apartment in San Francisco and money was tight. In fact, I had \$35 to \$40 left in my checking account to last for two weeks after my bills were paid. Clipping out pictures of beautiful homes was fun and adding them to my board was exciting and scary. I thought, "One day I want to live in a house like that."

One day I saw pictures of books in the Book of the Month Club mailing. I remember asking myself, "I wonder if I can be an author?" Imagine me as an author. No way, I don't have the patience to sit down and write. But somewhere deep inside me I heard, "Yes, Barbara, you can do this--go ahead and dream." So I clipped pictures of books and glued them on the board with a picture of me holding a book.

I remember looking at my board often and making it come alive. It was all so real, so wonderful and I still felt afraid. For five years nothing happened. I felt discouraged, but I never gave up hope and desire. Six years after I completed my *Dream Big* Board amazing things started to happen. Although I had a good job as a Regional Sales Manager with a major company, the entrepreneurial spirit came over me. I decided to pursue my dream of becoming a professional speaker.

After the first year in business, I had enough money to put a down payment on a lovely home--all by myself. Three months after I moved in my new home, guess who I met? Bob, my loving, kind, supportive husband. He also loves the vineyards, so we got married at Meadowood Resort in St. Helena, California. Guess where we honeymooned? You got it--the Greek Islands for three weeks. I even got to use my frequent flyer mileage for the tickets to Athens!

Two years after I met Bob a wonderful woman, Dominique, ran up to me after a speech on

customer service. She said, "Great ideas -- if you write them down, I'll publish it." I explained I had no manuscript or book proposal and had never written a book before. She replied, "No problem, I'm a publisher. I'll send you a contract and you have one year to write your book." *Five Star Service Solutions* was published a year later.

I guess if I had to get out my message in one sentence, it's simply this: Whatever you're dreaming--it's not big enough! Think about that. It's not big enough. So now what will you do? The choice is yours. You can say, "Nice message, but it won't work for me." Or you can make a decision and say, "I intend to create my future by dreaming big."

Listen to your intuition, for it is your best friend. Ignore your fears for they are your enemy. Believe in your dreams for they are your future.

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