

Finding Your Dreams

Dr. Jonathan Haverkamp, M.D.

It Starts with a Dream ...

It starts with a dream. If we would not dream up or envision things we would never get them. But this also means that what we dream up should have a positive effect on us and the world. Our dreams should be in sync with our values and true wants and needs. Dreaming primarily of money will not be fulfilling because money only stands for the things we buy with it. A nice home for the family, for example, can be motivating if this is something you value and truly aspire to.

You are ... Happiness

What makes us happy? When we live and act according to our basic values, that will make us happy. Our basic values are the true values that change little over time. They give rise to your long-term interests, desires and aspirations. When you live according to your basic values, life makes sense. It is meaningful in itself, because it is lived according to your values and who you truly are.

From Values to People

Following your values and basic interests you get to the people or things that will be important to you, because they will support you in living in sync with your values and basic interests. Finding them may seem difficult, but when you are aware of your values and aspirations, you will notice them once they cross your path.

Exploring one's values and aspirations is a life-long process. The older we get, the more information we have about our values and basic aspirations. However, this is more about seeing things in detail, while the overall directions are usually quite clear early in one's life. Traumatic experiences can change these overall parameters on the surface, but the key to one's happiness is still in the pre-existing values and aspirations.

Dreams as Self-Regulation

Dreams, whether at night or fleeting images during the day, are how the brain regulates itself. This could mean that you may dream of the opposite of what you really want. What you want has to be in sync with what you value, what you find important and meaningful in the world. Since doing things that are in sync with one's values, make one happy, screening one's dreams according to how one feels about them can be useful. The feeling to look for should be one of genuine happiness, not simply for a relief of tension or anxiety. Doing more of these things can also be quite helpful in cases of depression and anxiety.

Discovering Values, True Needs and Wants

Discovering what one values and truly wants and needs for is not so difficult. Often it helps to look at the moments that made you happy and fulfilled you in the past. Something in them was important, relevant and meaningful to you. These attributes usually change little over one's life.

If committing to a course of action is difficult, it may be because life feels uncertain and unpredictable at times, or it may be difficult to trust oneself entirely for various reasons. One may not feel so sure about one's abilities and the wisdom of one's feelings. But if you do not trust the person you spend 24/7 with, yourself, who can you trust in the world? If one does something one values oneself, not what someone else values, this will be valuable to oneself, no matter what.

Openness and Flexibility

So, the first step in finding your dreams is openness. Openness can be scary, but without it is difficult to let in something that is more in sync with your values. Even if one has been hurt in the past, it is still better to do something enjoyable and risk temporary failure than not doing it at all.

The Shackles of the Illusion of Certainty

The next step is to throw off the need for certainty, which may come from past experiences, traumatic or otherwise. Searching for your dreams is embarking on a new adventure, and this means finding one's own path, well-informed, people oriented, but independent. This does not have to mean changing one's life from one day to the next, but it means trying out new things with excitement and sensibly, not recklessly. Finding meaning in the world is the path ahead, daring for the sake of daring is foolish at best. Meaning is whatever is relevant to your values and true needs and wants, your aspirations, hopes and dreams.

Dare with Others

Another important step is to associate with the people who can help you in finding your dreams. The reason is that they are more likely to have the information you need to get closer to your dreams. So, finding your dreams depends on how you interact with other people. A friendly and open nature can go a long way, and being transparent with your feelings does the rest. It means seeing oneself as more than an autonomous, independent entity, but as someone who enjoys interacting with other people. In many cases the enjoyment comes from engaging more in the world. Knowing yourself better, appreciating yourself, your dreams, values, aspiration and dreams, makes you appreciate others more. You are one of them.

Committing to Your Dreams

The next step is to commit to your dreams once you feel you found them. This may mean dealing with old hurts and present fears. To fully commit to a dream requires seeing oneself as

positive, likeable and not to take someone else' negativity personally. All people have issues and we need to see them as they are, 'issues', that need to be dealt with by the person who has them, and not by you if they are not yours.

Your Emotions are Your Friends

Our emotions are evolutionary programmed to help us survive. They are our friends and not our enemies, as long as we use the signals they contain in a way that benefits us. Emotions like fear or guilt should not interfere with our life in a way that does not help us, or anyone else on this planet. If we have done wrong and hurt someone, we should make it right, if that is possible, and refrain from doing it in the future, but if negative emotions begin interfering with one's life and happiness, they need to be looked at closely and critically.

It's about the Feelings

Once you have found your dream, whether in a job or a relationship or any other area of life, it will feel right. Quite simply. Rational thought should help you live and aspire to those dreams that really make you happy, but it cannot determine them. Unhappiness is a feeling and not a thought, so being connected with one's feelings is important. Our thoughts can help us get to the place of happiness, but ultimately it is the feeling of happiness we need to experience.



Dr Jonathan Haverkamp, M.D. MLA (Harvard) LL.M. trained in medicine, psychiatry and psychotherapy and works in private practice for psychotherapy, counselling and psychiatric medication in Dublin, Ireland. The author can be reached by email at jonathanhaverkamp@gmail.com or on the websites www.jonathanhaverkamp.com and www.jonathanhaverkamp.ie.

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