10 Questions to Help You See It and Seize It

PUT YOUR DREAM TO THE TEST

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MAIN IDEA
Dreams are great. Dreams have the power to inspire, motivate and empower you to do great things. To make your dreams come true, however, you have to move them from being ethereal to real. To achieve this, there are ten questions you need to answer:

If you can explore your dream and come up with good answers to each of these ten questions, then the odds you will achieve your dream and make it real become very good.

“I truly believe that everyone has the potential to imagine a worthwhile dream, and most have the ability to achieve it. And it doesn’t matter how big or how seemingly outrageous your dream may appear to others if your answers are yes to the Dream Test questions.”

– John Maxwell

“Always remember there are only two kinds of people in this world – the realists and the dreamers. The realists know where they’re going. The dreamers have already been there.”

– Robert Orben

About of Author
JOHN MAXWELL is a leadership expert, public speaker and author. He is the author of more than fifty books which have sold more than 16 million copies. Dr. Maxwell is also the founder of EQUIP and INJOY Stewardship Services, training companies which have trained more than 2 million leaders worldwide. Dr. Maxwell is a graduate of Ohio Christian University, Azusa Pacific University and Fuller Theological Seminary. Dr.
Maxwell has been named as one of the world’s top leadership gurus and has been featured by the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal and Business Week. Three of Dr. Maxwell’s books – The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, Developing the Leader Within You and The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader – have each sold more than a million copies.

Young people sometimes find themselves in a situation where they go to college to do a course their parents like the sound of but which they themselves have no passion for. It’s an invitation to a dead-end because quite simply, you will never achieve a dream you don’t own.

You have to figure out what you want to do with your life. This is the key that unlocks everything else. If you spend your time hoping for the best rather than living out your dream, all you’ll end up with is a bucketful of ash. You have to own your dream if you’re to have any chance of making it happen. Refuse to accept the notions:

■ That dreams don’t come true for ordinary people like you.
■ That dreams have to be big and audacious or they’re not worth pursuing.
■ That now is not the right time to pursue your dream.

To stand up and take full ownership of your dream, you need to do five things:

1. Believe in yourself – and be willing to place some serious bets that you can deliver what you say you will. Have confidence that you can and will do what you say.

2. Start being proactive – in other words, lead your life and take responsibility to make good things happen rather than just accepting things the way they are. Step up to the plate and take a serious swing at making your dream happen rather than sitting back and doing nothing.

3. Do something you love – that you can be passionate about. Don’t try and do something just because it’s trendy. Find something you are genuinely passionate about and get to work excelling at it. Remember, once you own a dream completely, it will also own you so do what you love.

4. Forget about comparing your dream to the dreams others have – that’s irrelevant. Instead, concentrate on doing the best with what you have and where you’re starting from. Get into action and make your dream come to fruition.

5. Believe in yourself even when others express their doubts – because your dream will probably seem outrageous to others at first. Forget about the naysayers – they have their own sets of problems to overcome. Get to work living an above average life.

If you have a dream but you’re not actively trying to live it, then look inside and figure out whether your dream is the real thing or not. Either the dream you’re nurturing belongs to someone else or you’re not taking full ownership of your dream. Discover your own dream, take responsibility for it and get to work.

“The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible, and achieve it, generation after generation.”
“For all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, ‘It might have been.’”

– John Greenleaf Whittier

To achieve great things, you need your dream to be in focus. If you can’t define it and describe it in clear detail, you won’t be able to pursue it. You have to remove all the fuzziness and unspecific details in order to achieve something great.

There are several very good reasons why you need to bring your dream into clear focus before you can achieve it:

1. Clear dreams make general ideas and notions specific – which is important. You won’t get anywhere good until you have a clear idea what you want to accomplish. Once you decide what exactly you want, you can then start measuring your progress and finding ways to increase your momentum.

2. Dreams never become clear without effort on your part – they will just stay vague and fuzzy. Once you get down to specifics, your dream will take shape. These specifics normally take the form of the resources you will require, the experiences you will need to have and the people you will need to get onboard to help you get where you want to go. Keep working at your dream until you have clarity about what’s required.

3. Clear dreams feel right – they strengthen your sense of purpose rather than being in conflict. The more you clarify your dream and put it to the test, the more you should feel like you’re doing the right thing.

4. Clear dreams determine your priorities – because despite what we would like to believe nobody can have it all. To achieve your dream and commit to it, you’re going to give up all other options. When your dream is clear, your priorities will become obvious.

5. Once your dream is clarified it will give direction and motivation to your entire team – because great dreams always involve and demand the participation of others. Set out clearly where you need to go and let your people go to work. Know the end, clarify it and let your people get to work making it happen.

It’s surprising how many people and organizations are content to drift through life rather than taking control and making good things happen. To move forward, you need a clear picture of where you want to go. Let your imagination run wild and create a written description of your dream with as much detail as possible. Quantify it. Make it measurable. Dream big. Write it down. Put it where you will see it all day every day. And get to work.
“Never give up on your dream. Perseverance is all important. If you don’t have the desire and belief in yourself to keep trying after you’ve been told you should quit, you’ll never make it.”

– Tawni O’Dell

“If you have a clear vision, you will eventually attract the right strategy. If you don’t have a clear vision, no strategy will save you.”

– Mike Hyatt

“The indispensable first step to getting the things you want out of life is this: decide what you want.”

– Ben Stein

To succeed in the long run, you don’t want to leave everything to chance. Rather, you should build your dream on having the self-discipline and grit to maximize what you do well. You should build your dreams on factors which are within your control (with a lot of extra work) rather than luck.

“I welcome good luck just as anyone does, but I worked extremely hard to avoid being in a situation in which luck was necessary to produce a favorable outcome or where the luck of an adversary could defeat us. To me, the residue of design – luck – can be important. Much more important, of course, is design.”

– John Wooden

“Rose-colored glasses are never made in bifocals. Nobody wants to read the small print in dreams.”

– Ann Landers

The realities of achieving your dreams are:
- The journey will always take much longer than you originally anticipated.
- The obstacles will end up being more numerous and more serious than you believed.
- The disappointments and the lows you experience will be more intense than you would like.
- The price you have to pay to succeed will end up being much higher than originally budgeted for.

To realize your dreams, you will not only need to work hard but you’ll also need to work smart. This means you need to work towards a dream that plays to your strengths rather than merely hoping for the best. The best way to do this is to focus on doing the things
you love to do. If you do this, you will get three immediate benefits:
1. By focusing on what you’re already good at, you’ll align with “The Law of Least Effort” – meaning you’ll achieve more because you’ll be doing things which come easily to you. By finding your true area of excellence and staying within that area, you will move forward in leaps and bounds while others are struggling.

2. When you build on your strengths, you will generate more consistent results – rather than things you only do well once in a while. In most fields, success comes when someone does something superior day after day rather than as a one-time event. You’re more likely to be performing well when you’re working in an area of personal strength. Bear in mind also success will require consistency. You’re going to be far more likely to be consistent when you work in an area that aligns with your natural skills and talents.

3. Building on your strengths will always give you the highest rate of return on your energy invested – possibly because you’ll be so passionate about what you’re trying to do. Every person on the planet has strengths and weaknesses. If you can find out as early as possible what your strengths are and stay in that area of specialization, you will do some great stuff.

In practical terms, building your dream on reality means two things:

- Build on your real habits – because a dream becomes a reality based on your actions and for better or for worse, most of the time your actions will be driven by your habits. What you do each day – your daily habits – will have a large impact on the results you achieve with your life. The real secret to achieving your dreams lies in your daily agenda. To achieve something noteworthy, you need to harness good habits which are disciplined, focused and positive. Habits are powerful because they have a cumulative effect. They take you in a particular direction and keep you moving down that path month after month and year after year. If you have a dream which is based on the habits which are already ingrained in your life, then you’re much more likely to succeed.

- Build on your actual strengths – meaning don’t try and change where you’re starting from. It can’t be done. You are where you are at the moment. Accept that, and get to work changing where you end up. A good dream will always align with your strengths, your habits and your potential. If these three factors don’t align, the only destination that lies ahead is frustration.

When you do these two things, you make reality your ally rather than your stumbling block.
“If you know your strengths and build on them by doing what is needed to make your dream a reality, and you do them consistently until they become habits, the odds are very high that you can achieve your dream. For most people, the limitations they face aren’t on the outside, only on the inside.”

— John Maxwell

“Remember, life is nothing more than the sum total of many successful years; a successful year is nothing more than the sum total of many successful months; a successful month is nothing more than the sum total of many successful weeks; a successful week is nothing more than the sum total of many successful days. That’s why practicing successful habits day in and day out is the most certain way to win over the long term.”

— Robert Ringer

“Shallow men believe in luck . . . Strong men believe in cause and effect.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Reality is the enemy of fantasies but not of dreams.”

— Rudy Ruettiger

“Starting out to make money is the greatest mistake in life. Do what you feel you have a flair for doing, and if you are good enough at it, the money will come.”

— Greer Garson

“If your habits don’t line up with your dream, then you need to either change your habits or change your dream.”

— John Maxwell

Passion is the starting point of all achievement. Why is that?
1. Passion provides the energy that makes achieving your dreams possible in the first place.
2. Passion keeps you on track despite all the roadblocks, detours and disappointments along the way.
3. Passion gives you the tenacity you will require to overcome adversity.
4. Passion will fire your initiative and get you thinking about creative ways to achieve more.
5. Passion positions you advantageously where you have the greatest odds for success.

In simple terms, passion provides the spark to move down a different path to a better
destination than that which we would otherwise have achieved by doing what we’ve always done. Passion alone isn’t enough for guaranteed success, but it is one of the prerequisites.

So how do you increase your passion for what you’re doing?
- Know your temperament – and take that into account. Some people thrive on pressure, others hate it. Some people like aggressive confrontation, others shun it. Know what makes you tick and tap into whatever triggers work for you.
- Keep your eye on the ball – keep reminding yourself why you wanted to pursue your dream in the first place. It’s easy to forget that when you are knee deep in problems. Remind yourself of the big picture.
- Accept that you will be different from your peers – and see that as a good thing rather than something to fear. Anyone who achieves their dream will stand out form the crowd. Don’t worry what others think of you – it just doesn’t feature when you’re talking about achieving your dreams.
- Resist the apathy that comes with aging – and refuse to give up your dream. Too many people slip into a comfortable but unrewarding routine during the latter stages of their lives when they should be pursuing their dreams even more intensely. Refuse to do that. By all means accept your physical limitations as a reality but make the most of your positives. Don’t let it get you down. Even the world’s great achievers age like everyone else. You can do it.

“If you are working on something exciting that you really care about, you don’t have to be pushed. The vision pulls you.”
– Steve Jobs

“When love and skill come together, expect a masterpiece.”
– John Ruskin

“There are two things to aim at in life: first, to get what you want; and after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second.”
– Logan Pearsall Smith

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.”
– Albert Schweitzer

“Do I have a concrete strategy I can use to reach my dream?”

“There are only two kinds of plans. Plans that might work and plans that won’t work. You have to take a plan that might work and make it work.”
– Wesley K. Clark
It’s amazing how many people have a dream but then never do anything about finding a pathway to success for their dreams. You need to have a strategy for getting to where you want to go if you’re to have any realistic shot at realizing it. And sitting back and waiting for a fairy godmother to materialize and bail you out really doesn’t count as a strategy.

To create a strategy for achieving your dream, think SECURE:

**S** State all your positions – where you are starting from, where you want to end up and what lies in between. Once you’ve clarified these points, you can then start trying to visualize the steps you must take to get from where you are now to where you want to be in the future.

**E** Examine your actions – because the real difference between a dream and wishful thinking is what you do day-by-day. To reach your dream, you must do something every day which relates to that dream. Note whether you’re acting in a productive way. The secret to being a long-term success lies in your daily agenda. Make sure you’re doing the right things day after day.

**C** Consider all your options – and see whether or not it would be prudent to revise your plan. Success is almost always flexible. It’s rarely an exact science. There may be better and smarter ways to get the right things done. Be flexible in your thinking and be prepared to go down different paths if that turns out to be a better way to get the results you want.

**U** Utilize every resource you have – and ideally some you don’t have yet. Every dream requires resources. Look at the assets you already have available and figure out what additional resources will be required. Engage all your resources and talk to people who can provide you with what additional resources you don’t currently have.

**R** Remove all nonessentials – so you can focus on achieving your dream. Big dreams always come with a price. To achieve them, you’re going to have to put everything you have into the effort. Clear out the nonessentials from your daily routine. Lighten your load so you can move forward.

**E** Embrace your challenges – prepare to face them head on. The pathway to every dream is always filled with challenges of one kind or another. That’s life. There’s no way around it so prepare. Make temporary setbacks and failures your ally rather than the enemy. Learn to fail forward. Whenever you fail, examine it and learn from it. Have the mindset you’re prepared to make a mistake once if you have to but you refuse to keep making the same mistake over and over. Learn and move on.
Every dream requires that you interact with people in one way or another – as partners, customers, colleagues or in a myriad of other roles. It's also obvious that you will be able to accomplish more personally if you have a team of people to help you realize your dream. A great team can magnify the results you achieve and enable you to realize your dreams.

One of the central challenges of achieving anything of significance is to put together a dream team to help you do it. Your ideal dream team will be made up of people who fall into three distinct categories:

1. People who inspire you – who will encourage you and cheer you on. This kind of encouragement will lift you to higher levels of performance that you would otherwise have not reached. You want to be surrounded by people who motivate you to do better.

2. People who will be candid and honest with you – who will share blunt facts when the situation demands. These kinds of people will stop you deceiving yourself by providing dollops of honest feedback on your shortcomings.

3. People who have skills which complement yours – who are better at various things than you are. You want people on your dream team who are good at the things you’re weak at. They will offset your weaknesses so you can achieve more.

To recruit such an ideal dream team, you have to become skilled at transferring your vision to others. You need to get them to buy into your dream which is often a challenge. This will require credibility and conviction. The transfer of a dream or vision from one person to another always happens at three different levels:

1. The first level is logical. People won’t buy into a dream that doesn’t make sense. To be credible, your dream must be realistic and workable. If your dream does not address all the realities, nobody will take it very seriously. And not only must the overall objective be logical but the proposed strategy must be sound as well. Good strategy breaks the dream down into manageable parts which can be assigned to different people or groups. If the task appears completely unattainable and the strategy seems cryptic, people
won’t buy in.

2. The emotional level is second. People might understand your dream’s basic logic but to get them completely onside, you also need to establish some emotional connections. You do this three basic ways:
   - Show them the dream from their perspective and interests.
   - Show them what you personally feel about the dream.
   - Show them the bottom-line benefits they will receive.

3. Once people understand the logic behind your dream and connect with it emotionally, you can then make it real by bringing it to life visually. You do this by painting a vivid word picture of what the results will look like in the flesh. It then becomes easier to paint “before” and “after” comparisons. When people see the dream in visual terms, they can then sign on and get to work trying to derive those sought after benefits.

You’ll know when you’ve succeeded in transferring your dream to others because several tell-tale signs will happen:
   - People will clamor to be part of the implementation team.
   - Everyone will add value by injecting their own creative ideas into the discussion.
   - People will be anxious to take responsibility for getting the right things done.
   - Others will take ownership of the dream.

In almost every area of human achievement, it takes a team to realize a dream. You have to get other people involved in order to do great things. And the bigger and more embracing your dream is, the greater your need to get others involved as well. Fortunately, quality people are always attracted to big dreams. You’ll find that the bigger your dream is, the more people will be attracted to it. The challenge is for you to connect with these people, transfer your vision, invite them to get involved and then step back and let them do their stuff.

“It marks a big step in your development when you come to realize that other people can help you do a better job than you can do alone.”

– Andrew Carnegie

“Gentlemen – I know you are afraid. I remember being afraid when I was a soldier. I had the privilege of defending my country for a number of years through dark days when we didn’t know whether we could accomplish what we had been given to do. But this is your moment. We are counting on you to rise to the occasion and achieve everything you have set out to do. The fate of the free world rests on your shoulders. May this be your finest hour.”

– Winston Churchill to a group of soldiers just about the launch the D-Day invasion at Normandy

“We should show life neither as it is or ought to be, but only as we see it in our dreams.”

– Leo Tolstoy

“A dream is a compelling vision you see in your heart that’s too big to accomplish without the help of others.”

– Chris Hodges
“It takes humility to seek feedback. It takes wisdom to understand it, analyze it and appropriately act on it.”

– Stephen R. Covey

“I think most of us are looking for a calling, not a job. Most of us, like the assembly line worker, have jobs that are too small for our spirit. Jobs are not big enough for people.”

– Studs Terkel

“When you get in a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.”

– Harriet Beecher Stowe

Every dream has a cost. You can also guarantee:

- The true cost will be higher than first anticipated.
- You will have to pay the price sooner than you would like.
- You will end up paying the price more than once because of unanticipated developments and challenges.
- At some point, you will have to figure out whether the cost of realizing your dream is higher than it is worth.

The costs of a dream come in all shapes and sizes, but there are three costs which are common to almost every dream:

1. You will have to pay the price of criticism from people who matter – people you respect who will honestly advise you that you have inadvertently gone off down the wrong track. These people mean well but they aren’t in possession of the facts you are. You’ve got to be prepared to pay no attention to what they are saying and keep on pursuing your dream.

2. You must pay the price of overcoming your fears – which is inevitable when you move out of your comfort zone and push the edge of the envelope. You have to be willing to try new things, even if they might not work out.

3. You have to be willing to pay the price of hard work – of keeping going even when everyone else is relaxing. There is a very direct dynamic at work here: Dreams never work unless you do. You have to put in enough effort to make the right things happen. You have to do whatever it takes to succeed.

Only you can answer the cost question. This question differentiates the uncommitted from the committed. It always takes loads of personal courage to let go of what you
have and to strike out on a journey to somewhere new and hopefully better. To achieve your dream, you must be committed, and even after all the hard work involved, there are no guarantees you will realize your dream. In fact, when you think about it, the only guarantee that is available is if you do nothing and refuse to pay the price, you’re guaranteed not to achieve your dream.

“The secret of my success is that I bit off more than I could chew and chewed as fast as I could.”

– Paul Hogan

“It is hard to be 100 percent better than your competition, but you can be 1 percent better in 100 ways.”

– Rich Melman

“The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly; it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.”

– Thomas Paine

“Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising which tempt you to believe that your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires courage.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you have tenacity, you will keep nourishing your dream until it becomes a reality. People who achieve their dreams keep moving closer and closer to their dream day by day. Or put another way, if you have tenacity:

1. You will recognize that quitting is more about who you are than where you are – and you will keep on moving closer and closer to your dream all the time. External developments don’t derail the achievement of dreams but what happens inside your mind can. Tenacious people don’t give up just because the way ahead looks hard. They just keep moving forward.

2. You will watch your vocabulary and choose your words deliberately – because what you say is important and can move you towards or away from your dreams. To enhance your own level of tenaciousness, banish the words “quit” or “failure” from your vocabulary and use words that give you power and momentum instead.

3. You will stop waiting for perfect conditions to arise – and instead forge ahead taking advantage of whatever conditions currently exist. Tenacious people aren’t waiting for their ship to figuratively come in. They get busy trying to swim out to meet it.
4. You will make a conscious attempt to upgrade your thinking – to spend more time thinking about what you’ve already accomplished and how you are capable of doing what remains to be done in order to realize your dream. Successful people are positive. They get things done. They recover from short-term setbacks and concentrate on winning the big prize. To be tenacious, you need to win the battle for your mind and then keep working at it.

5. You will keep looking for the resources you need – and therefore move forward with confidence. Tenacious people realize resources always follow a vision, not the other way around. They move forward in the belief good things will come together as required.

6. You will practice the “Rule of Five” – meaning each day you will do five specific things which move you closer to your dream. The cumulative effect of these day in and day out actions will be you will get to where you want to go.

7. You will remind yourself that even when you assume you have exhausted all possibilities, you generally have not – and therefore you should hang in there and keep at it.

“A champion is one who gets up when he can’t.”

Jack Dempsey

“Effort only releases its reward after a person refuses to quit.”

W. Clement Stone

“Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.”

John Wooden

“The only guarantee for failure is to stop trying.”

John Maxwell

Working towards bringing a big dream to fruition in your life will take every ounce of effort, time and attention you can devote to it. Therefore, you’d better be certain that achieving your dream will bring you satisfaction.

“Achieving a dream is about more than just what you accomplish. It’s about who you become in the process! A great dream isn’t merely a destination. It’s the catalyst for a great journey. If that journey is right and you can answer yes to the Fulfillment Question, I wouldn’t go as far as to say that the destination doesn’t matter, but I will say if you don’t actually reach your dream, the journey is still worth taking. Why? Because the journey
itself is fulfilling."

– John Maxwell

There is always a large gap between the birth of a dream and its ultimate achievement. You have to ask yourself whether that gap will be a source of fulfillment or frustration for you. If it is a source of frustration, you’ll be miserable most of the time while you’re in it. By contrast, if bridging that gap brings you a sense of fulfillment, then every day will be a new adventure to be enjoyed.

For the pursuit of your dream to be sustainable, you have to find ways you can turn that gap into a source of ongoing fulfillment. How do you do that? There are several potential approaches you can try:

1. Differentiate between your dream and its realization – and temper your idealism with some decent doses of realism. Your dream exists in an ideal world where anything less than perfection need not be tolerated. Realization of that dream happens in the real world where things get messy. Match the two together a little closer and you will feel more fulfilled.

2. Realize the width of the gap is determined by the size of your dream – so be prepared for a serious disconnect if you’re pursuing a rather ambitious dream. A big gap will be par for the course. That’s just the way it is, so get to work making the journey rather than sitting back and complaining.

3. Don’t forget to keep on dreaming while you make the journey – because this is an integral part of inspiration and motivation. Keep the dreams coming because that’s what will keep you up when the going gets tough.

4. Learn to appreciate each step you take in the right direction – because you’ll never leap the gap in a single bound. It can’t be done. Progress is always piecemeal and cumulative. Be patient as you live your dream. Derive satisfaction from the journey itself rather than giving yourself permission to relax and enjoy it only once you get there. Draw personal happiness from the journey and you’ll have a great career.

5. Keep on making new and interesting discoveries while you’re in the gap – because there will be plenty there to see as you inch your way forward. Stay alert. Look for new doorways and interesting insights. Have fun and you significantly enhance your tenacity.

6. Never forget nature’s “Law of Balance” – which guarantees you will experience both good and bad in equal measure while in the gap. Neither optimists or pessimists are 100 percent correct. Life is always a balance of good and bad. They tend to cancel each other out over the long term. Keep doing the right things which will make your dream come true and you’ll feel good. You will feel personally satisfied, regardless of the outcome.
The underlying truth is when you’re doing something you believe in, working through the gap will bring deep satisfaction. Every day will be an adventure – which is great. When it comes to achieving a dream, it’s the process that counts, or perhaps more correctly, it’s what you become as a result of going on the journey that counts the most. If you can answer yes to the fulfillment question every day, then you’ll feel good about what you’re doing with your life.

“If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

– Henry David Thoreau

“All our successes are the same. All our failures, too. We succeed when we do something remarkable. We fail when we give up too soon. We succeed when we are the best in the world at what we do. We fail when we get distracted by tasks we don’t have the guts to quit.”

– Seth Godin

“If you want to be happy, set a goal that commands your thoughts, liberates your energy and inspires your hopes.”

– Andrew Carnegie

“You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process is its own reward.”

– Amelia Earhart

“I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one finds many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vistas that surround me, to look back at the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.”

– Nelson Mandela

“If I could go back and pick a single day in my life – in sports – to live over again, my choice might surprise you. Here’s the day I would pick if I could go back in time: I would like to conduct one more day of practice in the gym. Each day of practice was, by far, the most fulfilling, exciting and memorable thing I did as a coach – teaching those under my supervision how to achieve success as members of a team. ‘The journey is better than the inn,’ Cervantes wrote. The struggle, the planning, the teaching and learning, the seeking (which, of course, is the journey) surpasses all else for me, including records, titles or national championships. My joy was in the journey. Perhaps you might examine the source of your own happiness – joy. Is it in the journey or only in the prize, the inn?”

– John Wooden
The final question which must be asked is not at all complicated and yet it has the most far-reaching potential of all ten questions. You have to consider who your dream will benefit. Unless and until achieving your dream will benefit those who are closest and dearest to you, it won’t have the power to motivate you to greatness.

The great people in any society are not those who earn the most money. Rather, the most revered people are those who do things that benefit others. They made a tangible difference in the quality of life of other people. This is something you should aspire to as well.

As a generalization, most people tend to answer the significance question in three distinct stages throughout their lives:

**Stage 1**: I want to do something significant for myself

You will probably spent the formative part of your career building a personal foundation from which you can work and serve. You can’t genuinely help others until you have something interesting to offer. You will have to invest in yourself before you can give to others.

**Stage 2**: I want to do something significant for others

As you become more successful, there comes a time when you will ask: “Am I going to climb the mountain of success just for my own benefit or am I going to reach out and help others succeed as well?” Once you have your career sorted, you’ll start thinking about how you can modify your dream so it benefits others as well.

**Stage 3**: I want to do something significant with others

Once you start doing good things, you will realize with a little teamwork you could do a lot more. You’ll start aspiring to draft others into your dream because you’ll realize when a group of people come together with a common aim, mountains can get moved. In this stage, your dream will morph from being big and audacious into a cause that adds value to society as a whole.
So ask yourself:
■ Is my dream about the struggle for survival?
■ Am I striving for success or significance?
■ Is my dream powerful enough that I can and should dedicate my life and career to it?

Being a success is all well and good, but it's significance that counts. Smart people find ways to take their contributions to society to the next level. They dream big and include others in their dreams. They work to make the world a better place than they personally found it. As you work to answer the significance question for yourself, you'll probably find you end up in the same neighborhood. Make it happen.

“If a man for whatever reason has the opportunity to lead an extraordinary life, he has no right to keep it to himself.”
– Jacques-Yves Cousteau

“The first half of life has to do with getting and gaining, learning and earning. The second half is more risky because it has to do with living beyond the immediate.”
– Bob Bulford

“You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.”
– Woodrow Wilson

“A day lived without doing something good for others is a day not worth living.”
– Mother Teresa

“I never perfected an invention without thinking in terms of how it would benefit others.”
– Thomas Edison

“It’s easy to make a buck. It’s a lot tougher to make a difference.”
– Tom Brokaw

“Start doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly, you are doing the impossible.”
– Saint Francis of Assisi

“If you're not doing something with your life, it doesn't matter how long it is. It's not enough to just survive. You need to really live.”
– John Maxwell

“Dreams come a size too big so that we can grow into them.”
– Josie Bisset

“One thing I’ve noticed about romantics: They try to create a new and better world from the drabness of everyday life. That is Starbucks’s aim too. We try to create, in our stores, an oasis, a little neighborhood spot where you can take a break, listen to some jazz, or ponder universal or personal or even whimsical questions over a cup of coffee. Who dreams up such a place? From my personal experience, I’d say that the more uninspiring your origins, the more likely you are to use your imagination and invent
worlds where everything seems possible. That’s certainly true of me.”
– Howard Schultz

“You aren’t an accident. You weren’t mass produced. You aren’t an assembly line product. You were deliberately planned, specifically gifted, and lovingly positioned on Earth by the Master Craftsman.”
– Max Lucado

“Dreams are renewable. No matter what our age or condition, there are still untapped possibilities within us and new beauty waiting to be born.”
– Dale Turner

“If you desire to live your dream, you cannot afford to answer yes to just one or two of these questions. The more times you can answer yes, the greater the odds that you will achieve your dream. And that’s a good thing, because when you achieve your dream, the world becomes a better place.”
– John Maxwell

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