

MAKING DREAMS HAPPEN

by Alison Waines

Here's a simple step-by-step approach to achieving anything - whether it's losing weight, finding a partner, getting a new career, writing a novel, starting a new hobby, going to an evening class, moving house...

1. Identify your dreams/goals

Brainstorm: "I'd like to be..." I'd like to do..." I'd like to have..."

Find the one that is Number One priority for you right now.

2. Check the validity of your Dream

Imagine achieving your most compelling dream in detail, as though it is happening right now.

What does it feel like? Do you really want it? Are you willing to fully accept everything that comes with this dream? (Many dreams require a lot of hard work and some dreams are better left as just 'dreams')

3. Fear of Success

Make a list of the fears you have of *succeeding* in this dream:

"I want... but I'm afraid that if I get it, then..." (complete the sentence)

Examine and Challenge each fear. For example: "I want to get this promotion at work, but I'm afraid that if I get it, people will expect me to know exactly what I'm doing and I'll be scared of looking an idiot." To challenge this fear, explore how you'll deal with the situation, for example, by getting in first and asking others' advice, allowing yourself to get things wrong and preparing others by letting them know from the start that you're learning on the job and won't be perfect.

4. Self-Image

Describe your *old* self-image (the person you are *before* achieving this dream, for example: insecure, over-cautious, bored, lonely).

Describe the *opposites* to these (such as confident, go-getting, interested, sociable). Imagine that this is your *new* self-image.

How does this *new* self-image feel? Is it right for you?

Will your dream give you these positive aspects?

If not, do you need to re-think and adjust your dream?

Remember that what we are usually searching for in any dream is an *EXPERIENCE* - such as the experience of feeling fulfilled, winning, being creative, belonging, appreciated, loved. Check out the experiences you want to

have alongside your dream. If they don't match, use the *experiences* you want to guide you towards a better dream.

5. Visualisation

Picture yourself with your new self-image engaged in your dream. Vividly imagine your dream; pick out a moment/memory from the past which makes the dream seem a logical progression. How many links to your dream are there with your past? Does this flow naturally, or is it a real U-turn when compared to the rest of your life? Does it fit who you really are?

Then picture yourself going *beyond* the dream into the future (six months, or two years in the future).

How will this dream change your life? (We often forget to project beyond the point of achieving the dream). How will it affect those you care about? What might the consequences be? For example, you may realise that if you move to the country, then your plans to train as a self-employed healer may need a re-think, as you won't find many clients out in the sticks.

6. Act as if...

In whatever small ways are possible, act as if this dream has already come true for you. How would you think, feel, walk, speak, relate to others, behave etc, if your dream/goal had been achieved? How would you be different? Use this 'energy' to start making a move towards your goal.

7. Break it down

One of the biggest reasons that people don't make headway with their goals and dreams is that they expect too much from themselves and get stuck at the first post. Break your dreams down into small steps. Work backwards from the end-point in a systematic way until you can see what the very first step would be. Do this in a sheet of paper, so you map out the whole process. Add ideas in if you realise you've missed a step. Put dates next to when certain steps need to be done. Preparation is key. And determination. If your first step is to call a college to ask for a prospectus and the line is engaged - don't lose heart and give up. Put a note on your desk to call again in ten minutes ...and again until you get through. If that college doesn't have the course you want, try the next one on your list. Don't expect it all to slot into place! With this approach, you'll get there...

Don't forget that sometimes 'self-help' of this kind isn't enough - and you may need the support of a professional Counsellor or Life-Coach.