

## IMAGINING YOUR DESTINY



How can you unleash creativity, a quality that seems elusive but is actually inborn? By not allowing ego to stifle the creative impulse.

Everyone is naturally creative. Yet many people find this inherent capacity elusive. In fact, most of us assume that our natural default is to think "inside the box," not outside.

Some people have an innate ability to express their originality with ease. Perhaps you know someone who always seems to have a common sense answer to whatever question or issue is confounding you. Or, perhaps, you have a friend who is so inventive that he or she can take ordinary objects and fashion them into something very artistic.

Once we lent our summer home a person like this. When we returned, we discovered that he had twisted a rusted anchor wire around some driftwood to sculpt a graceful ballerina. It still stands next to our front porch.

So why is it that some individuals can express themselves inventively and freshly irrespective of their circumstance? Well one answer lies in an old Upanishad text:

We are as our heart's desire is.  
As our heart's desire is, so is our will.  
As our will is, so is our deed.  
As our deed is, so is our destiny.

Let's explore what these simple words are pointing towards. Each of us has been given two gifts, the conscious experience of life and free will. With these we can achieve our dream by creating the kind of life that is truly our heart's desire.

When we're young, it is easy to lose sight of this fact. Sometimes we take the opinions of others too seriously, bow to the fashions of our contemporaries, or assume the role our parents have scripted for us. But inside each of us lives a dream that is asking to be nurtured and cherished.

What is the glimmer that lives inside you?

For my son, who is 11, the dream may involve working with children, caring for animals, studying nature, or drawing. It is already apparent that his deepest joy comes when he is absorbed in any of these activities. I can literally see his joy stimulating his

inventiveness, for example, when he is playing with his younger cousins. His opportunity, as it is for all of us, is to bring his dream to life using his God-given creative capacity.

Now some people say dreams are for children. But don't we say about the most successful people that they "dreamt a big dream"? Ted Turner certainly saw something in creating a world news organization in CNN that influences more people than any government or dictator. The Wright brothers transcended their earth-bound bicycle factory by inventing the first flying machine.

Work seems like an avocation for these people. Even serious businessmen like Dave Packard or Bill Hewlett spoke about their jobs as just "playing around." It sure beats seeing work as a way to earn your living, does it not?

The second line of the verse points to the power of one's will, the energy necessary to bring our dreams to life. Lots of us dream, but few of us realize our dreams. Bringing a vision to life takes effort. We need to take action if we want our dreams to become tangible. Otherwise, they remain only fleeting thoughts never brought to life via our actions.

The will has two faces, one obsessed with the "self," the other devoted to "selflessness." If we turn in the direction of "What is best for me?" or "Where is mine?" then we risk turning our dream into a nightmare.

What I am pointing to is how self-absorption turns action from the sublime to mere drudgery. For example, if you are concerned about how your actions appear to others, you can very easily lose focus on your dream. If you are beset by worries, then you are either reliving past memories or anticipating worrisome things that you've simply imagined, and letting these worries crowd out your deepest desire. Or if you are frantically rushing from activity to activity, then how can you possibly remain fresh to possibilities and not overlook the obvious?

But whenever our hearts are not looking to satisfy our egocentric desires but rather to serve the needs of others, then our will is free to act unfettered. Paradoxically, we begin to see all sorts of ways to further our dream when we are not thinking about ourselves!

Do you think Werner Von Braun had any idea of how he was going to put a man on the moon in less than ten years? What about Mahatma Gandhi? When he set out from South Africa to India, did he know how he was going to overthrow the British Raj? Or how about Joe Torre? Did he actually imagine that he could take the Yankees to four World Series after having been fired as manager of three other teams?

It is paradoxical that the moment we turn away from our personal desires, our deepest desire takes form gracefully and effortlessly. Not only does this frame of mind tap into the most profound source of creativity, it also unites us with others who share our

vision. Haven't you been drawn to help others achieve their desires when you saw that their hearts were pure? And conversely, haven't you sat on your hands when you suspected that it was only about them?

"As your will is, so is your deed," say the sages. They are pointing to the Karmic law that every action has a consequence. A pure and calm mind yields a fruitful thought that, in turn, generates a positive feeling that, ultimately, leads to right action -- right action in the sense that the deed is both intuitive and obvious.

But they are also saying that the creative impulse is stifled before the action is taken if the will absorbed in wondering 1) Will this really work, 2) Is the effort worth it, 3) What if I don't get recognition, or 4) Suppose I look stupid. Where would you be, where would your company be, where would the world be, if we all looked beyond our narrow egos into the very depths of our souls and called forth the power there in service to our dreams?

Living your dream is a step-by-step process. Every moment presents you with the possibility of taking an action towards realizing your deepest desire. Like an infant learning to walk, your first steps may be a bit tentative and unsteady, but pretty soon you are able to stride with purpose and certainty.

People who set out on this journey end up creating their own destiny, a destiny that looks to others as though it was written in the stars. How could that person have ever become anything else? Yet, for the individual, it seems more like a miracle, in the sense of "How in the world did my life ever turn out like this?" Profound feelings of gratitude and appreciation make it easy to dedicate your life in service to the dream. And the productivity that the dream generates as one grows older can produce energy far greater than that of someone years younger.

Dr. Barry Brazelton is a pediatrician who has long recognized that the best way to improve childcare is to help parents trust their intuition and to teach doctors to listen to the parents. Not only has he become the "Dr. Spock" of the current generation of mothers, but he also looks 55 and acts 35, not his actual 75!

Yet, after having had an enormous impact on tens of thousands of babies, here is a man who still gets up every day, puts on his white coat and sees children with an enthusiasm and joy that is contagious.

It is ironic. When you begin the journey of your life, you are seeking fulfillment by searching for your dream. As your dream becomes real, manifested by your deeds, it is your dream in the end that seeks you out. For at the closing stages of your life, it is your destiny that guides your deeds. And you find yourself in service to something far more profound and spiritual than you ever could imagine, wondering all the time how you could have been so fortunate to create the life that you only dreamed of as a child.

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