

Chapter 6

EXERCISE YOUR POWER TO CHOOSE

Simply dreaming great dreams will not change your life; although, it is a first step in getting what you want. What do you do with these dreams? How could they possibly become reality? What would it take?

Many factors need to be considered so that you can make an informed decision whether or not to take action on these great ideas. Sift your dreams, your right brain, imaginative thinking, through the logical sieve of the left brain. That will lead you to a reasoned course of action. We form the dream in the right hemisphere of our brain, but the left hemisphere has to believe that the dream is do-able, in the realm of possibility. This allows a belief to be born and from that belief, a vision is born. The subconscious mind can then help us make it happen.

Visions are internal gyroscopes, guiding us in the direction of the person we want to become. They pull us in the direction of our desired outcome while we make daily decisions. When faced with choices, instead of thinking in terms of today or tomorrow, we are more inclined to look to the future and ask ourselves what those choices will mean in the long run. A vision is a dream that you feel is reachable, even if it seems outrageous.

Analyze the Dream You Selected

Many of us overlook the process of analyzing and jump right into action when we have a bright idea. Analysis is a key area that can make life work a lot better for us. By analyzing the possibilities and perils associated with a dream, we are in a better position to evaluate the potential effects. This is no easy task. Bringing dreams into reality takes effort.

One of my associates, a successful lawyer in Washington, DC, stopped off for a few days in Hawaii while returning from a trip to Japan. She was so impressed with the wonderful people she met that she was unhappy when she returned to Washington. There she resumed her "rat race" routine working long hours and commuting in rush hour traffic. She reminisced about what she had experienced in Hawaii and quickly decided to return there to live. She gave up her practice, sold most of her belongings, and moved. Shortly after settling into her new surroundings, she discovered flying bugs, wind, and other annoyances. She had not considered

the challenge of starting over or the length of time it took to reach the mainland where she still needed to conduct business. She had acted too hastily. Reality turned her dream into a nightmare. She just did not understand the power of her personal choices.

Evaluate

The dream can only become reality when a conscious and whole-hearted choice is made to follow that dream. Our task is to analyze and evaluate the product of our creative imagination. Find a dream and take positive action to make it happen.

Think of your dream and try to envision any obstacles that might interfere with its success. Often it seems like circumstances are hiding along our path, waiting to trip us. Turn over the rocks and see what is standing in your way. Look at the obstacles, hurdles that will have to be overcome. Maybe you dream of becoming a surgeon. What will it take? More education, more money, more time and energy? Are these things that could prevent you from achieving your dream? Think of ways you could overcome those obstacles.

Look at the risks. What do you have to lose? On the other hand, what resources do you already have? Perhaps you already have a related degree and savings or investments to cover costs. What benefits will come from this effort for you and others? Most of all, in the final analysis, you must develop a belief in your dream and in yourself.

Make a Decision

In every single decision we make, there is power--the power to shape and control our own lives. Unfortunately, most of the time we do not realize or understand how powerful we really are. Instead of pursuing our own empowerment, we sometimes blame our choices on outside influences. We speak in terms of what acted on us to cause a situation. How many times have you heard someone say, "I had no choice," or "I couldn't help it." Was it true? Or did the person just not understand the power of his or her personal choices?

Every day we make dozens, if not hundreds, of decisions. Some of them are fairly routine: what we will eat for breakfast, what we will wear, what radio station we will listen to. Some involve work: how to answer a letter, when to place a call. Other decisions touch

our personal lives: whom to date, whom to marry, should we buy a house, or move to a new city.

When I decided to move from Texas to the Washington, DC, area, my friends found it hard to believe. "Leave Texas?" "Do you know about the crime rate in DC. . . and all that traffic?" "It SNOWS up there!" Yes, I had considered all that and the benefits, too. When I arrived in the DC area, I was met with, "You left Texas to come up here???" However, my career opportunities were greater in DC. There was crime where I lived in Texas, too. Traffic may be worse in the DC area, but I could learn to deal with it.

My vision was living a life of ease in my senior years, and my career move was in line with that vision. It turned out to be an excellent decision. I eventually landed a promotion in the Pentagon and spent several very challenging and exciting years there.