

LIVING THE DREAM

Break free of the status quo and create your dream life

Written By:



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AN EPIPHANY! YOU CAN DESIGN YOUR DREAM LIFE...

“Life is a daring adventure, or is nothing at all.” Helen Keller

I was nine when I first caught a glimpse of someone living a dream life. My mother had a friend who quit his position as a professor and flew to Africa to become a wildlife photographer. Our family rarely ventured outside of our small town, so we were excited to receive his postcards of topless native African women, just like National Geographic Magazine! He went on to visit 200 countries around the globe, living as a nature photographer.

As I grew, I envied others who were “lucky” enough to have exciting lifestyles doing what they loved. Living my own dream seemed so far out of reach.

That is, until I had an epiphany.

It was October 25, 1996. I remember the date because it was a major turning point in my life. New to the beach town of San Clemente, California, I was invited to a party. That night I met a long-haired surfer who was living an envious life at the beach. He painted and sold

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his artwork for a living. He surfed anytime he wanted and he traveled to exotic lands for months at a time.

It was a life, he explained, that he had designed himself. At the time, he was 25 years old.

We spent more time together after that night. We had long conversations about his adventures around the globe.

I was fascinated by the prospect of being able to travel freely, anytime.

He said that I, too, could live a life like that.

He would dramatically stretch his hand out before me and say “*Maria, everything you want is right here. All you have to do is grab it.*”

Until then, I had no idea that you could live exactly how you chose. I thought you just got lucky if you fell into a job that you loved or if you had enough money to travel or if you fell in love with the perfect person.

Now I know the truth: There is no luck. Instead, there is something better and in our control; **there is endless possibility.**

I went on to design the life of my dreams. It took me about six years, because of **anchors** and **mental programming** that held me back and slowed me down.

Now I own a business doing what I love, travel abroad anytime I choose, and am filled with joy and surrounded by positive people.

My desire is that you take the leap and design your dream life, too.

Reading this book is the first step. I'll get you started. The rest is up to you.

Oh, and that wise surfer that I met back in 1996? I married him.



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YOUR “DREAM LIFE” IS AVAILABLE AND WAITING FOR YOU

“Nothing’s going to happen to you until you make it happen.” Maria Brophy

Living your dream life is about doing what you love, regularly. Doing what you love daily. Not just once a year for a weeks’ vacation. Not just every five years when the moon is in the right alignment with your bank account. **It’s living it every day.**

Right now, **as you read this book, you will feel yourself getting excited about the endless possibilities that life has to offer you.** Allow yourself be thrilled at the thought that you can be anything, do anything, have anything that your heart desires.

If you want to climb the largest mountain in the world, it’s available to you. If you want to buy a Harley and bike across the country, it’s a possibility. If you dream of painting the next best masterpiece, you can do that, too.

To create your new reality, **you’ll have to open your mind wider than it’s ever been.** You’ll have to suspend all of the anchors and thoughts that could hold you back. Leave those anchors behind as you make a new plan for yourself.

Life is too long to keep waiting for something to happen. **It’s time to design your dream life.** Let’s get started!

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YOU HAVE THE POWER

You already instinctively know that you were born with the ability to design your life to be anything you want it to be; otherwise you wouldn't be reading this.

Unfortunately, I didn't learn this principle until I had already wasted many years with **the wrong people in the wrong jobs doing the wrong things**.

The mistakes from my past are behind me and they make my current life taste that much sweeter. But I can't stop wondering where I would be if I had known then what I know now.

It's never too late to design your life. There are people who actually don't start living their dream until they are in their 60's and 70's.

But I hope you start much sooner, because **life is a glorious trip we are on and it's meant to be enjoyed**.

IT'S YOUR SPIRITUAL DUTY

The burning question since the beginning of time is “why do we exist?” The answer is deceptively simple.

Teachings from top religious leaders in the world, from Jesus to Buddha, can be narrowed down to one concept: **We are here on earth to be joyful.**

Think about that for a minute – we are here to feel joy.

Of course, we can expand the meaning of joy into several categories. We are here on earth to feel joy through:

- Connection to people and nature
- Giving to others
- Creating
- Experiencing pleasure through all that the world gives us (love, food, adventure, art)
- Using our natural talents and gifts

Life is at its most joyful when we are living the life that we are meant to live. We are meant to live doing that which we are drawn to.

This is why designing your dream life is important; it allows you to live the way you were meant to.

WHAT THE DREAM LIFE LOOKS LIKE

Living your own dream life looks like this:

1. Living where you are most happy
2. Having a peaceful home
3. Participating in activities that bring you joy, every day
4. Creating work from your natural born talents
5. Enjoying your own form of spirituality
6. Being content with what you have while joyfully striving for the things you want

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In a nutshell, the dream life is living exactly how you want to, no matter how farfetched, exotic or impossible it may seem.

The dream life is different for every person. Here are some examples:

- Extreme living as a kayaker who goes on dangerous expeditions
- A dancer spending evenings gliding through ballrooms
- A writer living in the mountains
- Traveling two to three months out of the year
- Making a living doing something unusual that you love
- Taking a mini-retirement every year

YOUR LIFE IS NOW:

“Life is what happens to you while you’re busy making other plans...” John Lennon

Today, it’s happening. Look around you. The universe is operating at full speed. Children are laughing, people are dying, flowers are blooming, and somewhere it’s raining. **And here you are, either embracing it all or waiting for something to happen.**

Many people make the mistake of thinking “I’LL BE HAPPY WHEN”

I graduate;

I hit my career goals;

The kids grow up we’ll really have fun;

We retire;

When, um, I ran out of time....

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Your life is NOW. Waiting for something to happen is a terrible habit to get into.

Make the decision to start living immediately, today, this hour, this minute.

MENTAL PROGRAMMING THAT KEEPS PEOPLE FROM DESIGNING THEIR DREAM LIVES:

“Everything popular is wrong.” Oscar Wilde

There are many limiting beliefs that we pick up along the road of life. These beliefs become a hard-wired mental programming that holds us back from reaching our full potential in many different areas.

We have to realize that all of the things we think we are SUPPOSED to do are just illusion.

Parents, religion, tradition and culture: all of these are ideas made up by people. They dictate what we should and should not do. And because we are born into it, it seems normal, and normal seems right. But it doesn't have to be.

This philosophy can be easily understood when you look at how differently people think from culture to culture.

In some countries, it's WRONG (and illegal) for women to work. These people are mentally programmed to think this way.

In the West it's WRONG (and illegal) to PREVENT a woman from working.

This is also mental programming. Your belief as to how it should be depends on which culture you were born into.

My point is this: just because you were taught something from the time you were little, doesn't make it right or truthful. It's all a matter of mental programming.

PROGRAMMING UNTRUTH #1: I DON'T DESERVE TO LIVE A REMARKABLE LIFE IF OTHERS AREN'T:

Some people feel that having all that you want is extravagant. It's greedy. It somehow takes away from others.

That is a very naive belief. There is enough love and joy and pleasure and money and food and excitement to go around to everyone who wants it. By living your dream life, you are helping to make it possible for others, by being an inspiration.

PROGRAMMING UNTRUTH #2: I SHOULD BE PRACTICAL AND FOLLOW THE STATUS QUO:

We are raised to believe that we need to follow a traditional roadmap, the same one that our parents before us followed, and their parents before them, and so on. This is “following the status quo.”

THE STATUS QUO PROGRAM:

Sometime between being born and graduating from high school, our inner desires and talents have been misplaced, even squashed, by what others think we should be.

We have been programmed to think like everyone else.

I've met professionals who went to college to earn a degree in something they dislike, just to please their parents or to earn good money. **This is a dangerous path to take** – one which leads to depression, drugs and divorce – an unhappy life.

There are too many rules and restrictions that we place on ourselves that hold us back. **Most of what holds us back is the mental programming in our own heads, learned at a young age by the people who influenced us.**

How many times have you met a very talented artist who chose a different career, because they were discouraged by family who said they couldn't earn money creating? They could have used their talent early on in life, if only they had trusted in their own instincts and bypassed the status quo.

Think of what the world would look like if everyone was living up to their potential, doing that which they can use their natural talents for.

I see a world where everyone is not only thriving, but joyful and generous and glowing with happiness.

Regardless of what your culture or upbringing was, allow nothing to hold you back from choosing your own path.

The status quo is an antiquated path that's taught by our parents, churches and schools. If we are to fit in and be accepted by our peers, we are programmed to believe that we should:

- Live by the rules of your parents beliefs
- Go to College then find a job
- Get Married and have 2.5 children
- Buy a House
- Retire and THEN take a Vacation
- Die

The problem with this program is that it rarely lines up with your own purpose. It's not YOUR destiny; it is someone else's program.

The other problem is that this plan is as boring as watching paint dry. No wonder there are so many divorces and medications and nervous breakdowns....

Throw this old worn-out program out of the window. It doesn't work. Create your own.

YOUR LIFE IS PRE-DESTINED

“You weren’t an accident. You were deliberately planned, specifically gifted, and lovingly positioned on the Earth...” Max Lucado, best-selling author.

Your life is pre-destined in that you were born with certain talents and desires. Those talents and desires are your destined path. Too often, people turn away from their destiny, without even knowing it.

What are you good at? What lights your fire? What are you drawn to? **The answers to these questions will send you in the right direction.** Anything that you were meant to do, you will enjoy doing. **You will be drawn to it.**

Anything that you don’t enjoy, you weren’t meant to do. Try putting a nature lover behind a desk in a cubicle. He won’t survive for long.

Since I was a little girl, I was drawn to people who traveled. If you were a backpacker I’d ask you ten thousand questions. I was fascinated by artists and writers and stories about adventures. It was not a coincidence that I ended up marrying a big-wave surfer who was an artist and world traveler!

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We all arrived on earth as a little bundle of flesh already knowing deep inside what we were meant to do. That's where our natural desires and talents come from.

The greatest tragedy is when you turn away from those things that you are drawn to because:

“It’s not practical; your parents disapproved; your wife didn’t like it; you were scared; the money wasn’t there.”

Run towards what you like. Your inner guidance is telling you where to go. Listen to it.

My 9 year old son Dylan is an inventor. He’s known it since he was five. I’ve tried putting Dylan into sports because I thought I was supposed to. He said “*Mom, all I want to do is make inventions.*” I stopped trying to get him to be someone he’s not. He’s an inventor. That’s what lights his fire.

Some people have their own hopes and dreams for you. But it may not be in alignment with who you really are. **It’s up to you to take control of your life regardless of what anyone else thinks.**

Warning: Once you start living the life you dream of, some people will think you've gone crazy. **You have to accept that not everyone will like your choices.** And that's okay. They don't have to. They aren't responsible for your life, you are.

The happiest people in the world are doing what your average person would never dream of: Living abroad, home schooling their kids, staying single, becoming an actor, writing and painting, living a modest existence or climbing Mt. Everest.

It doesn't matter how crazy or boring your dream is, it just matters if it's a fit for you.

Luckily, my husband always trusted his instincts. When he was a teenager, the high school guidance counselor gave advice that would make perfect sense to most; *"Drew, you can't just paint and surf the rest of your life."*

Drew was frustrated that an adult would tell him that the only two things he was good at, he couldn't do. Drew stubbornly replied *"That's exactly what I'm going to do!"* And he did; Drew has spent the last twenty years surfing and painting for a living.

Don't be afraid to do the ridiculous. Open your mind to possibilities that seem insane. **The real gems are jammed in between what we call "normal" and "crazy."**

FOUR STEPS TO DESIGNING YOUR DREAM LIFE

STEP 1 - DECIDE

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

To get what you want, you first have to decide what it is.

Some of us can't decide. Many forces hold us back from making a solid decision. One is our parents. We don't want to disappoint. The other is the fear of failure. Another is the reluctance to make a commitment.

You'll have to squash your hesitations and decide if you want to be the one who determines your path. **Otherwise, your path will be chosen for you by default, and probably not how you want it.**

GENERATE A LITTLE MAGIC - WRITE IT DOWN!

Let's write down what your dream life looks like.

Magic occurs when you write things down. The intentions you write end up happening over time. It's a secret shared by many successful, happy people.

The act of writing what you want helps to cement it in your subconscious mind, which makes you more aware when opportunities arise that will help you reach these desires.

Answers will come to you while you're singing in the shower or walking your dog or staring at a flower. You'll seem to attract people and things that can help you get to where you decided you want to go.

Get paper and a pen, and intend to have fun with this. Find a quiet place and create a relaxing mood. Light a candle and put on some soft music.

Put yourself in a state of mind of day dreaming. **LEAVE YOUR LOGICAL MIND BEHIND!** This is an exercise in dreaming up what you'd LIKE to see, not what's happening with your life as it is today.

List the following categories, then write under each one what your ideal dream scenario would look like (there's a worksheet at the end of this book to help you):

FAMILY / LOVE – Describe your version of a happy home life. Do you see yourself single or do you wish for a loving spouse and kids? Describe your relationship. Is it playful, serious? Don't think about what you currently have right now, but what you'd love to have.

WORK – Describe your dream job. What interests you? What are you good at? List your talents, even those that you don't think have anything to do with a career. What would make you want to jump out of bed every morning?

TRAVEL – List places you would love to go and for how long.

HOME – Where do you want to live? Are you drawn to the mountains or the ocean? Do you love the city life, or would you be wildly happy on a farm in Montana?

HOBBIES – What lights your fire? Do you dream of kayaking the Nile? Or learning how to surf, or paint or play Led Zeppelin songs on the guitar?

After this exercise, you should have a good idea of what your dream life looks like. And it's from this that you can springboard into making it a reality. Sum it up in a paragraph. Below is mine:

I will live at the beach where I can surf and take walks on the sand. I will spend several months each year exploring the world. I will cultivate a happy family home where we laugh and have fun. I will write books that help people and work in the arts.

***RECOMMENDATION:** To go into this exercise deeper, get the book **CREATIVE VISUALIZATION: USE THE POWER OF YOUR IMAGINATION TO CREATE WHAT YOU WANT IN YOUR LIFE** by Shakti Gawain. This book helped me greatly with the process of creating my life design.

STEP 2 - COMMIT

“The achievement of your goal is assured the moment you commit yourself to it.” Mack R. Douglas

Committing to your dream life can require motivation and self discipline.

It's easy to get caught up in the upsets and urgency of daily life. Things that appear to be more urgent will come up and if you let them, they'll stop you in your tracks.

You have to side-step those detractors and stay true to your planned life design.

Sometimes I'll hear myself saying "*Maybe we should skip our big trip this year. The money is tight, business is growing, and we just have too much to do.*"

Drew always reminds me of our commitment to take a big trip every year, and the big picture, which is represented by a lifetime of memories that are weaved by doing what we love to do.

A lifetime of memories: THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT I CAN MAKE

Look at your dream life in this manner: what you do weekly, monthly, yearly, makes up a life of memories and joy. If you let years go by without doing that which you love, you die having lived a life you didn't want.

Chilling, I know. But truthfully – if I died today, the only regret I would have is not seeing my son grow up. Everything else is complete for me. I've already done most of the big things I've dreamed about. I want you to be able to say that, too.

Commitment to your life design is what's going to keep you on track, even when things or people try to stop you from it.

STEP 3: ELIMINATE ANCHORS THAT BLOCK YOUR GROWTH:

“There are two types of people--anchors and motors. Lose the anchors and get with the motors because the motors are going somewhere and they're having more fun. The anchors will just drag you down.”
Wyland, world famous marine artist

There are many anchors that hold us back from living our dream. Cut loose the anchors and you can motor ahead with your new dream life.

DON'T TAKE THE WRONG ADVICE

Your number one anchor is well meaning people who care about you but don't know any better. Usually it begins with parents or other family members, then teachers, bosses and friends.

Only you can decide what's best for you. All these other people mean well, but they haven't a clue.

Often when someone crushes your dreams, they do it from a place of what they THINK is to be true. It's what they were taught, or read or heard.

When I took a solo back-packing trip around the world, many caring folks tried to talk me out of it because of the dangers. What they don't know is that I was safer in Italy and France than I'll ever be in Los Angeles! Their concern for my safety came from their lack of knowledge.

My good friend, freelance artist [Al McWhite](#), dreamed of leaving his fulltime job to work for himself. Many people tried to talk him out of it, because they feared he'd end up a "starving artist." He didn't listen. Even though he had three young children at the time, he left the security of his job and set up shop in a spare bedroom. It didn't take long for him to get to where he was making more money working for himself than he did in his "secure" job. That was a few years ago. He is thriving more than ever, his wife now works with him full-time, and he is wildly happy about his decision.

GET OUT OF THE WRONG JOB

Too often we stay in the wrong job due to fear; fear of losing money, fear of not being able to make it doing what we love, fear of disappointing others.

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Since you spend at least 40 hours a week in your job, it's crucial that you love what you're doing. It's a huge part of your lifestyle and your mind-set.

I spent 15 years in a job that wasn't right for me, in a company of negative people. The money was good and the benefits were great, but working there drained away my beautiful inner energy.

When I finally quit, I stepped back and saw how toxic that environment had been for me. Now, working with my husband and creating my own future, I set my own hours and do what makes me happy.

It takes courage to leave a secure job. The more money you make, the harder it is to break free of it. But once you leave it, you will find a way to earn money doing what you want to do. How? When you close one door many others open.

If you put yourself in a position where you have to figure out how to survive financially while doing what you love, you will figure it out. Trust yourself.

LET GO OF THE PAST

It's a human flaw to get sucked into the "*poor me, poor me, pour me another drink*" mentality! Most everyone had a rough childhood, people are assaulted and bad things happen.

When I was 12 my father punched me in the face so hard that my feet flew up in the air and I landed on my head. Then he went back to watching television. It wasn't the first or the last time that happened.

For many years I carried anger and sadness. "Why didn't he love me? Why was I born in that family? Why me?"

I learned, eventually, to let it go. I created my own self-worth. I found great love through friends and my other family members.

Until I let go of my painful past, I couldn't move forward into the greatness that my life is now. **It isn't possible to have one foot in the past and both feet in the present.**

Let it go, let it go, let it go. How? **Choose** to stop thinking about the bad things that happened to you and instead focus on the many great things that have happened, or are about to. And be easy on yourself – it takes time and practice. Sometimes it can take years, but start letting go now.

STEP 4 – CREATE YOUR NEW REALITY

“First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do.” Epictetus

Now that you have your life design written down, you’ve committed and you are eliminating blockages, **start planning out what you have to do to transform your life into that which you dream.**

If your dream is to start your own business, then research that field or industry, get educated on it, make a plan and make it happen.

If your dream is to take a mini retirement every six months and travel, than book tickets today! Why wait? Once you’ve committed by paying for flights, the rest will fall into place.

If you want to live at the beach but you are stuck in the city, start taking steps to move there. If you have to change jobs, than begin that process. If you have to convince your wife, than start working on that as well.

Take one step right now to create this life you dream of. And then take another, and another.

NOT SURE HOW? SEE HOW OTHERS ARE DOING IT

“Everything you want is out there waiting for you to ask. Everything you want also wants you. But you have to take action to get it.” Jack Canfield

If you dream of pulling up and moving overseas for a few years and taking your kids with you, the good news is that others are doing it already. Find out how by reading their blogs and articles online.

If you want to start your own business blogging full time so you can work from anywhere in the world, scores of people are doing this successfully and you can learn how from them.

For just about everything you dream of doing, trust me, someone else has done it. Look to them for inspiration and advice.

THIS IS YOUR LIFE

“This is your practice. Don’t worry about what your neighbor is doing. Do what’s best for you.”
Elissa, Asana Fit instructor of Forest Yoga

Designing your dream life is like getting a custom suit made. Every single one is different. You have to choose the measurements that are perfect for you. In doing so, don’t worry about what anyone else is doing with their custom design. And, at the same time, don’t worry about what anyone thinks of yours, either.

It’s your dream, your design, and your adventure.

My yoga instructor, Elissa, is wonderfully intuitive. In her class there are beginners practicing right next to masters. While one person is new to yoga and can barely touch their toes, the yogi on the mat next to them is standing on his head with his legs crossed in lotus position.

Elissa encourages us with the reminder: *“This is YOUR practice. Listen to YOUR body and do what’s best for YOU.”*

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Apply this wisdom to your life right now. This is your life. Do what's best for you. Don't worry about what your neighbors, friends or family is doing.

It's your practice. Find joy. Live your dream.

Maria Brophy



Maria Brophy is an artists' advocate, a world traveler and a surfer. She writes a blog that helps creative people design the career and lifestyle of their dreams at <http://www.mariabrophy.com>



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<http://www.drewbrophy.com> - A wise surfing artist who has been living the dream since the 70's....

<http://theskooloflife.com/wordpress/> - He'll skool you on living the dream, in his own special way...

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"LIVING THE DREAM" WORKSHEET

Name: _____ Date: _____

"In the long run, men get only what they aim at. Therefore... .. they had better aim at something high." H. D. Thoreau

DREAM FAMILY / LOVE LIFE:

DREAM CAREER:

DREAM TRAVEL / ADVENTURE:

DREAM HOME/SPACE/LOCATION:

DREAM HOBBIES / LIFESTYLE:

Review your list regularly & write out a new one yearly. Keep them always, so you can see years later just how far you've come!

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