

Work / Life

The Power of
Desire, the False
Hope of Fantasy

NAVIGATOR

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As we move from autumn to the time of renewal and optimism we call spring, we naturally look to the future, imagine new possibilities, and anticipate new and bigger opportunities. Many of us call them "New Year's Resolutions," others call them goals or benchmarks. Some just call them plans.

Whatever you call them, there is a vital distinction between our desires and our fantasies.

We all have fantasies of winning the lottery or discovering gold in our backyard. On a moment's notice, we can fantasize about moving to Tahiti or writing a novel that becomes a runaway best seller. We use fantasies to relieve stress and give ourselves a bit of pleasure and momentary joy. Daydreams are good things!

But few of them will ever come true, and, in most cases, we don't expect or even want them to come true. We don't pursue them, and we don't develop the skills to turn our fantasies into reality. They are simply movies we play in our heads, and, for that purpose, they are perfect.

Desires, on the other hand, come from a place much deeper in our hearts, and they are more challenging, more practical, and, in some ways, less exciting. Our desires are the things we truly want in our lives. They are the commitments we make, the skills we learn, the investments, effort and strategies we develop, and the actions we take. Our desires and aspirations are the things we work for.

Knowing that distinction is essential to both enjoying your fantasies and to achieving your desires. Some people confuse the two and get stuck.

Remember the old joke about the man who prayed every day that God would give him the winning lottery ticket? He finally died, went to heaven, and demanded to know why God never answered his prayer. After a moment's pause, God replied, "Well, it would have made my job a lot easier if you'd at least bought a ticket!"

Daydreams are fine, so long as you understand them. Fantasies are healthy tension relievers that most of us enjoy. They are important, and they help us relax, but they achieve little or nothing.

Desires, on the other hand, are tension creators! Aspirations and desires remind us of the difference between where we are and where we want to be. They challenge us to become more than we are, to learn more, grow more, accomplish more, and contribute more to our world. Desire makes us restless. It drives us to take risks, to experiment, and sometimes, to say exactly the right thing at precisely the opportune moment. Desires confront us with our own potential.

Desire keeps us awake at night and drives us all day long. Desires create fire and passion. They create an impatient eagerness, and they challenge us to find solutions!

Your deepest desires are the basis for the New Year's Resolutions that are NOT

forgotten or abandoned. Desires are the source of energy, passion, and hope. "Desire is the fire" that creates success.

When fantasy and desire are confused, people set their goals too far in the future, too far off. Their goals are unrealistic, and neither they nor anyone else is excited about them because no one expects them to come true. It has nothing to do with the actual size of the goal; it has to do with the distinction between fantasy and desire.

Have the courage to identify, write down, and honor your deepest desires and your highest aspirations. Get very hungry, very eager, very determined. Use your desires to create workable plans, then work your plans. Enjoy your fantasies from time to time, too. That's called entertainment, and it's a wonderful thing! But to achieve more, to have more, and to become more, know exactly what you desire, and go after it.

(Source: Dr. Philip E. Humbert,
www.philiphumbert.com)

WEB SITE PICKS

DIY: The Do-It-Yourself Network

<http://www.diy.net>

At this companion site to the DIY television network, you'll find advice on a wide variety of do-it-yourself projects. The tips cover auto repairs and maintenance, arts and crafts, decorating, gardening, home improvement, and much more. The site includes a discus-

sion forum for meeting other do-it-yourselfers.

The power of intention is a critical factor in all areas of life. Simply by intending to create synchronicity in your life, you can nurture that result.

—Deepak Chopra, in *New Age Mag*, 4/99

HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

A number of interesting studies about heart disease have tabulated the risk factors: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high glucose, obesity, and sedentary lifestyle. However, 50 percent of those who have heart attacks have none of those risk factors! Millions who die of a heart attack showed no previous indication that there is anything wrong with their hearts.

A Massachusetts study looked at this discrepancy. If smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and all the other factors trumpeted for decades as risk factors do not apply, what does? They came up with two:

1. Self-Happiness

2. Job Satisfaction

So—are you happy? Do you love your work? If you can truthfully say yes to both questions, it's likely that you won't die of a heart attack. Those two factors appear to be more important than any other risk factors.

Pleasure Heals: One of the greatest things about pleasure—apart from the sheer pleasure of it, of course—is that it's actually good for you. Savoring the delights of life protects you from disease, enhances mental health, and helps you live longer.

And playfulness, the ability to relax, forget yourself, and have fun, is an indispensable element of pleasure—it's invigorating and overrides anger, anxiety, and fear. Dr. Geoffrey Godfrey, an American expert in leisure studies, links enjoyment to healthy relationships, strong families, creativity, and spiritual growth. People who are absorbed in purely pleasurable activities, he says, have above-normal self-confidence that helps them to grasp new concepts more easily or solve problems more quickly.

Why pleasure is so good for you: Scientific studies have shown that the actual experience of pleasure lowers levels of damaging stress hormones in our bodies and boosts the performance of cells that fight disease. In one study at the University of Reading in the U.K., people were asked to recall their happiest memories. Researchers then took saliva samples to measure the levels of an antibody called immunoglobulin-A (IgA), which protects against respiratory infections. Amounts doubled 20 minutes after happy thoughts and

continued growing for 45 minutes. Even three hours later, people's immunity level was 60 percent higher than at the start of the experiment.

Memory is the scrapbook of the mind, and, if you turn to the happy pages, it strengthens the immune system, says Professor David Warburton, head of human psychopharmacology at Reading University, who led the study. He is also the founder of ARISE (Associates for Research into the Science of Enjoyment), an international group of scientists devoted to understanding the benefits of pleasure.

"We've been impressed with the sheer variety of people's pleasures," he adds. "It's not actually all chocolates and booze, but it can be spending time with the family, reading a good book, taking a long warm bath, or a walk in the country. All simple pleasures that aren't necessarily extravagant or indulgent." And this, it seems, is the path to bliss, "Your pleasure quota is the sum of enjoyment from all your activities, whatever they may be," says Professor Warburton. "People who are depressed aren't getting their pleasure quota."

Don't let guilt get in the way: Many of us behave like hamsters on a wheel trying to keep up with the daily demands of life. Where's the fun in pleasure if we're crippled with guilt about unironed shirts or unread reports? It seems guilt is as bad for us as pleasure is beneficial. Professor Warburton's study also asked people to recall guilt-ridden memories. When they did, their levels of IgA dropped.

If we could feel less guilty about engaging in our favorite activities, our health would benefit even more. Guilt undoes all the good work of pleasure, says psychologist Dr. Geoff Lowe of Hull University in the U.K., who's also a member of ARISE. He asked 30 volunteers to rate their 20 most enjoyable activities according to how much pleasure and how much guilt they afforded. "Those with more pleasure and less guilt in their lives were far more likely to have high concentrations of immunoglobulin in their saliva," says Dr. Lowe. Not surprisingly, men tended to feel less guilty than women and had IgA levels 15 to 20 percent higher.

Discover the three steps to happiness: It seems it's not quantity but variety that's the answer: a series of small delights is better than focusing on one pleasure to the exclusion of others. If we have too much of a good thing, an in-built mechanism kicks in to reduce our enjoyment, according to researchers at the University of Dundee in Scotland, who forced their subjects with chocolate. Too much is never as delicious as not quite enough.

"Pleasure has three components," explains Professor Warburton. "First is anticipation. Second, the joy of the experience, however

fleeting. Third, looking back on it through memory. You can plan to have a piece of chocolate with your coffee, relish it as you eat it and recall the moment fondly even if you didn't have the whole bar."

Build enjoyment into your life: "The only sure way to maximize pleasure is to plan it into your life," says Professor Warburton. So open your new diary and schedule time for pleasure. Be aware of playfulness too and don't work too hard at having fun. Sweating over your tennis performance won't bring the same rewards.

Keep a portfolio of long- and short-term desires and interests. Short-term pleasures are usually routine and inexpensive—listening to your favorite CD when you're driving, for instance. Long-term goals—such as a trip to the other side of the world—give you something to anticipate and plan for.

Your pleasure program: A number of the following suggestions are aimed at what you can do for others. Altruism not only brings a particular pleasure, but also engenders a return in kind.

Every day:

- Relish and enhance daily rituals—make fresh coffee rather than instant, or light candles for the supper table.
- Make sure you allow yourself a few minutes for doing nothing. Daydream, watch TV with your feet up, walk slowly through the park.
- Be ready to stop for unexpected pleasures when they come up—taking a telephone call from an old friend or joining in a game with the children.
- When you greet people, smile and look pleased to see them.
- Share a chat and a laugh with someone—a friend, neighbor, colleague, or a member of your family.
- Be with people you love. Watch television with the kids; take a companionable walk with your partner.
- Tell someone dear to you that you love them. One of the most powerful strengtheners of the immune system is a warm personal relationship.
- Use all your senses—smell, taste, and touch, as well as hearing and seeing—to savor pleasure. Studies show that sniffing pleasant odors can enhance the body's defenses against disease.
- Be nice to people. Buy something from the homeless charity; allow a fellow driver into the traffic queue ahead of you.
- As you go to bed, review the day and appreciate its moments of pleasure.

Every week:

- Buy fresh flowers and keep them on your desk at work.
- Make an appointment to meet friends for lunch or supper. Find time to visit a gallery or the cinema.
- Break your routine. If you always eat in, go out for once. Bring home little treats such as exotic fruit, smoked salmon, or a really good bottle of wine. Use the best silver and china.
- Pursue a hobby that absorbs and challenges you.
- Take up a new and enjoyable type of exercise, like swimming or belly dancing. Start with five minutes and build up to at least half an hour three times a week. You'll be amazed how gratifying it can become and how much better you'll feel for it.
- Spend time in a place of worship or visit some beautiful countryside.

Every month:

- Make an appointment to pamper yourself. Enjoy a facial or a body massage.
- Schedule a day of treats to look forward to. Some leisurely shopping (for yourself, not the kids), a trip to a stately home, a long lunch with friends you rarely see.
- If you don't already belong to one, organize a reading group or a gardening or dining club to stimulate new ideas.
- Take a weekend away—or at least plan one for the near future. Escape to the sea or an area you've always had on your wish list.

Every year:

- Take a proper holiday—two weeks away from home, with no laptop, e-mail, or mobile phone (except for emergencies), and allow yourself a day's leeway before rejoining the rat race.
- Learn something new—canoeing, jazz singing, making stained glass—anything you fancy.
- Remember birthdays with a special gesture—a handmade card or an unexpected gift. Take your friend or partner to a big show or a sports event.
- Plan a get-together of friends who live miles apart and make it special. Look out for cheap deals in spa hotels or attend a literary or drama festival together.

Tap into pleasure instantly. Discover what brings you joy so you can turn to it when life seems gray. Above all, don't forget to savor the simplest, most child-like things. Everyone is different, but some of the following may work for you:

- Treat yourself occasionally to an inexpensive luxury you don't really need, like gorgeous soap.
- Reward yourself after achieving a difficult task, even if it's just stopping for a few minutes and having a piece of fruit or listening to some good music.
- Replay a favorite video, especially a funny or romantic film.
- Phone a friend or relative you haven't spoken to for a while.
- Bring out photos of family outings, drawings and cards from the children, love letters, souvenirs of happy occasions—reminders that you're loved and appreciated—and indulge in happy memories.

(Source: Dianna Keel, SuccessCoach at FutureVisions)

HUMOR

Believe it or not, the following announcements actually appeared in various church bulletins.

Don't let worry kill you—let the church help.

Thursday night—Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and community.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the son of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.

This afternoon there will be a meeting in the South and North ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.

Tuesday at 4 PM there will be an ice cream social. All ladies giving milk will please come early.

Wednesday the ladies liturgy will meet. Mrs. Johnson will sing "Put me in my little bed" accompanied by the pastor.

Thursday at 5 PM there will be a meeting of the Little Mothers Club. All ladies wishing to be "Little Mothers" will meet with the Pastor in his study.

This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the alter.

The service will close with "Little Drops of Water." One of the ladies will start quietly and the rest of the congregation will join in.

Next Sunday a special collection will be taken to defray the cost of the new carpet. All those wishing to do something on the new carpet will come forward and do so.

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They can be seen in the church basement Saturday.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Come early and listen to our choir practice.

"Some people carry their heart in their head and some carry their head in their heart. The trick is to keep them apart yet working together."—David Hare

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Top 10 Reasons to Exercise In the Morning!

If I had to pick a single factor that I thought was most important in a successful exercise or weight loss program, it would be to exercise first thing in the morning . . . every morning! Some mornings, you may just be able to fit in a 10-minute walk, but it's important to try to do something every morning.

So why mornings?

1. Over 90 percent of people who exercise "consistently," exercise in the morning. If you want to exercise consistently, odds are in your favor if you exercise first thing in the morning.

2. When you exercise early in the morning, it "jump starts" your metabolism and keeps it elevated for hours, sometimes up to 24 hours! That means you're burning more calories all day long just because you exercised in the morning!

3. When you exercise in the morning, you'll be "energized" for the day! Personally, I feel dramatically different on days when I have and haven't exercised in the morning.

4. Many people find that morning exercise "regulates" their appetite for the day . . . that they aren't as hungry, and that they make better food choices. Several people have told me that it puts them in a "healthy mindset."

5. If you exercise at about the same time every morning—and ideally wake up at about the same time on a regular basis—your body's endocrine system and circadian rhythms adjust to that, and physiologically, some wonderful things happen. A couple of hours *before* you awaken, your body begins to prepare for waking and exercise because it "knows" it's about to happen. Why? Because it "knows" you do the same thing just about every day. You benefit from that in several ways . . .

a) It's MUCH easier to wake up. When you wake up at different times every day, it confuses your body, and thus it's never really "prepared" to awaken.

b) Your metabolism and all the hormones involved in activity and exercise begin to elevate while you're sleeping. Thus, you feel more alert, energized, and ready to exercise when you do wake up.

c) Hormones prepare your body for exercise by regulating blood pressure, heart rate, blood flow to muscles, etc.

6. For many people, that appointed time every morning becomes something they look forward to. It's time they've set aside to do something good for themselves . . . to take care of their body, mind, and soul. Many find that it's a great time to think clearly, pray, plan their day, or just relax mentally.

7. Research has demonstrated that exercise increases mental acuity . . . on average it lasts 4 to 10 hours after exercise! No sense in wasting that while you're sleeping.

8. Exercise first thing in the morning is really the only way to assure that something else won't crowd exercise out of your schedule. When your days get hectic, exercise usually takes a back seat!

9. If finding time to exercise is difficult, anyone can get up 30 to 60 minutes earlier to exercise (if it's a priority in your life). If necessary, you can go to sleep a little earlier. Also, research has demonstrated that people who exercise on a regular basis have a higher quality of sleep and thus require less sleep!

10. You'll feel GREAT!

(Source: Carole, Daily Health Tip Editor, MyFree.com LLC)

TECH TIP

Shortcut Warning!

When creating shortcuts, be sure to use the right mouse button and drag, not the left mouse button. If you use the right mouse button, you create a shortcut. If you use the left, you actually move the file! That can be bad news if Windows goes looking for a file it expects in a specific place and cannot find it.

The easiest way to differentiate between a true file and a shortcut is to look in the bottom left corner of the icon. If the newly created shortcut has a small arrow, then it's a true shortcut. If there is no arrow, you just moved the file. Move it back!

(Source: Carole Libbe, MyFree.com Internet Guru Tips Editor)

WORTH KNOWING

National Safety Council at <http://www.nsc.org/product/ddc/pconline.htm>

With their new online program, learning to drive defensively just got easier and more economical. The Council's first Internet-based driver-training program is based on the 8-hour defensive driving course for the classroom, but takes the average student half that time to complete. It's the most comprehensive content of any major driver improvement self-study program, and its cost, when purchased in quantity, is lower than any competitor's.

You can receive a certificate of completion from the National Safety Council that, in many States, can be used to lower automobile insurance rates. Check with your insurance carrier to see if you qualify.

WORDS OF WISDOM

The Wooden Bowl

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table, but the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off the spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something with Grandpa," said the son. "I have had enough of spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor." So the husband and the wife set a small table in the corner. There Grandpa ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed their dinner.

Since Grandpa had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl. When the family glanced in Grandpa's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped his fork or spilled food. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little wooden bowl for you and mom to eat your food when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went on with his work. The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no words were spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took the Grandfather's hand and gently led him to the family table. For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family. For some rea-

son, neither the husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

On a positive note, I have learned that, no matter what happens, how bad it seems today, life goes on, and it will be better tomorrow. I've learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles three things—a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas lights. I've learned that, regardless of your relationship with your parents, you will miss them when they are gone from your life. I've learned that making a "living" is not the same as making a life. I've learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance. I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need to be able to throw something back.

I've learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But, if you focus on your family, your friends, and the needs of others, your happiness will find you. I've learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I've learned that every day, you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch—holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back. I've learned that I still have a lot to learn.

People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people never will forget how you made them feel.
—Author Unknown

FINANCES

Cover Your Assets

If you're planning to relocate in retirement, exercise caution. Some States protect IRAs, 401(k) accounts, etc., from creditors, but others don't offer the same security.

Suppose, for example, you're thinking of moving from high-tax California to Nevada, which has no State income tax. You might want to consider the fact that Nevada places a relatively low dollar limit on the amount of assets that can be protected inside IRAs and plans such as 401(k)s. Florida, another popular destination for retirees, offers more IRA/401(k) protection, as well as State income tax relief.

(Source: Retirement & Financial Planning Report Published by *FEDweek*)

Questions/Comments to:

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An online version of this newsletter may be found at <http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codec/cc/navig-3.pdf>