



The 10 Questions to Ask Yourself If You Haven’t Reached a Dream

by Carol Dickson-Carr

Following are a series of questions I needed to ask myself and find answers to over the course of my life before finally deciding to go for it. It wouldn’t surprise me one bit if any of these looked familiar to you. You’ll notice that many of the questions and my proposed solutions are interrelated.

1. What am I really afraid of?

Addressing this issue right here is worth of an article all by itself! You may have heard somewhere that FEAR really stands for False Evidence Appearing Real. However, some fears are needed and rational You wouldn’t stick your hand in a burning fire place or run into oncoming traffic, for example!

But some examples of common fears that don’t really serve you are: the fears of success (I’ll lose my friends), of failure, of the unknown, of never having the courage to go for it, of losing your social life, and so on.

Instead of letting these fears paralyze you, write them down, and then consider confronting them and making new opportunities for yourself. Visualize the fear as the shell of a nut that needs to be cracked. Use your mental nutcracker to break the shell.

Pushing through your comfort zone can be frightening sometimes, but if you just push through it and do it, you may surprise yourself. An amazing amount of growth can take place each time you do. Courage is a wonderful thing. It comes from within, but can be brought out faster if you’re surrounded by people who can encourage you to move forward.

2. How is money or finances holding me back?

Financing and money are two of the biggest factors that people claim hold them back from reaching a big dream or goal. This is a fallacy. Resources, especially in the area of people and social capital, do not always come with a financial cost.

Tap your creativity. A good start would be to write down your dreams, big and bold, then tell the people you trust about your dreams. At least one person will be able to hook you up with someone who knows someone else who can help you.

If financing is really an issue, work gradually. Have a garage sale or auction some of your items on Ebay. At the same time, pay attention to your expenses, and do some trimming on your personal budget.



If starting a business is your passion, please check out your local Small Business Development Center. Visit <http://www.sba.gov> and find a center near you. They can advise you and also give you sources for small business loans. Also remember that the internet and the library are wonderful resources. The library is free, and the internet is inexpensive. You can't go wrong with those two.

3. How are my conversations about "a lack of time" stopping me in my tracks?

I understand probably more than most how life can sometimes get in the way and really upset a schedule, but if you think you never have any time, a couple of things could also be at play: You could be procrastinating and letting the distractions interfere, or you may have a very optimistic time frame for your list of goals or “to-do” lists. Big dreams don't happen in a day, but build daily.

If you feel you've taken on too much, see if you can delegate some of that responsibility to someone else. Taking baby steps daily will help make the sense of overwhelm subside—that, and a good cup of Tension Tamer Tea! If you'd like to change the relationship you have with time, you might be interested in my free six-day e-course. You can sign up here: <http://unlimitedpersonalgrowth.com/>

4. But shouldn't I only be in this particular role?

You aren't tied to one identity. You encompass many personas as you go through life. It's actually possible to be wife (or husband or partner, etc.), mom or dad, friend, business owner, employee, all at once, if that is what you desire and you learn the balancing act. The point is that there is only one “you”. Even identical twins have nuances that are unique from each other. So choose your role, and go for it!

5. How do I go about pursuing my dream? Where can I find a good support system?

Do a Google or Yahoo search on your passion and see if you can find an email group or bulletin board with people willing to commiserate and brainstorm. You'll be able to find a support system by doing searches on your desired topic.

The Encyclopedia of Associations is a goldmine if you're looking for an association related to your passion. With luck, there will be a local chapter you can contact.. To find out more about the Encyclopedia of Associations, visit: <http://library.dialog.com/bluesheets/html/bl0114.html>. You can also find it at your local public library.

Also, I'm an advocate of reading. A lot. Network, find mentors, have a plan, have someone hold you accountable, avoid distractions, and revisit these ten questions. ☺ I believe it was Jim Rohn

who said, “When your ‘why’ [you want to do or have something] is clear, then the ‘how’ becomes clear.”

6. How is my negative self talk creating emotional blind spots in my ability to "really go for it?"

Because of my many varied interests, I had this self-perception of being the “Jill of all Trades but Mistress of None,” so the records that played in my mind were, “No way can I be positioned as an expert.” In talking with others and writing about all that I knew, I realized how much that self-talk was holding me back.

Common statements I’ve heard from some of my former students were: “I’m not good enough.” “I’m too old,” “I’m too young,” “No one will hire me because I’m too fat,” etc. Addressing this involves a different dialogue with yourself and surrounding yourself with positive people who can appreciate your unique gifts. When that negative inner-voice tries to sneak in, try reframing your statements with a more positive spin. For example, “I can’t do this!” could be reframed as, “I just need to practice more. Then I’ll be able to do this.”

7. How does my inability to focus create a "choke point" in my process?

Analysis paralysis can be so debilitating! Take it from someone who suffered from it for years! It seemed to be compounded by the fact that I had so many interests that were seemingly unrelated to each other, and especially unrelated to the degrees I chose to get in the name of being practical. Journaling, brainstorming on paper first and then with people I trusted did wonders.

8. How does my upbringing send me messages that "this will never work?"

If people you respect told you it was best to be 100% practical and conventional but your dreams lean toward the opposite, then you are probably wondering if you should bother. Or maybe you were less fortunate, and had people who were perpetually negative. It’s hard to thrive in that kind of environment unless you have an amazing amount of inner strength from the get-go. Again, if your center of influence is filled with positive, supportive people rather than negative people, it can make all the difference.

9. How is my belief system getting in the way?

This ties a lot into the upbringing issue, the negative self-talk, and to some extent, the fear issue above. I heard a speaker recently say, “A belief gets its strength from the evidence (your life experiences) that supports it.” What starts as an idea can become a conviction.

As an artistically, musically, mathematically inclined eccentric, I got called weird a lot in high school. So one of the beliefs that really stayed with me for years was, “Eccentric people will



never fit in.” I now embrace my uniqueness regardless of what the majority believes. What are some of the beliefs that you hold that may be getting in your way?

10. How do I recover when life keeps throwing me curve balls?

Rest! Be kind to—no, SPOIL yourself. If you need to vent, I say go for it, but choose whom you vent to carefully. Not everyone appreciates a good rant. My journal, I’ve found, is the safest place to do it. Treat these curve balls as learning experiences, then get right back on that horse and try again.

I heard something that really inspired me from speaker Jim Stovall. He said (paraphrased), “We live up to the expectations of ourselves *or* what we allow others to expect of us... That big dream wouldn’t have been put inside you if you didn’t have the capacity to do it. Change your life by changing your mind.”

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