

FIND YOUR DREAM



Catherine Hughes

Yes, There's Legal

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If you want an original copy, visit the 8 Women Dream website:

<http://www.8womendream.com>

Acknowledgements

This e-book is dedicated to my son Brian,
who taught me to rekindle my childlike wonder,
and to go after my dreams.
Having him,
was my most important dream come true.

I'd like to acknowledge the following for their contributions to 8 Women Dream and this e-book:

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Preface

This e-book, and all the information it contains comes from ideas, projects and workshops completed by the participants in the 8 Women Dream Project.

The 8 Women Dream Project was developed by Catherine Hughes, Editor and Chief of the 8 Women Dream Project who decided to study dream success through the dynamics of a group, and share the experiences with the world.

This e-book teaches the first part of dream success: figuring out what your dream is by paying attention to what you are passionate about.

The effectiveness of this book is based on your willingness to do the exercises outlined within.

You may begin the exercises in a very excited frame of mind. It may put you in touch with many feelings of empowerment and wanting to change many things about your life.

Beware.

For these exercises may bring up other feelings too – feelings of loss, inadequacy, anger, sadness and regret. Understand that these extremes are normal when processing new information and processing experiences from your past.

You need to be kind to yourself and the child inside of you who may appear as you work through the worksheets provided. This is not a book about magic. I'm not going to tell you that your dreams will magically come true if you read this book.

Dream achievement is a process and this book is just a beginners guide, a first step in this process. I want to help you find your lost dream, and your passion for jumping out of bed in the morning to do the things you were put on earth to do.

I would like to know how this book impacted you and if it helped you begin to think about your next dream life. I encourage you to e-mail me at info@8womendream.com with your perspective. Please feel free to e-mail me if you get stuck at any point and need my help. I promise you will find great value in this mini e-book.

Are you ready?

I. Viewing Your Life From A New Perspective

"Nothing happens unless first a dream." - Carl Sandburg

Do you have a reason to get out of the bed in the morning? Do you look forward to your day? Does your life have meaning? Are you passionate about your work? Do you know what you want to do next with your life?

If you answered no to most of these questions, then this is the e-book for you. I am going to show you how to find your dream, your passion and your life's purpose.

Don't believe me? That's okay, just read along anyway.

The 8 Women Dream Project was formed in 2008 to explore the art of finding, then living our dreams. I am not talking the type of dreaming we do in bed at night, but the kind of dreaming we did all the time when we were kids.

"Some day I am going to be a pilot . . . "

"Someday I am going to run with the giraffes in Africa . . . "

"Someday I am going to be a fashion designer . . . "

Do you remember what you loved doing when you played outside, or when no one was watching? Did you grow up to do something similar? Maybe you were lucky enough to be one of those adults who pursued your childhood dream, only to find it wasn't as wonderful as you thought it was going to be. It left you wondering what's next -

- *Where do I go from here?*
- *How do I find my passion for life?*
- *I don't know what to do with myself anymore.*

Where To Start

The first step in finding your dream and reclaiming your lost purpose is to find the things you are passionate about. Discovering your passion is the first step towards exploring your dream.

Trust me, no matter where you are in life, or how sad your circumstances might be, there are things you love to do.

Finding what you are passionate about can bring a special purpose to your life. I am not talking about a personal relationship, even though they can bring on the same feelings of passion and purpose. Placing all your hopes on to one person eventually becomes a burden to the person on the receiving end of those hopes - what if they don't live up to your expectations?

Or they leave you?

It's better to find something you love doing (that isn't a person) and pursue a life based on this passion. Why? Because it's good for you! Okay, maybe I am channeling my mother a bit, but . . .

A new study found that people who reported a greater level of purpose in life were less likely to die or have Alzheimer's, as compared to people with a lower level of purpose.

"It can be anything from wanting to accomplish a goal in life, to achieving something in a volunteer organization, to as little as reading a series of books," says study author Dr. Patricia Boyle, a neuropsychologist and assistant professor of behavioral sciences at Rush University Medical Center.

Finding your passion is one of the most important stepping stones to happiness, because it provides a foundation of fulfillment, even when other areas of our lives change. It can carry you through divorce, sickness and other tragedies.

The only problem is that no one can do this for you. You must uncover what fuels your passion on your own. It is up to you to find out what you are passionate about, and quite often, it isn't what you think it is.

Websters dictionary describes passion as, "a strong or extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, or desire for anything."

But Catherine, I don't think about life that way.

Really?

Lets' say you loved a particular sport in high school and dreamed of being a professional athlete. You are now 50, so you know it's not possible to be a professional athlete (in this particular sport) at your age, so how does your passion for once wanting to be a professional athlete have anything to do with finding your dream - or resurrecting it - even though in theory it is now impossible to achieve?

Because there is valuable information in your past dream – there's important data in ***the experience of what you loved doing***. There's something intrinsic about your dream past, which can provide you with input on how to live the sweet part of your former dream in your life now.

It's true.

You are about to become a detective to your own life. You are going to explore all the things you have loved, and still love doing. Trust me, when I tell you there is hidden information in exploring what you love. I want you to examine this exploration like a stranger just getting to know you for the first time.

Use the worksheets provided in this e-book to research a new dream which will add life to your days, passion to your discussions, and becomes a driving force to your life.

Dreaming can change your world.

II. It's About Passion Baby

I've designed some exercises in this workbook to help you figure out what makes you happy and examine what bliss might look like.

You will find that I interchange the word passion with words like bliss, love, happiness and joy, because each person has their own idea of what passion feels like. I don't want to use a term that gets you stuck in a place where you won't try the worksheets, so I will use other terms to help you get to the place where you have your "Aha" moment.

If you are willing to do the exercises, then I am willing to help you discover the life you were born to live.

Or, at least bring more of what you once loved back into your life.

You can be passionate about anything you want. There are no rules here about what you like. It can be anything from staring at ladybugs, to growing an English garden. It can be feeding the children of Uganda, or planning a 4-week trip to Italy while learning to speak Italian. It's your dream; I'm just going to help you uncover what you love about it.

The Exercises

In order to be successful at dream achievement, you must first be sure you love what it is you are going after. Passion keeps you in the game during all the highs and lows of dreaming. Passion gets you up at 4:00am to write that book you dream of publishing. Passion makes you eat more rice when you are sick of it, because you are saving all your money for your dream trip to Italy. Passion makes you train in the rain while preparing for the marathon you promised yourself you'd complete before you turn 40.

Before you jump feet first into going after a dream, it's important to investigate what you love – to be sure of what it is about that particular dream that makes your heart sing. Because sometimes we think we want one thing, and we begin exploring it, only to find we don't like it after all. This happens because we are disconnected from what it is we loved about it.

For example, let's say you explore getting back into running because you loved to run as a child and successfully competed in some races. You think you miss it terribly, so you buy some running shoes and begin to hit the pavement, only to remember all the things you once hated about running and the reasons you quit.

The dream process can be like this, if you don't stop to explore everything you loved doing as a child, and why you loved running as much as you did.

Through investigating your past, you may discover you loved running because it took you away from home, up into the hills, where you loved to explore new trails and experience new situations. By exploring your past and your present loves, you may discover this is a common theme in your life, and what you really dream is to be an Outdoor Guide.

For this reason, I've put together some exercises to help you explore what makes you feel happy - joyous - happy - blissful (pick your own word).

If you are ready, let's delve into your past and probe the times where you felt on top of the world. Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed, put on some of your favorite music, and ask that no one bother you for 30 minutes.

Relaxation

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Become aware of your breathing. Notice any tension in your body and let it go. Slow your breathing by practicing 4-squared breathing.

Inhale slowly to the count of 4, hold your breath to the count of 4, exhale to the count of 4, then hold your breath to the count of 4. So it's inhale slowly - hold your breath - exhale slowly - hold your breath.

Do 4-squared breathing until you can feel your mind begin to release the all the brain chatter. Capture any worries that arise in a balloon above your head and picture letting them go into space. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply until you feel completely relaxed.

Once you feel relaxed, open your eyes and complete the following worksheet.

Exploring Your Past

Exercise 1 - Think back to when you were young. What did you love to do before you were 12, or when you were in grade school? List all the things you liked doing that made your heart soar. Only list those things you enjoyed before 7th grade. Try and come up with as many things as possible. This should be done quickly so you don't have time for doubt, or over-think your answers.

An example might be:

Dancing around my living room (*This gave me joy*) - Alive/free/independent (*I felt*)
Riding my bike (*This gave me joy*) - Alive/free/independent (*I felt*)

This gave me joy	I felt

Exercise 2- Do the same exercise for ages 13 – 23, or middle school, high school and college years. Try and come up with as many things as possible.

An example might be:
Driving my first car (*This gave me joy*) - Alive/free/independent/mature (*I felt*)
Giving speeches & class presentations (*This gave me joy*) - Alive/accomplished (*I felt*)

This gave me joy	I felt

Exercise 3 - Do the same again for ages 24 – 32, or your mid to late 20s and early 30s. Try and come up with as many things as possible.

An example might be:
Writing for college paper (*This gave me joy*) - Alive/free/accomplished (*I felt*)
Dancing (*This gave me joy*) - Alive/free/accomplished (*I felt*)

This gave me joy	I felt

Exercise 4 - Do the same again for ages 34 (mid 30s) – current age. Try and come up with as many things as possible. Skip this step if we covered your current age in the last worksheet.

An example might be:

Riding around town on my scooter (This gives me joy) - Alive/free/accomplished (I felt)

Blogging and self publishing (*This gives me joy*) - Alive/free/accomplished (*I felt*)

This gave me joy	I felt

Answer Questions About Yourself

Exercise 5 - Now that you have played detective to your past, I want you to answer the following questions as quickly as possible. Write the first thing that comes to your mind.

1. If someone was searching for you in a bookstore, what section of the store would they find you in?

I feel _____ when I am in this section.

2. What type of books do you always buy?

I feel _____ when I read these books.

3. What types of magazines do you buy?

I feel _____ when I read these magazines.

4. If money didn't matter what would you do for a living?

I feel _____ when I think about doing this.

5. Is there something that you think about every day?

I feel _____ when I think about this.

Are you beginning to notice any patterns forming?

Noting What You Enjoy

Write down the things you are beginning to notice that keep coming up for you over and over. Let's say you see that you love adventure, fitness and leading groups of people. Is there a way to combine this into a dream you would love to fulfill? One example might be to plan summer excursions for groups down white-water rapids throughout the US.

Remember my professional athletic analogy at the beginning of this book? Maybe you found out that you love attending high school sporting events and you'd probably make a great coach. You find that you enjoy the company of teenagers, and you like having a positive impact on teaching them success. Or, maybe you love photography too, and you've started thinking about being a sports photographer.

Just because you are not able to live your original dream does not mean there aren't parts of that dream you can still create which will bring that original passion back into your life.

Don't think of this stuff as something to make a living at just yet. Begin by recognizing these are circumstances you love - and you should bring more of this into your current life.

What keeps coming up for you?

Sports? Dance? Painting? Wine making? Bicycle riding? Writing? Teaching?

Write down your thoughts -

Exercise 6 - If you were free from all responsibility . . .

If you won the lottery today, list 18 things you would do this month for yourself -

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.

16.

17.

18.

Is part of what you dream hidden in your list? Do you really have to win the lottery in order to bring it more fully into your life?

If you could spend a day starting at 6:00 am and ending at 11:00pm, doing only the things you love to do - what would your day look like? Can you map it out - step by step?

Your dream is hidden in the feelings you get when you map out your day - is there a common emotion?

III. Handing Resistance and Fear

It is natural to resist thoughts of change, and exploring the idea of bringing more of what you love into your life. If you have a dream you haven't yet fulfilled, it is more likely you are resisting the change it might bring. There are solid reasons for this resistance. You need to look at your negative resistance so that your dream doesn't die on the paper it's written on, or you stop working through this e-book.

You will resist taking action towards your dream, if you think -

- the change will threaten job security or status in your community
- the rewards are not seen as adequate for all the work involved
- there is not sufficient information, money or resources to make the dream feel possible
- the change could modify established relationships with people you care about
- the change can't be completely controlled by you
- the reason for going after the dream and creating the change is not clear

How do you counteract your resistance? By drinking several martinis? This might work in the short term, but you need better long-term solutions, and having several martinis every day will just make you buy more vodka, and suffer terrible headaches in the morning.

Instead, we need to figure out how to align our dream with our current beliefs and values.

- Maybe your dream will inspire others to take a chance on their dreams.
- It may make your kids proud.
- I could change someone else's life for the better.
- Your dream not only may benefit you, but may benefit those you love and the community at large.
- Maybe achieving your dream will make it possible for you to send your children to college, purchase a new car, remodel your home.

Find the need for going after your dream. It can be time constraints – you are growing older, you've given yourself a short window of time, the opportunity will pass within a certain time frame, someone else may launch your idea if you don't – whatever it is that creates the need.

Sometimes resistance to moving forward in your dreams comes from other sources – not just your own. It is important to look at your thoughts around why you think you can't have a dream and where that "can't" really comes from.

Exercise 7 - Reasons you think you can't have your dream

An example might be:
It's too much work/I don't have the money (*Why it won't work*) - My husband/ my
Father (*Who this sounds like*)

What can go wrong/won't work	Where I learned this

Now that you've finished understanding where your fear voices really come from (you know, the resist voices of your father, who told you your ideas were irresponsible, or your 4th grade teacher who made you feel like you couldn't succeed) you can begin to counter those voices when they come up.

In order to move forward in the idea that you can have your dream, you need to look at resistance, then bring it out into the light to deal with.

Can you imagine your resistance voice differently? Can you ask yourself if you want to change your belief about it?

For example, I resist preparing for the Boston Marathon because my knees hurt too much.

Do I want to change my belief about this because I really do want to run the Boston Marathon?

My new belief might be –

My preparation may or may not be related to my knee pain. It could be my shoes, how I extend my legs, lack of upper thigh strength – a whole host of reasons. Until I have myself evaluated by a professional running coach and a doctor, I am going to move forward with weight lifting, and improving my diet, in preparation for the marathon.

Understand that uncovering your dream is a process. For some people it's more of a difficult process than it is for others. Looking back can bring up some painful memories.

For some, they cannot begin to think about what they love doing without listing all the things they hated doing growing up and still hate to do now. This is fine. If you are stuck – start here.

Create a list of the things you hate to do and why.

Knowledge is power when performing this detective activity of finding what you love doing. There isn't one set way to get you into the land of dream achievement.

Sometimes looking at what you love spending time doing is painful. Remember we will do anything to resist pain. Don't let the pain stop you from looking at what you love doing. Feel the pain and do the worksheets anyway. Do them over and over until you begin to see the pattern in the things you love doing.

Exercise 8 - List the top 5 things you loved doing throughout your life so far and why -

If you are lucky something might stand out for you like, "Wow, I'm really happy when I am cooking in my kitchen. I love entertaining and sharing my creations with groups of people. It makes me feel on top of the world and I have all this energy when it's done and people have had a great time."

Now this doesn't mean you need to run right out and apply for a job working in a restaurant kitchen, start a catering company or open a bakery. It's just information.

All you are doing right now is processing information.

For now, you need to let this information relax and allow it to just be. Don't make it into anything yet, because your dream will come to you, sometimes when you least expect it, but you still need to gather more information.

For the next few weeks - or even a month - take a small note pad with you wherever you go.

Look for clues everywhere in your life.

Take note of anything that stirs your heart, or excites your imagination. Goose bumps are good. Ask yourself why certain activities seem to be making you happy, and pay attention to times when you are having a good time.

Be patient with yourself during this process. Remember that your search for identifying your passions may take time, and you may need to explore many interests before finding the right one. Time and introspection will help you identify the activities which bring you the greatest joy.

Once you have narrowed it down to 2 or 3 items, then begin the 2nd part of this process which is putting your dreams to the test.

IV. Putting Your Dreams To The Test

It takes commitment to find what your real dream is - and to go after it. It also requires a substantial investment in time. It does not happen all at once. You need to test your dream ideas and refine them over time.

It's a process, like anything else.

If you enjoy taking assessment tests, sometimes it helps the dream process to take one of the many assessment tests provided free online. One of my personal favorites is the The Motivated Skills Test. Executive recruiters Stewart, Cooper and Coon offer the test for free at website @ <http://www.stewartcoopercoon.com/jobsearch/freejobsearchtests.phtml>

Where is your tribe hanging out?

You need to find some sort of structure to support successfully working your dream ideas. For 8 Women Dream it's showing up on the blog each week to share our dream ideas.

Is there a club you can join, a place where you can go to hang out with people who share your same love of an activity? Rayne of 8 Women Dream went to a bookstore to share and hang with other writers, Remy formed a photography group on Meetup™, I created 8 Women Dream, Heather hired me, Toni joined a screenwriter's group and so on.

Let's say you have discovered you enjoy cooking and entertaining. You could try volunteering for some charities that have local events where you can help in the kitchen or serve food. You might take a culinary class at the local college. One dreamer I know started out thinking her dream was to be a writer, but she really loved baking, and was always taking about owning a bakery at the 8 women Dream meetings - NOT her writing!

She tried maintaining a blog with a story that had been kicking around in her head for some time. She found the process tedious. So even though she thought she loved writing, once she started blogging, it wasn't the same. It didn't bring her the joy she thought it was going to bring, and her thoughts kept going back to baking. Eighteen months later she started a mobile restaurant with her brother serving BBQ pork. Their business is thriving and she is ecstatic.

Her dream doesn't look anything like she first imagined. Who knows, maybe in her future she'll write recipes online about BBQ pork and combine her two interests.

You should take all the time you need to explore whether you are on the right dream path, and make any necessary adjustments before you decide to quit your day job and go working in a new field.

How do you know you've picked the right dream? Unless you take the time to research what you enjoy, by taking notes and understanding why you like to do certain tasks, you won't recognise your dream, and you will never stop searching for what you want to do with the rest of your life. And if, you underestimate what you want for your dream, you'll stop your research too early.

Finding your dream and living it doesn't mean: your dream is what you are passionate about this second. You have to love your dream more than vacation, laughing with friends, and enjoying a glass of wine.

Start slow. Take baby steps. Check and double-check.

Most likely you will have to engage in new learning or improving skills, along with gaining a new understanding of what your dream will take. You also need to evaluate whether you are willing to make any necessary sacrifices. Your willingness to make sacrifices will tell you how badly you want to change your life for your dream.

Go over the exercises a 2nd - even a 3rd time if you have to. Narrow it down, think it over, and study what keeps coming up for you.

Remember to begin with looking at your past and asking yourself what you loved to do as a child - start there and take it through when you last remember being happy. If you get stuck, start by listing all the things you don't like doing and why. Get the negative out and move to the positive. If you don't remember, ask childhood friends to remember a time when you seemed happy.

Take notes for at least a month. Let the ideas circulate in your mind, but don't force a decision. Eventually, one dream idea will keep coming up over and over again. Once this happens, find simple ways to put this repeating dream idea to a test, to see if you do enjoy it. This is where you will want to take a class, join a group, or try on your dream for a test run.

Expect to struggle with your choice. Finding your dream can be very difficult. Most people give up. If you find your dream idea, you have more than most. But I don't want you to stop there. In my next e-book I am going to help you set a plan in motion to help you accomplish your dream.

I wanted to break the dream process down into three small e-books so that you don't become overwhelmed and quit. I want you to spend time exploring your life to come to some conclusions before you launch your dream.

Until then, I'll be getting the next e-book ready for you.

Come by 8 Women Dream at www.8womendream.com and tell me what you've discovered about yourself. We'll even post your dream for you on the 8 Women Dream Worldwide dream page launching November 2010 and share it with the world.

I found my love for writing and public speaking working through this same process.

I have every faith you will find your dream.

Now get up and start taking notes on what you love doing!

V. Final Thoughts

Congratulations! You made it through the first step in finding your dream!

The question now is what are you going to do with what you've learned. Remember to take a journal or note pad with you and record what you love. Or do it at night before you fall asleep - write in your journal what you loved doing - what made you smile that day. Find small ways you can incorporate more of what you love in your life by volunteering, going to school, or joining a club. Be open to the process of change and new directions. Allow yourself room to explore other dreams you never thought of before.

Be kind to yourself during this process. You might be feeling sad that you did not start your dream quest sooner - praise yourself for starting now. For Lao Tzu said: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

And you've just taken your first big step.

Thank you for spending time here with my e-book. I appreciate it more than I can say.

Now go out there and dream big!

Catherine Hughes

For information on the next e-book in this series: "Set Your Path: How To Put Your Dream Into Action" visit www.8womendream.com for updates.

About The Author

Catherine Hughes is the Founder and Editor of 8 Women Dream, a popular dream achievement website which soon will be a social network site for dreamers worldwide. She has two decades of experience as a published writer and motivator. She writes a popular mom blog, A Week In The Life of A Redhead at www.aweekinthelifeofaredhead.com where she is best-known for her Erma Bombeck writing style.

Throughout her adult life Catherine has continued to explore the question of how people achieve their greatest dreams. She has studied the works of Jim Rohn, Jack Canfield, Barbara Sher, Anthony Robbins and Dale Carnegie to name a few. She found where most people fail is they lack a clear idea of what their dream might be - they think they like something - but don't know how to make it a dream. Catherine is on a quest to help the women of world dream big dreams.

And of course, men can too.

Related Reading

- Wishcraft: How to get what you really want. A Unique, Step-by-step Plan to Pinpoint Your Goals and Make Your Dreams Come True - by Barbara Sher (with Annie Gottlieb)
- I Could Do Anything If I Only Knew What It Was: How to Discover What You Really Want and How to Get It - by Barbara Sher (with Barbara Smith)
- Put Your Dream to the Test - John C. Maxwell
- Finding Your Own North Star - by Martha Beck
- Women Who Run with the Wolves by Clarissa Pinkola Estes
- Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway - by Susan Jeffers
- Notes from A Friend: A Quick and Simple Guide to Taking Charge of Your Life - by Anthony Robbins
- The Success Principles - by Jack Canfield
- The Power of Focus - by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen
- Reinventing Your Life: The Breakthrough Program to End Negative Behavior and Feel Great Again - by Jeffry Young, Janet Klosko and Aaron Beck
- Get Out of Your Own Way: Overcoming Self-Defeating Behavior - by Mark Goulston and Phillip Goldberg