

LIVING BEYOND THE DREAM

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Martin Luther King once said that, "If a man hasn't discovered something that he would die for, he isn't fit to live." Dr. Billy Graham, Einstein, Elvis, Hitler, Colin Powell, and little Joey down the road were all born into ordinary families. Many of our most revered heroes were not privileged at birth, so why is it that some kids grow up to change the course of history and others slip on through, hardly noticed, and without significant achievement? There are many possible answers, yet we could safely say that most self-motivated people are driven by a passion or direction from within, and from a very early age.

The best way to recognize our kids' passions is to have passions ourselves. If we have found ours, then it will be easier to help our kids find theirs. When kids see passion in action, they want it, too. It's infectious. I can remember being told I was 'not university material'. Then I moved to a town built around a big university and saw that almost everyone around me was studying. I looked at some of my co-workers and thought, 'Well, if you can do it, I know I can!' If I hadn't been in that kind of atmosphere I would have believed the lie and never felt the thrill of achievement on graduation day.

You can identify what is driving your kids in the following ways. Stimulate their imaginations by exposing them to a wide variety of activities from physical play, to inventing things, to reading interesting books and biographies. Monitor their school reports and talk to their teachers about possible strengths. Live in a creative environment. When they show some interest in a particular activity, run with it and see where it takes them. Try and keep them to one main interest at a time. Don't rush out and buy every instrument in the orchestra until they have some mastery of one.

If we are going to put dreams into action it is important to be a 'family of purpose', and to have strong values and boundaries to live by. Our family values should include the need for each family member to be encouraged to reach their potential. This means nobody can be ignored for the sake of another. When parents display purpose and clear values, it encourages a child to do the same. He learns much more quickly how to set goals, and how to achieve while maintaining high personal standards.

Now is the time to start to plan for family achievement. It is NEVER too late to fulfill personal dreams. Mom would like to start some tertiary study. How long will it take to complete the course? How much will the course cost? How many hours a week will it take? What study time will she need each day? Will she realistically be able to complete the study, considering the other responsibilities she has? Can family members perform some of the household

chores to help her fulfill her passion? It takes this kind of forward thinking at the beginning to alleviate the possibility of failure to fulfill her passion. Jessica has a passion to be a skate star.

Similar questions need to be asked as part of the plan to ensure she fulfills her dreams, just as it will with Thomas whose passion it is to be the U.S. champion acoustic finger-style guitarist. Not all kids aspire to be the world's greatest. They just want to be the best they can be in some particular field. This is fantastic! Their satisfaction level is going to be just as high as their sibling or parent who wants to climb Mt Everest. The main thing is that kids and adults alike put legs on their dreams and go for it.

Here are some suggestions to help you and your family put legs on your dreams. Surround yourself with positive, encouraging people who are achievers themselves. Identify the negative comments that have kept you from realizing your dreams in the past, and, one by one, refute them e.g., 'I am not hopeless and useless', 'I can do anything I put my mind to', 'One failure does not mean I will fail again', 'I will set goals I can keep, and I will succeed.'

Celebrate attaining your short and long-term goals and throw a party when you have reached your dream. Then dream again!!!

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at sally@forefrontfamilies.org. We invite you to also check out our website at www.forefrontfamilies.org and our blog site at www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com for further assistance.