

# Picking up the Dream

How I Integrate My Vision  
into Daily Life



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### ***My Dream***

I remember the day my dream shattered. I know that sounds abrupt and before telling you how I picked up the pieces, I would like to quickly paint the picture so that you can see what the pieces were and how they got there.

It all started about two months after I graduated from college. I was riding in the back seat of my car (someone else was driving) thinking about the direction of my life. I was in the middle of wondering why it was so hard for me to commit to a full-time job when I had a major epiphany:

“There is more to life than this.”

I felt like society had set a path for me that led to a full-time job and I needed to experience something else before making that commitment. Shortly after the epiphany, I pursued my dream, started a music business and began attending seminars and workshops geared to entrepreneurs and people who wanted to start part-time businesses. I conducted hours upon hours of research and pretty soon, I wanted to become a consultant and started a consulting business. Within a year, I became fascinated with the idea of coaching other people in their lives and businesses. So without reservation, I decided against consulting in favor of becoming a coach. This trend of shifting from thing to thing, idea to idea continued for about 5 years.

Then on May 22, 2009, I reached the bottom of a downward spiral. That was the day that my wife (who was 9 months pregnant) and I came home to a house that was in foreclosure where the electricity had been turned off and we had no money to pay the bill. At that point, I realized that I had pursued entrepreneurship and business ownership at the expense of my own well-being and that of my family. I was forced to make a decision. I could either stay and cling to a vanishing dream of self-employment and the independence that I craved, or eat a slice of humble pie and start over. I decided to begin again, but this time, more intelligently.

### ***My Paradigm Shift***

On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, my dream shattered. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, I began again. My wife and I moved in with her parents and I began looking for the thing I vowed never to get – a full-time job. There were a few companies that wanted to hire me, but I already knew what I was supposed to do and it was two-fold. I need to 1) move to Maryland and 2) go back to school. After landing a full-time job with one of the largest school districts in Maryland, that’s exactly what I did.

As my life got back on track, I found less and less time to devote to my dream. Even when I could find the time, I lacked motivation. For months, I had no interest in looking through my dreams or reading the entrepreneurial magazines and business books I had grown to love. To be honest, it was painful to even look at them because they reminded

me of my dream (you know...the one that was lying in pieces on the floor). So I gave up on my dream and rationalized my feelings of defeat claiming "I tried it once and it didn't work. What makes me think it'll work next time?"

Let me just break right here and share a very important gleaning from that experience:

**The beauty in every broken dream is the paradigm shift that follows.**

The fact that my dream slipped away caused me to pursue it again, but more intelligently.

Some people live with shattered dreams. Others' have dreams that are fully intact, but they just don't have the time to work towards achieving it. Still there are others whose dreams have stagnated due to lack of money. These problems are universal. One major challenge for me was how to move forward with my dream after picking up the pieces.

Your dream may have shattered. Or it may be fully intact sitting on a shelf. It could even be still forming and developing while running through your head. My hope is that this special report will inspire you to pick up your dream if you have put it down or to keep pursuing it if you're already moving forward.

### ***Misconception versus Conception***

Misconception comes from the word 'MISCONCEIVE' which means *to interpret incorrectly*. So from the word CONCEIVE, we can infer that it means *to interpret correctly*. CONCEIVE and THINK are synonymous. They both mean "to form an idea of." However, CONCEIVE suggests the forming and bringing forth and usually developing of an idea, plan or design.

CONCEIVE can be defined in the following ways:

- To become pregnant with (young)
- To cause to begin: ORIGINATE
- To take into one's mind
- To form a conception of: IMAGINE, IMAGE
- To apprehend by reason or imagination: UNDERSTAND
- To be of the opinion

To conceive a dream does not mean throwing out the original dream. It simply requires you to reframe your dream experience and see it through a new perspective. In the next section, you will find seven misconceptions that I have corrected while picking up my dream, accompanied by the solutions that I use to correct my thinking.

These seven principles are a variation of “7 Misconceptions that Almost Shattered My Vision”. The misconceptions are the commonly held myths that contribute to the stagnation of dreams. The solutions are the right ideas that I used to correct the misconceptions and reframe my dreaming experience while holding on to my dream.

## Misconception #1

### ***I HAVE TO KEEP MY DREAM TO MYSELF***

One way I stifled my dream is by keeping it to myself. I would avoid talking to others about it. Sharing dreams makes me vulnerable to the criticism of others. To avoid this criticism, I protected my dream from being criticized or rejected.

## Solution #1

### ***BRAINSTORM***

A better way is to prepare myself to talk about my dream. I have found that brainstorming is an effective starting point in preparing to discuss my dream with someone. It helps me to think through my ideas before asking for their advice. Brainstorming provides me with a chance to read through my ideas, think about them and succinctly discuss them with other people. Seeing progress is a great motivator.

## Misconception #2

### ***EVERYTHING HAS TO BE DONE IMMEDIATELY***

This misconception reflects a strong sense of urgency. As an introvert, I need an external stimulus that makes my dream more urgent. If everything reflects a sense of urgency, however, I tend to lose sight of what is important and become a slave to the urgent and immediate. When this happens, it is difficult to make decisions that reflect my values.

## **Solution #2**

### ***FOCUS ON MY TOP PRIORITIES***

The way that I spend my time and money are great indicators of my current priorities. The problem is that time and money are driven by day to day needs and if I let them determine my schedule, I can easily become a slave to the immediate. Striking a balance between need-based and value-based priorities makes life more fulfilling. Let me ask you: how well do your priorities line up with the things that you value? If you are not quite sure, the life focus coaching process provides ten areas where you can assess whether your personal and professional values line up with your life.

## **Misconception #3**

### ***MISTAKES ARE BAD***

I hate to fail. And to be honest, the path to my dreams is filled with mistakes. Only recently, I have come to a place where I respect failure. That respect grows out of knowledge of how failure can accelerate my plans instead of stopping them.

## **Solution #3**

### ***NEGOTIATE FAILURE INTO MY PLAN***

The old adage says “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” My philosophy is to work failure into my plan. Failure happens and I cannot run from it. So it makes sense to plan for the “what ifs” so that I do not fall flat when they present themselves. A good plan is one where I honestly ask myself “how much am I willing to give up to achieve this dream?” and “what parts of my dreams are not negotiable?” The more I negotiate failure into my plan, the better prepared I am to face it and not lose time in recovering from a crisis situation.

## Misconception #4

### ***I HAVE TO DO IT MYSELF***

This misconception is a half-truth. As a person who naturally likes to start new things, I run into both internal limitations, like the motivation to finish what I start, and external limitations, most notably a 24-hour day and budget constraints.

## Solution #4

### ***MAKE ROOM FOR OTHERS TO HELP YOU***

When presented with limits I can choose to allow them to stifle my progress or use them as opportunities to connect with others. I have learned that its better in the long run to ask for a little help along the way than a lot of help at one time. No one will fully commit to my dream like I will and it is impossible for me to do everything myself. That leaves me in a place where I can ask for or watch my dream shrink to the size of my schedule and spending plan. External and internal limitations can either produce obstacles in the dreaming process or reveal places in life where I need help. Life focus coaching helps you to identify the obstacles and also resources that are available to overcome them.

## Misconception #5

### ***THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY WILL ORGANIZE MY DREAM***

I remember when I first made the switch from Blackberry to iPhone thinking, "Great! Now I can transfer my whole music library onto my phone." How wrong was I? I forgot that I was the person who had to download the music onto the phone. I forgot that I'm not very technically inclined when it comes to integrating software applications like Microsoft Office and iTunes. An attempt to get organized turned into an eye-opener that revealed how much organizing I actually had to do.

## **Solution #5**

### ***ORGANIZING MY DREAM REVEALS HOW IT ALIGNS WITH MY DAILY LIFE***

The first thing two exercises I completed in the life coaching course dealt with life gleanings and dreams. Gleanings were a major eye-opener that helped me to walk back through positive and negative experiences in order to pick up on important themes and patterns that I initially missed. As much success as I met in the gleanings exercise, I met just as much challenge in dreaming. I thought, “whats the use in writing down how I want my life to be, when reality is waiting for me on Monday morning.” Once I opened myself to dreaming again, I was able to see parts of my dream that I was accomplishing and other parts that I had already achieved. The gleaning and dreaming process exceeded my expectations by helping me to make sense of the pieces of my dream that were surrounding me.

## **Misconception #6**

### ***I NEED A CONCRETE PLAN***

Once upon a time, I was obsessed with writing business plans and setting long-range goals. I came up with them left and right and discovered that detailed long-range plans are hard to integrate into my daily schedule.

## **Solution #6**

### ***CRYSTALLIZE YOUR PLAN***

Here's a little riddle: Why do concrete plans fail?

Give up?

Because you cannot see your dream through it.

I found that by replacing my concrete business plan with a crystallized life plan, it was easier to figure out next steps and take action. Concrete plans literally block your dream. A crystallized plan, on the other hand, is a clear and focused plan that allows you to keep your sights set on what is ahead. It's a plan that you can see your dream through through. The Life Coaching program is designed for you to cast your dream to the horizon and phase it into your schedule using a clear-cut achievable goal that reflects those things you value in life.

## Misconception #7

### ***I CANNOT SEEM TO PUT MY DREAM INTO WORDS***

It's a challenge to explain my dream in a way that connects your future with your current reality. In misconception #1, I explained how I overcame my reluctance in sharing my dream with others. Looking back, I realized that every time I shared my dream, the most important part of it was always left unsaid.

## Solution #7

### ***START WITH YOUR STORY***

I read a bumper sticker that said, "the hardest part is to start." You may be asking "What's my starting point? Where do I start?" That's a fair question. The starting point is your story – telling the story behind your dream. To tell my story requires me to ask, "why is my dream important to me?" and "is this dream just for me or does it include others?" I took one weekend just to write and understand the story of my dream experience and how my future connected to reality. I thought about what motivated and influenced me. I also made sense of my motivators, values, influences and passion. If you can master the story of your dream, you can close the gap and become more comfortable putting your dream into words. The Life Focus process helped me to transform my dream into reality by providing the tools I need to reframe my dreaming experience.

### **The Dream Cycle**

Dreams are like tiny apple seeds. They contain the destiny of a seedling that can grow to produce fruit. Given water, the right location and correct temperature, the seedling will sprout up and the seed will fall away. If germinated and nurtured properly, the apple seedling will turn into an apple tree that produces apples. And inside of each apple, there is more than one apple seed. Contained in each apple tree are enough seeds to produce fruit that will feed thousands over its lifetime. The process begins with the tiny seed.

The cycle of an apple seed reflects the cycle of a dream. My dreams began with an picture of a better life, of something I wanted to accomplish. Over time it grew into a bigger dream that benefits myself and others. At that point of transformation, my dream turned into a vision.

Like seeds, dreams fall away when they are giving birth to a greater vision. My vision is to bring dreams into focus. Over the next 12 months, I am looking to connect with those who are serious about moving forward with their dreams, goals and vision. If you are serious about focusing on your future, I would like to connect with you to talk about your dream. I would also like to share my experience of setting a 9-year goal to pursue my dream of becoming an Executive Coach and Organizational Development consultant, the steps that I have made to achieve that goal and how the life focus process can benefit you. For more information, please give me at (917) 647-6879 to schedule a time that we can talk about where you are in your dream experience.

Talk soon,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas E. Anderson, II". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Thomas E. Anderson, II