



## **DARE to go after your dreams and desires!**

By Liz Di Marco Weinmann

Do you dream of losing weight to get healthy? Desire to move to a different city? Dream of starting a new career or starting a company? Desire to master the guitar. Whatever your own dreams & desires, they're well within the realm of possibilities for those of us wishing to pursue daring endeavors.

There are millions who feel the same way. It's all part of our innate desire for individuation, to look that identity crisis right in the eye, and to get out dare to discover. So, assert the right to your own reinvention, and if anyone challenges that right, be prepared to retort "How dare you suggest I'm too old to dream & desire!?!"

To get in touch with your grown-up dreams & desires, you need to put your "inner editor" on hold, and indulge your "free-association" muscles. First, you need to capture them for future reference. Just let your mind wander, take notes, or clip, click, draw, paint, paste or doodle them – whatever works for you. Don't worry that they may seem unedited, disorganized, or grandiose. Don't dwell on how you'll make them happen. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Put some index cards wherever you hang out for more than an hour, so you can jot down some ideas that come into your head when you least expect them. Instead of fuming about being stuck in traffic, or complaining to yourself about how boring the elliptical machine is, let your mind wander to explore dreams & desires. When you're focused consciously on something else, that's when your sub-conscious spits out longings you didn't even imagine you could have. Jot down your impromptu ideas on your index cards, and put them aside. After a month or so, take them out, and note which ideas seem appealing enough that you could envision driving them to fruition.
2. On your laptop, start a journal, and password-protect it, unless you truly want to share your innermost thoughts with everyone in the free world. Write in it daily - at least three pages,

but no more than ten. Write as soon as you wake up, or right before you're going to bed, because that's when your mind won't be so alert that you'll edit yourself. Write down all the things, people and places that are making you happy or driving you crazy. Write for at least 20 minutes and you'll eventually generate ideas for what you want and need to accomplish. When you go back and re-read your entries weeks and months later, you'll see a pattern of dreams & desires your subconscious is bringing to the surface.

3. Go With Your flow. The landmark book, *Flow*, by renowned psychology professor, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, became one of the most popular books ever on the topic of tapping into our deepest dreams & desires. The author defines the concept of "flow" as a state of such intense concentration and immersion in a pleasurable activity that you completely lose track of time. To tap into your own flow state, take note of the next time that hours seem to fly by without your thinking about food, water, or the fact that your husband hasn't fed and bathed the kids, (which would otherwise be obvious if you looked up long enough to see they are eating the contents of a 20-gallon drum of Costco popcorn right from the floor). Then note the following:
  - What activity are you engaged in? Is it work-related, or completely different? If it's work, does it feel like work, or is it too pleasurable to be considered work?
  - If it's not work but has engrossed you in fun for several hours, is it something you could see Driving? Write it down.
  - Here's an exercise that's just as powerful - note when you feel you're in torture doing a work or extracurricular activity. If you have to endure it, what could you change to help you make it a more optimal experience now, or to replace it?
  
4. Break out of your rut. Harvard Medical School scientist Dr. Herbert Benson is renowned for his 30 years of respected research on stress, productivity and creativity. His best-seller, *The Breakout Principle*, has helped millions get unstuck and land on new solutions and even "breakout" discoveries. Try these four **simple exercises**:
  - Set a time to immerse yourself in the problem, challenge or task you're trying to achieve, with both sides of the brain in focus;
  - Then, move away from the task, and do something right-brain oriented, such as dancing, skiing, having sex, eating chocolate, etc.;
  - Talk over your challenge with a reassuring source of comfort, either a friend, your spouse or a pet (hey, you know who you are and it's perfectly normal);
  - Eventually, return to the challenge, with a fresher perspective that often leads to a "breakout" idea.
  
5. Your life's an obstacle course? Take a different course – go back to school! Surf course catalogs from the college, university or vocational school of your choice. Let your eyes wander, and click on courses that appeal to you simply by their titles. Read through them quickly and print those you want to consider further. Don't be concerned right now about any prerequisites, what the costs are, whether you'll have time, or whether there will be anyone as "old" as you in class. (As a college professor, I assure you there will be classmates as old as you, and much older). Put the print-out aside for just a few days.

Then take it out, read through the list of courses again, and decide on at least one you want to take.

Then, start exploring the next batch of dreams & desires that could change your life!

**ABOUT LIZ:** Liz DiMarco Weinmann is the Founder and CEO of The DARE-Force Corporation ([www.thedareforce.com](http://www.thedareforce.com)), an educational resources company whose mission is to inspire visionary, intelligent and motivated individuals who want to pursue, develop and lead new and fulfilling ventures in their personal lives, careers and communities. She is the author of *Get DARE From Here! - 12 Principles and Practices For Women Over 40 To Take Stock, Take Action and Take Charge of the Rest Of Their Lives*, from which this article was excerpted and adapted for Blush. (Visit <http://www.thedareforce.com>, download a free chapter).