

Time To Dream Again... Considerations for Inspiration and Confidence Building

The gift within each major life event is the opportunity to take pause and say, "What now? What do I really want for the next part of my life?" Whether your event was planned or sudden, welcomed or regrettable, the gift of opportunity is always there.

Once you have moved through the early stages of your transition and feel ready to take steps toward the next phase of your life, it may be time to dream again. This should be an enjoyable process. Think of it as an exploration of new possibilities that will shape the next chapter of your life. When you feel ready for the process of discovery, follow the three **Time to Dream Again** steps.

- Step One: Make Your Dream List
- Step Two: Tell Your New Story
- Step Three: Test and Explore Possibilities

Step One: Dream List

A **Dream List** is made up of those things that, in a perfect world, you would do for yourself and your family. In this initial stage of deciding what to put on your list, try not to focus on budgeting, but rather on what would make you feel happy and fulfilled. Pay attention to your feelings as you go through this exercise. Try to pinpoint the things that you are passionate about and deeply believe are important.

Ask yourself the following questions:

*If money did not matter, what would I be doing with my life from this point forward? What is truly important to me?
What have I always wanted to accomplish in my life—and is this still important? How would I describe my perfect day,
month, and year?*

Imagine yourself telling a friend that you just spent the perfect year. What would comprise a perfect year? Do the same with longer time periods: five years, ten years, and the rest of your life.

Do this exercise in three different sittings. Notice how your three lists differ and how they are similar. Another thought provoking approach is to ask yourself the same key question several times and listen to the depth you add with each answer. End by prioritizing your list. You may be able to do many things on your list you want but not everything at once.

Dreams, Hopes, and Goals	When would you like this to become reality?	How much do you think it will cost?



Step Two: Tell Your New Story

What if... you had the ability to actually create the next stage of your life by writing it down like a chapter in a book? What if everything you wrote in this chapter happened just the way you imagined? Try to think ahead and write as though you are telling the story of how your life is unfolding at that moment in time.

- Where would you be? Who would you be with?
- How would you spend your days? What's your normal routine?
- What would make you feel pleased and proud of yourself?

Step Three: Test and Explore Possibilities

Now that you have spent some time reviewing your priorities and crafting your future story, come back to today. How do your talents, your financial picture, and your obligations, align with your dreams.?

As you consider scenarios to test on your Dream List, you may discover that some dreams are immediately available and that others will take time to fulfill. Make sure you prioritize your list to help you focus on the really important things first.

Before you project the financial side of your dream equation, write a brief description of how you want to live now and into the future. For example:

I want to stop working, pay off my home mortgage, pay my children's student loans, volunteer, and travel.

Next, you will need to have accurate numbers to work with. For example, each of these dreams has a quantifiable cost attached to it.

- How much will it cost to replace your income?
- What is the mortgage payoff amount?
- How much are the student loans?
- What will your travel budget be?

Scenario testing — merging your dreams and reality. Scenario testing will yield an action list. Remember that transitions take time, and your dreams are worth waiting for.

Organize your scenarios:

- Number your scenarios and identify what is being analyzed.
- List the variables or assumptions, such as potential investment rates of return, taxes, income sources, and expenses.
- Record the results for each scenario and determine how will you assign success.

Scenario #1

Assumptions:

Result:

Scenario #2

Assumptions:

Result:

Scenario #3

Assumptions:

Result:

Scenario #4

Assumptions:

Result:

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