

Recover Your Dreams & Change Your Direction

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Most of us dream in the wrong direction.

When confronted with a job we don't love or a life that feels purposeless, we look forward to the future and ask big discovery questions:

What do I want to be when I grow up? What do I want to do with my life? What is my calling?
In that moment, the answer we get is often a little terrifying because every option in the world is on the table.

- Should I get a new job?
- Do I need to go back to school?
- Could I volunteer more?
- Start my own nonprofit?
- Take up a new hobby?
- Find a sport I enjoy?

What's my dream? What's my passion? What's my next move forward?

As we survey the black hole of endless possibility, we often get overwhelmed in that moment. We don't know where to start when we ask discovery questions, so we stop. We freeze. We get paralyzed and give up dreaming before we've even really begun.

But what if dreaming were an act of recovery instead of an act of discovery? Of rescuing something from your past that was lost, something you put down because life got too busy?

Dreams are usually the first thing to get bumped off the to-do list when the day gets full. Something that someone who mattered to you told you didn't matter. A teacher, a parent, a peer said, "You're not good enough to do that. You could never turn that into a full-time job. That would never make enough money to live on." So you stopped.

A friend of mine used to love to dance when she was a little girl. It was all she dreamed about. In the eighth grade, her mom pulled her aside and said, "You know you're not going to be a Rockette, right? You know that's not in the cards for you, right?"

Do you think she danced much after that? Do you think it was easy for her to lean into that dream with everything she had? Of course not. She left her dream behind in the eighth grade.

Most of us have done the same thing in our own lives. We've felt something big and true, but for a million reasons stopped doing it and left it in our past. That's why finding your calling and your dream is not a first date; it is more often than not a reunion. And if that's the case, if dreaming is an act of recovery and not an act of discovery, that changes everything.

Instead of asking forward-facing questions like, "What do I want to do with my life?", we dream backward and ask, "What have I done in my life that I've loved?" And the answer we get is not a bottomless, faceless list of options that could apply to anyone. It's a personal, small, uniquely tailored to our hearts and our souls, handful of life experiences that made us feel alive.

And finding those—dreaming backward—gives you everything you really need to move forward.