

## Chapter 8 (Dreaming of me)

*"Filming and screening I picture the scene, Filming and dreaming, Dreaming of me" - Depeche Mode*

There are plenty of people who say dreaming about the future is a waste of time. I know many others who have written self-help books that infer we should not dwell on the past. Yet, I'm pulled back to one fact. We must know who we are. So much time is spent searching for meaning. Searching for who we really are. People go on spiritual treks. Well established Pastors find themselves on sabbaticals. Often, they will recluse themselves in a convent or secluded hideaway just to get in touch with God and themselves. Even within Gods kingdom people need purpose. I read this book called "Wild" by Cheryl Strayed. It was a messed-up book, but a fascinating read. She hiked the Pacific Crest Trail to find herself. While following her on Twitter, I realized she is still messed up. Her last name fit's so good. I think people are continually searching for the perfect self. Some amount of time must be spent, in the past, to understand who we are now. Yet, people stray into the past and dwell on the future too much. Where are you right now?

I like the quote above because it's true. A kid is always learning. They are recording the whole scene. It's tough to recall much after fifty some years. Childhood was so long ago. Yet, I have feelings about playing in the dirt. Feelings about spankings and homework. So many people hold on to tiny memories with tiny feelings. Trying to grasp ahold of good times while equally trying to let go of others. We record it all. Within all these good and bad times are dreams. Those visions that you hope will one day become reality. Would you look up at a plane and say "I should become a pilot?" Were you destined to do so? Yet, how many actors pointed themselves towards Hollywood just to make their dreams come true? Yet, they found themselves a prostitute on those very streets. A drug addict that failed to achieve stardom. They had dreams too. We all

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do! Places in the heart that let go of a terrible past and hope for a great future. It's the things that dreams are made of.

Those dreams reside within our head and heart. There they sit, used and unused. Like I said, I think a midlife crisis is an indication that these dreams are not meaningless. So many people divorce after ten years or into their thirties directly because they need to find meaning. We need to find those dreams and make them happen before it's too late. Then the storms of life hit on a Saturday afternoon when you least expect it. The dreams get strewn around with everything else. Babies are sitting on the pilot dream. Bills clutter the Hollywood dream. Even loneliness and jealousy paint over love, marriage, and a happy life. Those poor dreams are real. Yet, sometimes they just get lost in the storms of life. Try cleaning up after a life storm. How often do hopes and dreams get filed away in the wrong place. That's where wasted time comes in.

We need dreams to thrive in our soul. I do feel that they are directly linked to your passion. Your direct line to hope and success. It's a waste of a good dream if you don't use it. It's why I'm writing this book. I know wasted time. I still have dreams. My messy life has cluttered some of them. Circumstances blew them around and I inadvertently filed them in the wrong place. What happened to my dreams? Sometimes we forget where we put them. Then there you are wasting time searching for them. What did I dream of becoming? Who am I really? That's how we get to crisis points. That storm rearranged our dreams. So, there we sit with all these tarnished images of glory. Old photos we recorded in our head of being the best at our passions. Far too often we leave a spouse just to reconnect with our dreams. The problem is not the storms or the people around us. It's you? What if you had stood up to the storm in the first place? What if you overcame the distractions that led you down a bad path? No matter what happened, you held on for dear life to your dreams?

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It's a waste of time trying to find yourself when you are the one who got lost. That might seem odd but bear with me. So many people say that an unwarranted pregnancy changed their fate. That a rotten person ruined their life. The real answer is you allowed it. Years ago, I read a book that stated "*what a man allows, happens.*" Take man out of it and insert the word "person." Go deeper and change that word to "you." You allowed that storm to take you down. Where were your defenses? Where were your convictions and morals to weather the storm? "But that person ruined me!" What part of no do you not understand? What you allowed certainly did happen. You allowed time to be wasted by fearing another and fearing your own ability to overcome. That's how we waste time. We allow the storms in life to blow us around.

I heard the story of a father that feared losing his son. As each conflict came up with his teenage son he relented in fear. What if my son hates me? What if he left? He didn't make his kid go to church. The father let the homework and house chores slide. All of this was done in fear. Yet, what happened was that his kid began to slide too. It began innocently with a messy room. Then homework was not completed. Angry music crept in. The boy started wearing dark clothes and the relationship between father and son deteriorated. Yet, Dad took the hands-off approach in fear of losing what he was losing. One day a friend told the father "who is the boss." Right then and there it hit him. I'm the father, the boss of my son. The relationship with his son began to turn around when he took back control. Ironically his son began to improve. A commander, father, or mother need to be in control of their family and life. Who is the boss?

Inventing yourself is not a waste of time. Being the boss of your life is not a bad thing. Just living in the moment is a waste. Going only where circumstances and tragedy take you is a terrible idea. The people who wrote self-help books and do seminars experienced the same things you did. The difference is wasted time. They wasted little time moving on. Little time dwelling

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and pondering. How long is wasted time? It's twenty years wishing you were an actor. Thirty years in a bad marriage. I would also say that wasted time is realizing you're in a place that ground against you for twenty years. A father letting his child drift away without direction. All the compromise and giving in resulted in zero progress. Letting life have its way with you usually results in life having its way with you forever, if you let it. You have heard the term "give them an inch and they take a mile?" Wasted time is not those first five years. Oh no, it's the next five years trying to find a way to be yourself and appease life at the same time. Five years of trying turns into ten years of wasted time still finding yourself in the same spot where you began.

Wasted time comes from waiting on others to help you become what you want. I hate to burst your bubble but they are way more interested in themselves. You are not first on the docket, nor should you be either. This is the trouble with wasted time. What you could have done in half the time, turned into sitting there twice as long waiting for someone else to do it for you. That bottle will make things better, right? That abuser will become nice, right? This workplace will improve. Those that give the seminars and write the books are plainly saying it is time to get off your ass and do something. Yes, for yourself.

Those dreams in your heart aren't going anywhere. They are; however, collecting dust and being lost in the shuffle. I just can't imagine someone looking in the mirror at fifty just staring at the wrinkles on their face. There they stand wondering why so much time got wasted. Barley recognizing their older self as they scramble to resurrect dreams, they forgot about thirty years before. It would be a horror movie of wasted time. In that moment, will you nobly stand there proclaiming that you tried your best? Really? For thirty years! Then you find out ten days later that cancer has arrived. To compound it you are told that you have two years remaining.

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Dreams were forged at twenty years old and it took you thirty years to find them all piled up in life's messes. Then you have less than two years to make it happen. It isn't happening! That's why they say there is no time like the present. It should be a crime to wait thirty years to find lost dreams.

Look, it's not about mourning the past. That is long gone. Don't waste a single second thinking about what could have been. Instead spend time thinking about your dreams. Take the time to look at your hopes and desires. We should never look at how much time is left or wasted. Just do whatever you can to make the best life possible. It's noble to love an abuser. I suppose love should not be discriminatory. Shouldn't we love everyone? It's noble to sacrifice your life so that another can live theirs. Yet, there is a slight difference. A soldier gives his or her life so we don't have to. To win the battle for all of us. One person might go to jail for a bigger cause. Those are not what I'm driving at. Noble causes done for the good of everyone are what heroes are made of. It's not wasted time. Sacrificing yourself as an eternal victim is!

Taking one for the team means that someone else will have their needs met (at the sacrifice of yourself). This is not funny, noble, or bright. They get to live while you waddle in wasted time. They get to see their dreams come true and you lose yours in a pile of rubble. That is not noble. Wasted time is trying to catch love for them using their bottle. Is the fight for dreams and love all about the fight? Is it to win misunderstandings? A few misunderstandings are what life is. They happen from time to time. They are not the norm. Someone not wanting you to catch your dreams and find your hope is not the norm either. I just saw on Twitter someone saying healthcare is a right and not a privilege. Tell that to someone in a third world country. However, love is a right. We were made to love God. We were created to love others. Take that away and all that remains is wasted time not being loved. Should your right to be loved

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take one for the team? Be discriminatory with your love. Choose to protect it. Choose to give it out to those who warrant it.

Let's say your forty years old now and starting over. Your spouse left you or they died. Either way you're holding the bag. They are gone. What's in the bag? It's the life you made for yourself. Are you where you wanted to be? A few months ago, I noticed a girl on Facebook (who was a friend) that started posting a ton of pictures of herself. They were getting more and more revealing all the time. Then I discovered that she had left her husband. This girl was trying to show the world she was still pretty. That out of the shackles of marriage she still mattered. Maybe it's not the best way to expose yourself to the world but I have seen this type of thing all the time. People radically changing themselves while trying to find who they really are. Those of us on social media get to see your search being played out. That girl will spend a ton of wasted time trying to find herself now. The marriage didn't cut it? Her old clothes didn't cut it. I would even say her old body didn't cut it. What would cut it?

No matter the age, it's time to start now. Not another moment wasted. Who are you? What are those dreams you made all those years ago. Are there hopes you still think of? Things you still desire? It's generally not about dumping the old. The new becomes old really quick by the way. No, it's about inventing new habits that replace the old ones. The old habits ignored your dreams in the hope that someone else's dreams are met. The old ones say that if you love them more, then they will be happy. The new habits say I am important. My dreams matter. I have a right to be loved too. I fear my friend on Facebook is looking for significance in all the wrong places.

**Dialogue**

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Socrates created this term to show people that they can investigate themselves. It's the search for your identity. The ancient Greeks loved to dialogue or debate the relationship between the physical and mental. They wondered why we are here and how does this whole world work? Philosophy is the practice of gaining wisdom by searching, learning, and discovering answers. How? Through dialogue. There needs to be a dialogue between you and your dreams. I would even venture to say that it's not a dialogue between what is or what should have been. Instead, the conversation should be centered around what we can accomplish from this moment on. Where do we go from here? I am not a big fan of the "bucket list." I only say that because they are things to check off before what? It's picky, but I feel the list is too focused. They are just things. I would insist that we focus on defending our time. We should make time to be the best individual we can. Embrace and explore what your passions are. Seeing the great wall of China is cool. Yet, "you" will go home. What if "you" were worth exploring? Yes, we should go a few places. I do! Going inside and dialoging with yourself about your hopes and your dreams is a far better focus. It's a place we need to travel too more often.

I cannot tell you how many people change their circumstances only to find out they are in the same situation years down the road. Why? It's because they did not look under the hood of the car they are driving. Going places will give you a boost. Yet, it's still only a boost. What would give you the ultimate boost? Taking "you" out for a test drive. Turning a Volkswagen into a Ferrari. But, Patrick, I am a Volkswagen! Oh, contraire my friend. You are as good as you believe yourself to be. Years ago, my son feared the expectation of being a lawyer or doctor to make his parents happy. He asked me if a pizza driver was ok too. I said no matter what you do be the best pizza driver you can. The relief on his face was priceless.

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So, you're not a sports star or a lawyer. Be the best at what you are. The only way that will happen is if you embrace the dreams that you had from your youth. I do realize that at forty you might have a harder time becoming a doctor than at twenty. Yet, if you're living an unfilled life, what then? What if your passion is still doctoring? The thrill of trying to fulfill those dreams will be worth it. Is ten years as a doctor worth more than thirty years wishing you had tried? Run a marathon! You loved to run in your youth! Suppose you can't run anymore? Train others to run! Take your passion and run with it! Dive head long into the things you dreamt of doing. Do you really know what would happen if you did? I know this, you would be happier trying.

Look, it's beyond yourself. We talked briefly about leaving a spouse or a job. What if you were the sour puss in that marriage? What if being weaned on pickle soured your spouse? What if you thought you were good? Yet, dreams were left on the table. Is it possible your demeanor and outlook suffered? Did those around you suffer because deep inside you're not happy with how things turned out. I'd swear most divorces did not have to happen. What needed to happen was personal change. A change in habits. Defend your time. A change in attitude: I'm going to pursue my dreams. I am betting most spouses would embrace a passionate partner trying to fulfill their life's dreams. I'd even bet many of them would move hell or high water to see you succeed.

Were in a strange age. A woman succeeds because she is a woman. So, did a man succeed just because he was a man? The woman's lib people would say "hell, yah." Yet, I just went through tons of statements from current successful women over forty. I was going to quote a few but they are all saying the same thing. These women are glad they found success later in life. Each one said they needed time to find confidence. Almost each one also reported that they took their passions and made them a reality. That someone in their life believed in them. First



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and foremost, they began to believe in themselves. Almost none of them blamed others for their failure. Why? Didn't a man hold them back? Didn't opportunities pass them over because of politics? They were all quoted as saying that they needed to learn. They needed to see themselves as they truly are.

Time is good for that. Good for what? For seeing yourself for the first time. Rarely does that happen at nineteen. Yet, at forty you can see yourself so much clearer. The thing a gained most from these women was effort. They never let go of the dream. They knew who they were. Each one held on to their passions and stayed the course. Sure, it took years. That can be said of Eddison and Colonel Sanders. Almost all of the presidents. Most things take time. Most things need time to see more clearly. One woman was getting married at thirty-nine. She could not find a dress so she made one. Her father realized that his daughter had talent. That there was passion in her design. He financed her thriving wedding gown business. Who knew? Yet, a divorce was not the answer. Drinking and running away would not have done it. No, it was recognition of passion and dreams. Ironically, she was already in the fashion business but it was not her business. This talented lady mentioned in passing that she did not think she could succeed as an owner. Her passion and dreams screamed that she could! She needed time to see that.

Dialogue! She had dialogue with people and herself. Don't tell me she did not go for at-least one walk and talked herself into the wedding gown business. How many people stay home and talk themselves out of it? I don't care how crazy the dream was. Let's say you dreamed of being a fighter pilot. Dreamed of being a cook. What can you do today to begin walking down a path of fulfilling those passions? Step past the bucket list. Be involved in your passions. At-least try. At-least start a path. I have told the story of a young man who wanted to be a doctor and a missionary for Jesus. He ended up becoming a paramedic. Through a series of dialogue, he was

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offered a chance to be a doctor in a foreign country and a missionary. Never give up and never give in.

I do recognize that a fifty-year-old might not become a vogue model. How about an older model? Maybe an agent for younger models. What if working as a pizza driver wasn't cutting it after twenty years. The job was fun but not really you. When will you find what is you and do it? Gordon Downey of the music group The Tragically Hip died at fifty-four. I am positive he died doing what he loved. They all said he had passion on stage. Fifty-four is a young age to die. Yet, he died with passion fulfilled. Did Prince die with passion fulfilled? I bet he did. Yet, I'm not convinced Princess Dianna did. The former princess of Wales probably had not found it yet at the young age of thirty-six. Imagine being wrapped up in royalty at an early age. Prince Harry and his wife are trying to find themselves as we speak outside of royalty. Being rich does not breed success or fulfilled passion. If it's time to die, hopefully you spent the time you had creating the best you possible.

I always wanted to be a producer. I can't play or sing music. It's not my passion really. I'd love to play a little and certainly I have tried. I probably should keep trying too. Yet, recently, someone recognized my passion for computers and music. They had seen my funny videos I had made with my daughter. They asked me to produce a live stream for them. I am thriving now. This is me. I write in my spare time. I have been writing and reading for fifty years. I do believe there is more to discover in me. Yet, I have explored my passions. They have changed me too. There are new dreams to dream. A new passion of mine is to travel. It's becoming a hobby. Where will it take me?

It's amusing, funny, and fun. I have another new hobby of listening and watching people. What are they doing in life? What do they dream of? This new hobby is asking them the right

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questions. Are you pursuing your dreams? Equally I am challenging people not to give up on their marriage. Make “you” exciting in the marriage. Challenge your spouse to be more than they think they are. There is a ton to watch in people’s lives. How can I help them find life? I think God helps. Having multiple sides to you is important. God wants that too. This deity has a way of opening your eyes to a bigger world. People claim it’s all about rules and commands. Boy, they are missing out on who God really is. In many ways they are missing out on who they really are too.

In the morning you wake up. Most of us do look in the mirror. I’m sure many of us look like holy hell first thing too. What if our lives looked like that too? We walk around in a daze half asleep. What would waking up look like? Many people have read a self-help book and changed. A seminar helped them quit smoking. Sometimes all we need is a little push. I read about a lady who wanted to be more in her church. To be bold. Her prayer? She asked God to push her. He did too. That’s why I read her book. God pushed her to write it although she was afraid. Are you so afraid of change that you would rather walk around asleep?

These dreams we have are the key. The passions you have are also the key. One person dreams of being a writer. Other people dreamt of being president. Yet, each one is passionate about their own dreams. My wife is not passionate about my writing. I am not that passionate about her medical stuff. What do I dream about in my sleep? What causes me to day-dream and get distracted? It’s dreaming of me! Seeing me in another place far from where I am. As we ignore those dreams we tend to travel farther and farther away from who we really are. How many people look in the mirror years later and wonder how it got this way? So many of us do!

I can’t stress this enough. You must defend your time. Why? So that you can defend your dreams. Defend your passion. It’s ironic sitting here because I just had to do that. Church has the

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uncanny ability of flying low. Christian leadership tends to want things to be nominal. Low excitement and low passion. Just don't rock the church boat. Yet, they hired me to run their live stream. I tend to fly at forty thousand feet. We have butted heads more or less. The low flyers want me to come down. The problem is I can't for very long. I'm a forty-thousand-foot flyer. I spent this week defending my passion. Defending who God made me to be. On the TV Show Gilligan's Island, Gilligan is flying (using feathers). He is way up in the air literally flying. The Skipper tells him that he can't fly. Gilligan says "I can't?" The Skipper yells back "no!" What happened next? Gilligan fell because he believed someone else. He did not defend himself.

Write down your dreams that you have always had. If you can't remember, maybe it's time to go for a walk. It's time to reach back and sift through life's storms. Where are those dreams of your youth? What are the passionate things you miss dreaming about? Don't waste any more time trying to live your life for others exclusively. Defend yourself. Defend your time. Defend your dreams. Then go get them! Don't fall for the wrong reasons. Let's move on to a last look at wasted time.