

Chasing Dreams

by Michael Taylor

For as long as I can remember I have always dreamed of being an entrepreneur. I remember when I was only 8 or 10 years old I said to my grandfather, "One day I am going to be a millionaire". "How are you going to accomplish that?" he asked. "By owning my own company," I replied.

It is my fervent belief that every human being has a divine purpose. I believe that intuitively we know what this purpose is, but, because of a society that discourages individuality and dreamers, we simply lose site of our dreams. We then begin to conform to society's versions and definitions of success and begin wondering why our lives feel so empty and meaningless. In other words we stop listening to our own inner wisdom, we simply forget how to tune in to our own souls.

At the age of twenty-three I was living the American dream. I had a very good paying job, a beautiful wife, a nice house, three kids and every credit card you can imagine. By society's standards I was successful. Although externally it appeared that I had it all together, internally there was a deep feeling of emptiness and a longing for something more. By the age of twenty-nine my dream became a nightmare as I experienced divorce, bankruptcy and foreclosure. I had gone from having everything to having absolutely nothing in the span of only six years.

So there I was in unfamiliar territory. I was bankrupt and alone and had fallen into a deep state of depression. One night during the darkest period of my life I had an epiphany. I was thinking about all the things that had gone wrong in my life and I was trying to find a way to gain a sense of hope and optimism. All of a sudden I had this thought. Actually it was more than just a thought it was more like a divine communication. The communication was in the form of a question and it said, "What would happen if you took all of the energy you've invested in trying to get rich and focus that energy in simply trying to be happy?"

As simplistic as it sounds that question that propelled me to begin to rediscover my dream of being my own boss. To begin chasing my dream I had to begin asking myself some very deep questions. The first question I asked was "What is it that really makes me happy?" Next I had to ask myself, "What am I really good at?" And finally yet importantly "How can I take what makes me happy and combine it with what I'm good at and then make money?"

After some deep self-introspection and a few years of participating in a series of personal development seminars and workshops, I found the answer to those three all-important questions. Because of my own personal development I came to realize that I really enjoyed teaching. I have always had a deep love for learning new things and I discovered that it brought me a lot of joy to share what I learned with others. I also learned that I am a very good communicator and have a gift for public speaking. Although public speaking

terrifies most people I found out that I absolutely love the intellectual challenge of being able to relay my thoughts, ideas and beliefs to others in a passionate intelligent and conversational style. I am filled with excitement and energy when I speak in front of groups. I can't really put the feeling into words but part of me connects with a divine presence that always guides me in my thoughts, words and actions. It's as if I'm not actually doing the speaking. It feels as if my spirit is giving me the words. It is a very powerful and enlightening experience to say the least.

So now that I have answered the first two questions, what makes me happy and at what do I excel - all I needed to figure out now was how I could convert this knowledge into a career that would allow me to make an adequate amount of money to live my dreams and be comfortable. During this time I was experiencing extreme burnout at work. I knew that I really needed to do something different but I was still unsure as to which direction I should go. A part of me was excited about trying something new, yet another part of me was scared to death about giving up my secure position and career.

After months of asking myself what I wanted to do next I decided that I wanted to write a book and start my own publishing company. In addition, I could become a motivational speaker that targeted my products and services to the African American market. I had spent years participating in workshops and seminars dealing with human potential and personal growth and I noticed that there were very few African American participants. I had found an unfilled need and I decided to fill that need with my new company. Once I decided that I wanted to start my company I had to face the reality that I did not have the financial backing to get started. In fact, I was so far in debt that starting a company seemed like the last thing I needed to do. However, despite being completely broke I knew that I had to figure out a way to make my dream come true.

The first thing I needed to do was actually write the book. Therefore I committed myself to completing my manuscript. Amazingly I was up late one night watching *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous* featuring a famous romance writer. I do not remember her name but something she said really stuck with me. She said that every day she writes ten pages of text. No more and no less than- ten pages everyday. She said that sometimes it takes her twelve hours and sometimes it takes her ten minutes. She writes ten pages a day, no matter how much time it takes. When she finishes she goes to the beach or just relaxes and find other things to keep herself busy. After listening to her, I decided that I would attempt to write only five pages each day. In my mind it seemed like a realistic goal. The next day I sat down to write. It took me over nine hours to write my five pages but commitment resulted in it's completion. Although there were tons of errors in my writing it did not matter. What was most important was that I kept my commitment of writing five pages. I continued my commitment and within ninety days I actually completed my manuscript. Boy was I relieved when I finally finished. Though challenging it was very rewarding to finally complete the project.

Then the issue of money (actually lack of money) came up again. I decided to ask some of my friends what they thought of my idea about starting my own company and to see if they might be interested in investing. Although most of them were supportive, none of

them was willing to invest any money into my company. Their biggest fear was not that I did not have the commitment, perseverance and knowledge to start the company. Their greatest fear was that African Americans would not buy my books. Repeatedly, I would hear comments like, "Black people don't read or black people don't spend money on personal development programs. How many people are going to purchase a book titled Brothers Are You Listening? Don't you know that black men are the last people to purchase these types of books? Although I must admit that I was a little surprised by their reactions I completely disagreed with their conclusions. I knew there was a need for personal development books written by and for African Americans and although most people disagreed with me I decided to pursue my dream any way. In fact their rejection inspired me even more. I knew that if I could overcome all of the obstacles ahead of me it would give me even more credibility and ultimately help me sell more books. It would make my story even more inspiring.

Now that I had completed my manuscript I needed to get it edited, copyrighted, printed and bounded. Once that happened I would officially be a published author. Boy, that sounded good. Michael Taylor published author.

Since I didn't have any money I decided to try to get my book published by a major publisher first. If I could get a publisher to accept my manuscript I could get a small advance to cover some expenses and then they could help promote my work and me. I mailed out over a hundred query letters to publishers all across the country. Each one was returned with the polite rejection letter stating that my book did not "fit" into the genre or target group of their company. Although some people dislike rejection it actually inspires me. I knew that these rejections were not a reflection of my work; it was simply the closed-minded attitudes of people in the publishing industry. I simply needed to stay focused and eventually I would get my big break. After over two years I realized that my big break was not going to come through any publishing company. I knew that it was now up to me to get my message out and I needed to redirect my energy in a different direction. I began doing research on self-publishing. I read several success stories about people who had self-published and I decided that was the way I needed to go. Although it sounded easy to do, the down side was that it was going to take a substantial amount of money to publish my book myself.

During this time I had been listening to a series of tapes by a person named Wayne Dyer. I had been reading and studying his work for over ten years and I actually consider him one of my favorite mentors. The title of the tape series was The Secrets to Manifesting Your Destiny. In this series Dr. Dyer talks about the importance of meditation and focusing your thoughts on what you want. He talks a lot about visualizing the dreams and goals that you have and trusting that you are connected to an Infinite Universe that will support you in manifesting your desires. I have learned to trust and accept this concept so I began focusing my attention on getting my book published somehow. Another thing that Dr. Dyer teaches is the concept of synchronicity. This simply means that everything

in our lives happens for a reason and if we will simply learn to recognize the divine synchronicities in our lives they will guide us to our ultimate destiny. I was doing my

meditation and being aware of the synchronicities in my life when I experienced a divine miracle. I met a woman at a bookstore and we immediately became good friends. We had a lot in common and shared the same beliefs about the Universe and synchronicity. Actually, she was a huge Wayne Dyer fan just like me. One day she invited me to go with her to pick up some gift cards that she was having made. When we arrived at the printers she introduced me to the owner. He was a very nice guy that had been doing printing for over twenty years. After our introduction I asked him exactly what his company did and he told me that he handled all types of printing. I asked him if he also printed and bounded books and he answered yes. Wanting to know how much he would charge to print it and bind it; I begin telling him a little about my book. He gave me a price and I told him that I could not afford to pay him at that time. He asked me to tell him a little more about my book and after our conversation he was so impressed that he offered to pay for the printing up front if I would be willing to pay him back in monthly installments.

It took every ounce of strength in me to keep from jumping through the roof. I was so excited that I actually gave him a hug to say thank you. I knew immediately that my meditations and prayers had worked and the Universe was supporting me in manifesting my dream. After approximately six weeks I had my first printing of books delivered to my home. I can't even begin to express how happy and excited I was. However, I knew that the work was just beginning. Now I had to prove that I could sell my books in addition to repaying him for printing them for me.

Fortunately I have always been a salesman so I did what I do best; I began selling my books to anyone that looked interested. I sold books to people on the bus, I had a few friends that owned beauty salons who allowed me to sell in their shops, and I even sold a book to a female police officer that wrote me a ticket. I was a selling machine. After a little over a year I sold my first thousand copies. This was pretty phenomenal considering I did it with no advertising or marketing. This happened over ten years ago and today I'm still selling my book. In fact I am almost finished with my next book, which should be available in 2007.

Although I have not reached all of my financial goals I can say that I am now living my dream. I am currently an entrepreneur, a writer and personal development coach that loves to empower others to live their dreams and create a life worth living. As I mentioned at the beginning, every human being has a divine purpose. The question is whether you are willing to look deep within yourself to find yours. If you have been inspired by this story and would like more information about my company or me, please visit www.creationpublishing.com The site is designed to educate, motivate and inspire you to reach your full potential. Check it out and let me know what you think.

In the meantime remember that dreams really do come true but you must be willing to put forth a whole lot of effort to make it happen. Take Nike's advice. **JUST DO IT!**
Michael Taylor