

“Working Out” a Dream



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Bruce Springsteen’s, “*I’m working on a dream*” is a popular song that appeals to many. Generally, humans like to imagine a better future, yet few people have focused their dreams by creating a written plan. In Zig Ziglar’s book, “*See You at the Top*”, he tells of a dream experiment during which electrodes that measured sleep patterns were hooked to participants heads. Researchers then allowed the participants to sleep, but they were not allowed to dream. Each time participants fell into the dream state, they were woken up.

This process went on for days. The first day, the participants woke more fatigued than usual; the second day, fatigued and depressed; the third day, fatigued, depressed and irritable. On the fourth day, the experiment was stopped because participants were on the verge of becoming violent.

If we do not have a dream pulling us forward, we may find it difficult to be motivated and may find ourselves frustrated with life and apathetic.

When interviewing a potential employee or client a favorite question is, “Do you have any dreams for your life that you feel comfortable sharing with me?” If they don’t, achieving excellent results with this person is unlikely. They are too low on fuel for their future. There is, however, hope for them if they commit to “working out” dreams for themselves. As we “dream-build”, the circumstances of our lives often rise to superior levels.

Dream building has proven effective in 88 different fields. Yale University studies found that only 3 in 100 people have dreams in writing, yet those that do outperform the other 97 combined in getting results.

I suggest that you start with a dream to improve your physical condition. As you do, other areas of your life may begin to gel. A good “Dream declaration” should be in writing, be specific, be measurable, exciting and a bit daring. It should include action steps with timelines.

An example dream declaration might be something like: “I will be able to comfortably wear the same size pants that I did when I was 20 years old.” With this declaration, action step No. 1 might be, “I will strength train tow days per week starting April 1, 2009.”

I advise creating up to six action steps to support a good dream declaration. Dream on!

(Note: This article by Fred Schafer originally appeared in the California School Business magazine’s Spring 2009 issue.)

