

DREAM GUIDE

BY JOSH REICH

UNSTUCK

One of the hardest things to do when you face disappointments in life is to dream again. And if we're honest, 2020 has been a dream killer, a year of setbacks, letdowns, and disappointments. There are unmet expectations everywhere. We are so glad that you took the step of wanting to get curious and dream again. We believe that God will meet you there and help you move forward with what He puts on your heart.

In his book *Dream Big: Know What You Want, Why You Want It, and What You're Going to Do About It*, Bob Goff lays out some helpful questions to help us dream:

1. Who are you?

2. Where are you?

3. What do you want?

We want to encourage you as you go through this exercise to write things out and dream. We edit our dreams too quickly and miss out on what God has for us. So before you ask 'how' questions, take some time to pray and *dream*.

We'll get to the editing and 'how' questions at the end. Right now, it is important to dream, to write, to let your mind wander. As children, we are good at this, but the older we get, it is easy to limit ourselves. Limiting ourselves is how we end up with regrets, disappointments, and cynicism. This isn't an exercise in fantasy thinking; we'll get to reality. More than likely, if you're like most people when it comes to dreams, reality thinking isn't the problem. It is dreaming that is the struggle.

WHO ARE YOU?

What makes you, you? What makes you tick? What makes you unique?

This exercise is about getting an understanding of your story.

All of us have different gifts, personalities, talents, ambitions, and histories. God doesn't waste any of those. If you grew up in a broken home or grew up in poverty, that has an enormous impact on what God might want to do in your life and future.

Take some time to write down moments that have impacted your life—both high and low.

Ask God, what does that say about me? My story? Is there anything in that list you want me to pay attention to? Were there any limiting beliefs in my family growing up? Anything in particular from my family story that I need to pay attention to?

Here are a few other questions that might jog some ideas: What are your strengths, gifts, and things you are good at? How has God wired you in a unique way so that you can contribute something special? What do you do without having to think? In what things do people ask you for advice or seek out your help?

WHERE ARE YOU?

This is more about your stage in life than your geography, although geography does matter when it comes to dreams.

What is your life stage? Did you just make a big change in your life: marriage, children, retirement, new job, new school, or new house? Are you about to make a big change in life? Or, maybe you would like to make a big change in life. These are important to your current life stage.

I'm a dad of 5 kids, two of who are teenagers, so there are dreams I have today that aren't for right now. That's okay. This isn't about limiting yourself or your dreams, but having an honest assessment of who you are and where you are. Just because we can't do something today doesn't mean we can never do that thing. It just means today may not be the time.

So, be honest:

Where are you in life?

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Even though we love the idea of dreams, it can be difficult to attach words to them. But list out what do you want in life. For what do you want to be known? What things do you want people to say about you at your funeral? What stories do you want people to tell about you? Do you want to travel somewhere? Do something you've never tried before? What legacy do you want to leave in your life?

Recently I heard a pastor in his 80's say, "More people need to ask, 'What kind of old person do I want to be?'" That really struck me and has caused my wife and me to think differently about our lives and dreams.

If it helps to think backward, write out where you hope to be in 5 years. For many of us, we have put this on hold this year because of how hard it has been, but this is a moment to take that back and dream again.

Don't edit this. Don't start to "how" your list and try to figure out how you'll get there or get it done. Just list it out.

NOW WHAT?

Take a moment to look at what you've written down. Bring those things before God in prayer. Ask him what things he truly wants you to focus on this week, this month, this year, or in the next decade. Not everything on your list is for now, and that's okay. Dreams don't always happen fast.

Depending on your personality, you might look at your list and see some impossible things; that is great. Continue asking God for his help. Maybe you see some things that are overwhelming or scary, continue bringing those before God, and ask him for courage and guidance. Ask someone to pray with you as you move forward with your dreams.

Here is one last helpful insight: The dreams that help people, that are meaningful to you and others, that line up with your personal values—those are the ones that will draw the best out of us. Whether one person knows we accomplished it or a thousand, those numbers aren't important.