

10 Secrets to Creating and Living the Life of Your Dreams

You remember when you were little and kids used to indignantly say to each other, “You’re not the boss of me!” You know what? They were right. We are all “the boss” of ourselves. This is a not-so-secret super-power granted to every human being on the planet, and it’s a cool one: personal agency.

What does that even mean? According to social psychologists, it means “the capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one’s life.” More simply, personal agency means the ability to develop our intentions before events or taking action, to choose our reactions, and to embrace a deep knowing that we shape the meaning and purpose of our lives.

There are many paths to creating and living the life of your dreams, but it never hurts to know a few shortcuts. Here are our top ten faves:

1. Practice Self-Awareness

Until we are aware of our thoughts, motivations and even our actions, we haven't let ourselves in on the knowledge that we can change.

Everything—and we do mean everything—begins with acknowledging what we're doing, and why. Example: I can't stop biting my nails if I'm not even aware I'm doing it. Similarly, I can't turn my finances around if I'm unaware that I'm holding the thought, "Rich people are corrupt and evil."

This is #1 for a reason. We cannot stress enough the importance of the POWER in this little secret. And as soon as you think you have mastered this... THINK AGAIN!

You and you alone have the keys to your destiny. If you took this one secret and RAN full speed ahead into your grandest visions, dreams and desires, you would SEE every little thing in your way of having it all.



2. Take Responsibility

Those of us who are stuck in blaming others or circumstances for our challenges or abandoning our autonomy in favor of playing the hapless victim are, for all intents and purposes, powerless.

Owning that we and we alone are responsible for our every thought, action and response to our circumstances gives us back our power. As infants, we experience power in our helplessness. (Parents would say their babies have ALL the power, lol!) It's exhilarating, however, to grow up and own your actions and choices—ask any two-year old who's learned the power of “yes” and “NO!”

Now imagine combining full-on self awareness with 100% responsibility and see if you can tap into those feelings of POWER and FREEDOM.

Pretty delicious, if we do say so ourselves!



3. Stay Focused

What we give our energy to—those things on which we concentrate our thoughts—expand. If someone is focused on every discouraging thing that happens to them in a single day without noticing the positive events, they will experience that life kinda sorta sucks.

Whether you focus on what you want or focus on what you don't want, you will experience more of it. (Haven't you ever wondered why you have days where "everything" goes wrong, or, conversely, "everything" goes right? It's because each victory or challenge feeds your thoughts and emotions—which, in turn produce more of the same.)

Choose which thoughts and beliefs you fuel carefully and with your eyes wide open.



4. Raise Your V.I.B.E. Level

Consciously and intentionally raise your energy to match the experiences and feelings you want. For example, consider a job interview. Who's more likely to land the gig: the guy who is sweaty and desperate and discouraged, or the guy who is calm and exudes confidence? Your current V.I.B.E. level is nothing more than a habit--and that's good news. Habits can be changed, but it takes conscious intention and commitment. Practice V.I.B.E.-ing higher for at least 21 days until it comes easily and reflexively for you.

How do you do that, we hear you ask? Simple: you can actually choose the feeling states/emotions you want to experience. For example, someone might wake up in the morning and think, "I want to feel empowered today." Then it's a matter of consciously and intentionally choosing the actions that will result in that feeling state. Will going to the DMV make you feel empowered today? Probably not, although the thrill of getting an onerous task off one's plate can feel pretty great. Whatever might feel "empowering" is unique to you, and could look like almost anything: riding a horse, coloring with sidewalk chalk, balancing your checkbook, working out. The actions will feed the V.I.B.E.; the V.I.B.E. will feed the actions. A very magical and symbiotic relationship indeed.



5. Learn to Say NO

Saying no to anything and everything that isn't aligned with your big visions and dreams is as important as embracing them. This needn't feel heavy and fraught with guilt. Instead, learn to say no in the way you'd learn the rules of a fun game. Consider it like playing "hotter/colder" as a kid. Keeping your big visions and dreams in mind, does whatever action or opportunity that arises serve you (hotter), or take you farther away from what you want to bring about in your life (colder)?

Equally useful: learning why you're tempted to say yes to people and things that don't serve you.

JUST SAY NO!

6. Practice Forgiveness, Gratitude and Love

This is one of the best ways we know to V.I.B.E. high. Blame is a lie, but one we human beings love to perpetuate. People take actions; circumstances arise. They are neither good nor bad until we tell ourselves a story about it. (“He ruined my life!” “My job is making me crazy!” “She deserves to be punished.”) Pretty much every single one of us is doing the best we can with whatever resources we have to work with at the time. When you can see others around you through that lens, it’s easy to feel forgiveness. Similarly, a regular practice of gratitude is tremendously freeing: oh, the relief in letting go of irritation, smoldering anger, hurt feelings! Love is the natural consequence of forgiveness and gratitude. And John Lennon was right: love it all there is.

The Hawaiians practice a meditation they call ho ‘oponopono that consists of four simple thoughts: “I love you. Thank you. Please forgive me. I’m sorry.” Try focusing on each person or circumstance in your life that feels restricted, tightly held, negatively charged or icky, and thinking the above thoughts. Feel how something in your heart and your belly loosens. (Hint: don’t forget to think these thoughts while focusing on yourself, too.)



7. Celebrate Your Successes

Acknowledging and celebrating your wins, big or small, is essential in living the life of our dreams. Often, small successes fly by without our even noticing, let alone acknowledging them and giving ourselves a pat on the back.

Paying attention and praising yourself may feel weird at first—our culture prizes both modesty AND confidence at the same time, which is a confusing message indeed—but throw off cultural conditioning and allow yourself to enjoy the wins.

Cheering yourself on expands your capacity for greatness and fills your mind with the thoughts and feelings that you can indeed create, live and have all that your heart desires.



8. Take Inspired Actions

Inspired actions spring organically and almost effortlessly from being clearly aligned with your goals and dreams. They don't feel yucky or burdensome, and they don't come loaded with words we whip ourselves with like recalcitrant horses (should, ought do, supposed to, have to). An inspired action feels good and right at an almost cellular level. It is an action that comes from your heart and soul.

It's important to note that your inspired actions are not the same as what might feel inspired to someone else. Two people could have the same big vision—to experience abundance in their lives—and yet pursue two completely different courses of action to get the same results.

Don't be tempted to try to replicate some one else's life; it generally doesn't work. Your own authentic inspired actions will move mountains—for YOU.



**Take INSPIRED
Action NOW!**

9. Trust and Believe in Yourself and Your Dreams

Every action, if you think about it, is an act of trust. We drive down the street, trusting that the other drivers will obey the rules of the road instead of suddenly veering all over the place and running red lights. We trust that when we go to sleep, we will likely wake up the next morning. This kind of innate trust in the world is necessary in order to function. How would we ever get in a car or go to sleep again if we paralyzed ourselves with fear of horrible outcomes?

But where many of us struggle is in trusting and believing in ourselves. Some of it is old conditioning, ancient software you yourself didn't install, but that is still running in the background ("You'll never amount to anything." "You're a loser, just like your father." "Girls aren't good at math.") And much of it, whether it originated with us or not, we unconsciously perpetuate in our every choice and action. ("Oh, I could never do that." "I guess I'm just not the adventurous type." "Nothing ever goes right for me.")

Stop it. Yep, just like that. You actually have the power to do so—and like Dorothy and her wish to go home—you've had the power all along. The only thing standing in your way of having your dreams come true is, quite simply, YOU.

You've been "practicing" distrust and disbelief a long time, so those neural connections are very thick and well-established in your brain. Thinking a different way takes conscious effort until those new neural connections are as strong or stronger than the old dysfunctional ones. Practice, practice, practice.

10. Live Life to the Fullest Every Day

Whatever today is, wherever you are, and no matter what your life looks like this moment, you have the power to take action in order to experience what you want—or at least something closer to what you want. Don't wait until tomorrow, or Monday, or the first of the month, or until something happens (your kids graduate from high school, you lose thirty pounds, the moon aligns with Mars) to start living every day and living BIG.

The poet Mary Oliver writes, "Tell me, what do you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Guess what? That life isn't waiting for some future point to start. It's happening today. **Go live it!**

