

Foreword

“IT MAY BE THOSE WHO DO MOST, DREAM MOST.” — STEPHEN LEACOCK

It is not unusual for either young people or adults to be urged to follow their dreams. As a social worker involved in all kinds of youth development programs, it is advice I have heard delivered, movingly and eloquently, many times over. And it is advice that I have delivered myself. But it is one thing to counsel people to dream. It is something else altogether to help people — regardless of their age or circumstances — to get both the support and the practical know-how they need to make their dreams come true.

Sharon Cook and Graciela Sholander decided in 1999 to do something that would empower people to follow their dreams. Sharon, a motivational speaker and author, saw that many people simply weren't fulfilled. As she traveled across the country to different speaking engagements, she saw over and over that many people were not passionate about their work or their lives. Sitting quietly one day, she experienced a burst of inspiration. She realized that with her trusted friend and colleague, freelance writer Graciela Sholander, she wanted to co-author a book showing people how to dream, how to begin turning dreams into reality, and how successful individuals have created the lives of their dreams. Graciela immediately saw the value such a book would bring to others. Both began to work on the project, compiling a book with a unique mix of true-life stories and information the reader can apply.

What these authors deliver on the exercise of dreaming is one part inspiration, one part example, and one part practical advice. On the pages that follow, you will be moved by words of dreamers from all walks of life. You will hear about the people, places, and

things that first inspired and then sustained them. Whether the inspiration arose from artistry or science, humanitarianism or business, Graciela and Sharon have captured the moments of inspiration that spurred lifetimes of dedicated effort and profoundly satisfying outcomes.

These remarkable people and their collective stories exemplify the power of dreaming and the dedicated action required to transform a dream into reality. Some of the names will be familiar to you, well-known artists like Yo-Yo Ma, Gloria Estefan, and Harrison Ford. Others names, like Nancy Archuleta and George Fullerton, are likely to be entirely new. In either instance, I guarantee that you will enjoy getting to know them all and learning about the origins and fulfillment of their dreams. You will also take heart from the obstacles they met and overcame along the way. Entrepreneur David MacKay speaks for all of those profiled when he says: “There is no such thing as failure, only learning experiences.”

Example is buttressed by practical guidance. The authors provide questions to trigger your mind and heart into revealing your own dreams. Their “Dream CPR” is a reminder of the essential attributes every dreamer must master for a dream to become reality.

One particularly strong piece of advice emerges from many of the stories — find and value mentors. I could not agree more. Many of the dreamers profiled in this book had a strong mentor who, along with caring relatives, helped them chart and stay on course to realize their ambitions.

As Graciela and Sharon demonstrate, dreaming is vastly more than a simple imaginative exercise. Dreamers who succeed rely on their focus, drive, passion, faith, and a strong sense of accountability. This book will inspire and equip you, as well as the young people you care about, not only to dream big, but to dream effectively.

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