

The Five Stages Of Dream Achievement

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DEDICATION

To all my mentors, all the people who pushed me in this life.

The first and foremost were my mom and dad.

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DISCLAIMER

I think it's really important to keep in mind that true intelligence and wisdom come from realizing, emphatically, that we have so much to learn. Writing books is a fun way to try and share some of what we know with others. Whatever value the information in this book has comes from a lifetime of continuing to get up after my failures, each time learning a little bit more.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. Jay LaGuardia, one of the kindred spirits I have been blessed to know in this life. You are a shining example to the world of never settling, always finding new horizons, and being generous with your blessings, knowledge and success with anyone willing and able to listen.

W.J. VINCENT II

FOREWORD

Not sure what or if I will even have a foreword.

CHAPTER ONE

"DREAM STEALERS"

"Sometimes you have to get knocked down lower than you've ever been, to stand taller than you ever were." ~ Unknown

The first Dream Stealer I ever dealt with in my life happened when I was 3 years and 19 days old. Even 50 years later it is a moment seared permanently into my memory. My parents had me all fired up to be a big brother. I was so excited to meet my little baby brother for the first time. I remember the drive to the hospital with my dad and thinking about holding him in my arms for the first time. It was in my mind to be the best big brother ever, and to me that meant welcoming him into this world and letting him know personally I would always be there for him.

As we pulled into the parking lot, exited the car and entered the hospital my heart started to beat faster in anticipation. I was going to look after him, protect him, teach him, share my toys with him, it was going to be amazing! My father stopped at some huge desk and was talking with people, I was too excited to pay attention, all's I could think about was holding my little brother for the first time.

Then, my father turned and bent down to me and said let's go over there for a minute. Perplexed, I walked with him to an area with a bunch of chairs, he said they don't want to let us in to see the baby, you sit here for a few minutes while I go see what we can do about that. I was 3 years old, and I formed my first and most sincere response to my "dream" being stolen. Anger, I was immediately angry at the hospital! How dare they deny me the right to hold my little brother, to see him, and tell him all the cool things we were going to do as brothers. Didn't they realize how

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important it was for a new baby to meet his big brother?!?!? I sat there stewing in whatever the maximum level of rage a 3-year-old can have without throwing a tantrum for what seemed like an eternity. My father came back and said put your coat back on I found a way for us to see your little brother together. We walked through what seemed like a complicated labyrinth of corridors and doors until we were in this outside courtyard area. Dad lifted me up and I saw my baby brother for the first time through a window from the outside. I put my hand on the glass to say hello, and told him I was his big brother, and I was certain in my 3-year-old mind he heard me and even smiled a little bit. It wasn't the way I had dreamt it, but my father had essentially helped me to overcome the first major "dream stealer" I ran into in my life!

There seems to be an awful lot of talk these days about various forms of "privilege". A huge amount of that discussion centers around racism, color of people's skin, etc., but the greatest privilege anyone could have to start out life, is great parents. In a perfect world that would be two great parents, but having even one great parent makes all the difference in the world. Boy oh boy did I get lucky when it comes to that, as witnessed here with my father helping me to overcome my first Dream Stealing situation.

Now let me point out something that isn't as much fun. Most of the time in our lives, the biggest dream stealers we will have are the people who love and care about us the most. They mean

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well, they “think” they are helping us. They really and truly believe they are doing right by us. They say things like, “When are you going to get a real job?” or “Some things just aren’t meant to be.” Obviously, there are literally hundreds of thousands of versions of this, but it usually comes during a dark time in your life. A setback, or a situation where things are not going well, and probably haven’t been going well for a good long while. Instead of encouraging us to keep going, or to try harder, they try to “help” us quit whatever it is that we are trying for. Again, like I said this is often the most difficult of “dream stealing” to overcome in life. These are the people we love the most, and as such they can influence us negatively or positively the most.

There is a bit of a paradox within the “Dream Stealer” part of this life as well, and that is that sometimes a “Dream Stealer” coming into our lives is exactly the thing we need to push us further. Michael Jordan famously for years would convince himself that things people said were them trying to “Dream Steal”. He used it as fuel to work harder, to play harder, to reach deep down into the depths of who he was to find a way to beat them rather than let them steal from him. The biggest lesson most of us NEED to learn from “Dream Stealers” is that if we are truly committed to something, to accomplishing something, or becoming someone better, or achieving anything worthwhile, we will need persistence, as well as the ability to find motivation in the setbacks we will face along the journey to success in most anything in business or life.

Sometimes we may find that we ourselves have become a “Dream Stealer” to someone. Even if we are self-reflective, it may be years before we realize it.

So, as I am writing this book, a situation has developed out in the world. The CEO of United Healthcare was murdered. Instead of there being an outcry of sympathy and empathy, people were happy that this man was killed. Why? Well because apparently healthcare companies are evil. They have a history of denying coverage, which has cost people’s family members their lives. I was surprised, even a little shocked by the reaction. Especially when I had a direct conversation with my oldest son. He seemed to agree with the overall sentiment.

Now, the healthcare industry has been pretty much broken for a long time. However, celebrating someone’s murder just seems beyond the pale to me. How can we look in the mirror and be good, decent, moral human beings ourselves if we are happy for something like that to happen? What if this CEO that was murdered was going to be the one to fix everything? What if he was going to experience enlightenment in his life, some kind of moment where he suddenly realized how wrong what they were doing as a company was, and he was going to begin the moment that could bring about real and lasting change. Instead, he was brutally murdered, and now we will never know. He never gets the chance to learn from his mistakes, and his company’s mistakes. Instead, all the rest of the health insurance companies

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are hiring more security and erasing the photos and names of their CEOs from their websites. How's that going to bring about the change we so desperately need in that industry?

This is the worst kind of "Dream Stealer". To end someone's life, this takes away all they are, and all they are ever going to be. It removes any chance they will have to learn, grow, improve, and become better. As long as any of us are alive, each day is another chance to turn it all around. I think that might be part of a famous movie quote, maybe from "Vanilla Sky" possibly, but it is true, isn't it?

Trying not to be a "Dream Stealer" ourselves is one of the important things to achieve in this life. As a parent, I try very hard to NOT steal any of my children's dreams. Even if I think what they are trying to do is next to impossible, it is not my place to tear their dream down. The world will send plenty of people to do that. My job as a parent is to do my best to teach them "how to think" not "what to think". Sometimes they end up thinking wrongly, and it results in disaster, but they hopefully learn from it. If they are learning and growing, then it is okay.

Here's some deeply complicated "metaphysical" soup for you. What if being your children's "Dream Stealer" is sometimes necessary to "push" them further on the path they want for themselves despite your best wishes or intentions? Let's just stir through this soup if you will and accept one simple truth. Your

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support is far more valuable in most cases for your children than your attempts to stop them. I like to believe that, deep in my soul I gotta believe that. To me, I never want to intentionally go against my children's hopes and dreams. Discussions yes, arguments even, okay, deep negotiations to change their mind possibly depending on what it is, but in the end, you back them up, even if you can't ride with them on the path they are choosing.

One of the biggest dangers in life is in thinking that a moment, or a person is MORE than they are. OR, not recognizing the significance of them. When I realized this, so many of my own life's biggest challenges ended up being me "Dream Stealing" my own life. The times when I thought a person was more than they were resulted in me losing literally years of my life trying to make things work with them. Perhaps the biggest one though was when I failed to recognize the significance of the love of my life. I unwittingly tried to leave her several times. Talk about stealing the dream from myself. Luckily for me, my dearest Natalia recognized what we were supposed to be long before I did, and she held on tight until I came to my senses.

Yes, I think it is fair to say, the most difficult and challenging of all the "Dream Stealers" we will have in our lifetimes will undoubtedly be ourselves. Which is why it is so important to keep working on us for our entire lifetime right up until the end.

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We just never know what the next mountain will be that we need to climb. Believing in ourselves is one of the most sacred beliefs we can ever have. It is the singular and most necessary ingredient to “dream achievement”. Think of it as the first step, the spark, the beginning that is required in order for anything of any real value to happen for us. Napoleon Hill famously said in his great book “Think and Grow Rich”, “Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve.” So, remember that the next time you are doubting yourself. Well, try to remember it the next time you are doubting anyone for that matter, but most importantly yourself. Don’t steal your own dreams, because it has often been said that God would never give any of us a dream that he did not also give us the opportunity to make that dream come true.

