

MAKE 2009 YOUR YEAR TO SHINE

By Melissa Borghorst

As the curtains close on 2008, we are reminded of the New Year looming around the corner. It's that all-important time of year to create our New Year's resolutions. But instead of your typical resolution—to lose weight or cut down to one latte per week—I propose a new and more exciting concept. Why not give 2009 a theme? The year to dream. Life whizzes by, full of errands to run, work to finish, and, for some, kids to raise. Dreams are pushed to next year with the intention of pursuing them when there's more time, money, or whatever excuse you tell yourself. A year becomes five years, and then ten and twenty. If you're not careful, life will pass you by in a flash. So whether you're fresh out of college and just beginning your life, right smack dab in the middle of life, or retired and looking back on your years, now is the time. It's time to start making your dreams come true!

Do I have you on board yet? Hopefully you're nodding your head in agreement and bursting with excitement for the year ahead. OK, so you may be nodding your head, but you're still a little leery. You might be asking yourself: What are my dreams? How do I accomplish them? What if I don't accomplish them? Before I go any further, I have to lay one ground rule. You're not allowed to ask yourself that last question: What if I don't accomplish them? Now is the time to think positive and give yourself permission to dream. Put the Law of Attraction into action.

To get started, you'll need three pieces of paper and a pen or pencil, or, if you're more of the techie type, open up a Word document on your computer. On one page, write or type the following questions, leaving plenty of room for your answers. Then give yourself 5–15 minutes to answer them, remembering to dream big.

1) When I was a kid, what did I say I wanted to be or do when I grew up? (List as many as you can remember.)

2) Pretend you are free of all responsibilities and have all the money and time in the world. What would you do? Where would you go? Who would you meet?

3) Fill in the blanks:

I'd like to visit:

I'd like to see:

I'd like to meet:

I'd like to be:

I'd like to go:

I'd like to give:

I'd like to learn:

I'd like to:

Did these questions spark some ideas for you? On the next page, write the words "My Dream List" in big bold letters at the top of the page. Then look back at your answers, and if any of those ideas seem appealing, write them down. Write down any other dreams that come to mind, allowing yourself to dream without limitations. This list is the first step and key to making your dreams come true.

Whether your list is short and sweet or long and imaginative, it can seem overwhelming at times to figure out which dream to follow or steps to take. To make this process less daunting, it's best to choose one or two dreams from your list to start. On your third piece of paper, write the chosen dream at the bottom of the page. Now it's time to create your plan of attack, map to your dreams, or what I call a "dream tree." This is where you'll break your big dream into smaller, more manageable goals that you can start accomplishing right now.

Begin shaping your dream tree by drawing lines from your dream that branch out into specific goals. Below is an example:



Once you've created your dream tree, pick one or two smaller goals to start on now. As you accomplish each goal, cross it off and continue onto the next. Each may take a different amount of time to finish, but don't give up! If you get discouraged, it's okay to set it aside for a short amount of time while you focus on other goals. Soon you'll reach your dream and be on your way to tackling the next item on your dream list.

Over the next year, or years, continue adding to your dream list. Keep it near and dear to your heart, visiting it often to never lose sight of your dreams. After accomplishing a dream, cross it off the list and celebrate. Share your list with others who might be able to help you on your

journey. And most importantly, help others in making their dreams come true.

Next year's theme is to dream, but why not take it one step further. Make 2009 your year to shine!

Author, adventurer, and motivational speaker Melissa Borghorst is founder of Dream List Media. She inspires others to follow their dreams through workshops and the Dream List Photo Journal series. For more information, visit www.dream-listmedia.com.