

TERRI SAVELLE FOY

Imagine
BIG

UNLOCK THE SECRET
TO LIVING OUT YOUR DREAMS

Printed in the U.S.A.

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Library of Congress has cataloged the original addition of this work as follows.
Foy, Terri Savelle.

Imagine big : unlock the secret to living out your dreams / Terri Savelle Foy.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.

ISBN 978-1-9421-126140 (hard cover : alk. paper)

1. Dreams—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Imagination—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Success—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title.

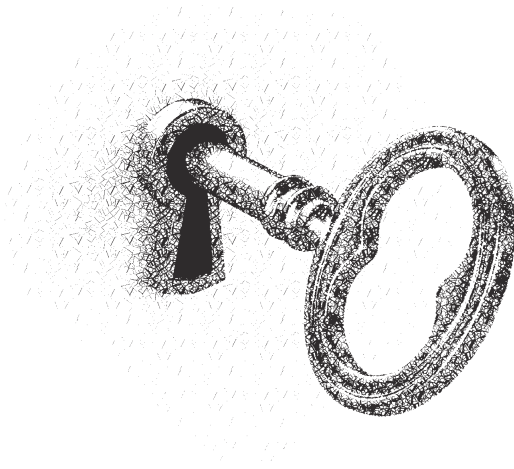
BR115.D74F69 2012

248.4—dc23

2012030407



Imagine



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INTRODUCTION

Your imagination is everything. It is a preview of life's coming attractions.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Your imagination is your ability to envision your future. It's the starting point to bring your God-given dreams to reality. I've written *IMAGINE BIG* to challenge you to stretch your imagination and open your mind to the new possibilities God wants to bring your way. But I won't stop there, because it isn't enough to picture great things in your mind. I will teach you how those imaginings can come to life. When what you see in your imagination is bigger than what you see in your reality, you will begin to attract the ideas, opportunities, resources, faith and relationships necessary to pursue those dreams.

Through the use of powerful biblical examples, personal experiences and inspirational anecdotes, I will unpack the words I.M.A.G.I.N.E. and B.I.G., used like an acronym to show you 10 faith-filled, practical and motivational principles. Each of the 10 chapters in this book focuses on a specific action step from this acronym that will help you see, pursue and live out the deepest visions God has for your life—for your family, your church, and even your community.

Imagine your future
Make a dream book
Assign time daily to review your dreams
Get goals in place
Initiate action now
No more negativity
Express gratitude

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11
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Imagine BIG

Be led by your God-given desires
Invest in your dreams
Get your expectancy high

Cultivating your imagination is vital to shaping your life; and faith is a big part of doing that. Many of us had that child-like faith that Jesus advocated, but we have allowed it to dissipate. We've permitted the realities of life to diminish our capacity to imagine, to dream, to believe. In some cases, it has disappeared altogether.

A friend of mine shared a story that makes the point. He was in Honolulu when he spotted a magnificent mansion that overlooked Diamond Head and Waikiki Beach. He thought, *I couldn't imagine living in a house like that!* At that moment, he heard the Lord quietly respond, *Don't worry about it, son, you never will.* Wow! Those sounded like harsh words, but there is a good lesson here. Your imagination has everything to do with what you will experience in your life. My friend had lost the capacity to imagine big. If we cannot imagine, guess what? Nothing will happen.

Imagining big isn't only true for big houses—it's also a necessity for every dream our big God has for us. It could be that we are moved by the homeless person we see on the street. Maybe we want to write a book that will glorify God and change lives. Perhaps we want to start a small business or become a college professor. Are we willing to imagine the possibilities? If not, guess what? Nothing will happen.

When God inspires and stretches your imagination, you begin to think bigger than you've ever thought before. You begin to enlarge your ability to believe for the impossible. You begin to grow your desire to believe even for what may seem like a pipe dream.

What types of God-given possibilities can you imagine? Can you see yourself giving \$100,000 to a cause that tugs at your heart? Building a ministry of worldwide influence? Going back to school to get your master's degree (and actually finishing)? Can you imagine vacationing in Paris, Venice or Sydney? Buying and decorating your dream house? Building a company with thousands of employees? Becoming a fashion mogul? Having the funds to adopt and care for several orphans? Seeing your children commit their lives to the Lord? Creating a nonprofit organization that will feed and clothe thousands of people in need?

I know how hard it can be in today's world to envision a future that is successful, purposeful, prosperous, stable, meaningful and even lucrative. You may think today is not the time to imagine. Life is too hard. Dreams are too unrealistic. Too impossible. The truth is, you cannot allow what is happening in the natural—no matter how bad your circumstances look—to dictate what you imagine, and more importantly, what God can imagine for you.

IMAGINE BIG will inspire you to stop procrastinating and to act now. I believe we tend to get a “tomorrow” mentality about the things we feel God has placed in our dream vision. Many people get stuck thinking the future is far off. We make ourselves feel better when we say, “Someday, I’m going to do that.” “Someday, I’m going to get my act together and live for God.” “Someday, when I make enough money, I’ll spend more time with my kids.” “Someday, when my schedule slows down, I’m going to get involved at church.” “Someday, when I have more time, I’ll focus on getting in better shape.” Here’s a sobering wakeup call—*someday* won’t ever happen unless you act today. Let me show you how *someday* can turn into *today*.

I wrote *IMAGINE BIG* so that you can . . .

Imagine BIG

- embark on a journey to think bigger than you've ever thought before,
- awaken the dreams that have been buried for too long,
- quit making excuses and start imagining,
- let go of fear and hold on to faith,
- take action to make impossibilities possible, and
- start living God-inspired dreams.

If you want to dream, and expand your imagination, but you are afraid; if you have an active imagination but need direction to actualize your dream; if you need practical steps to turn “what if” into “what is”; if you need encouragement that God can still use your imagination to bring great things to life, then this book will put you on that path and equip you for the journey.

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I like the quote from Dexter Yager: “You will never leave where you are until you decide where you'd rather be.” *IMAGINE BIG* is the starting point for everything you want, and everything God intends you to be and do.

Chapter 1

IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE

*I can teach anybody how to get what they want in life.
The problem is I can't seem to find anybody who can
tell me what they truly want.*

MARK TWAIN

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15

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Do you know how to *imagine*?

What does “imagine” mean, anyway? It is defined as “to form a mental image of . . . (something not present).” And what is “imagination”? It’s the “creative ability; the thinking or active mind.”¹ It is what happens in your mind when you give it room to create. It is what your mind does when you let it come *alive*.

Can you imagine building your dream home? Can you imagine owning your dream car? Can you imagine learning a new language like Spanish and traveling to Spain? Can you imagine going on safari in Africa? Can you imagine owning your own business? What about publishing a book and having hundreds of people come to your book signing to see *you*? Can you imagine having millions of dollars to deposit into your bank account? Or standing in front of thousands of people to



Imagine BIG

perform, preach or give a motivational seminar? Maybe those are your wildest dreams. Maybe you see them as nice little fantasies, but not worth occupying your mind. My goal, through the means of this book, is to help you explore your imagination, learn how to access it and discover God's full potential for you through it.

The *I* in *IMAGINE BIG* stands for "imagine your future." What can you imagine?

We read in 2 Corinthians 4:18, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." In other words, as believers we are to fix our eyes on the unseen things that God has said are true for our lives, on His promises, His plans and His vision for us. I want you to take this verse to heart, and as you read this book understand that this is what it means to imagine. We can't see the future. We can't see what's coming down the road. But we can have faith in the fact that God has great plans for us.

Start dreaming the dreams that God wants to give you, and devote time to using your imagination according to His desires for you. You may be thinking, *How do I use my imagination? I haven't done that since I played with dolls when I was five.* Well, imagining isn't just playing pretend. It serves a much greater purpose than making playtime fun for kids. The first step is to sit quietly and think. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with God's thoughts for your life. In Jeremiah 29:11, the Lord says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you . . . thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" (NKJV). As you sit quietly, see what comes to your mind and let that grow into a dream. Begin to see yourself doing something that seems impossible or out of reach. Once you're able to imagine it, you are one step closer to having what you are visualizing.



It can be downright hard to get a handle on God's dreams for your life, much less pursue them. In this chapter, you will read several inspirational stories and some of my personal experiences that will give you examples of what it means to imagine a better life. I am going to talk about your God-given dreams, your vision and your goals. You will start visualizing what you want in life. I believe that God places things in our hands at certain times to help us get focused on what He wants us to do and where He wants us to go. I believe this book may be the tool you need to resurrect your imagination.

One of my favorite Bible verses is John 17:4: "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do." These were Jesus' words before He went to the cross. He perfectly finished a glorious mission that affects everyone for all time who comes to Him. Since He is our role model for life, these words also mean that God has an assignment for every single one of us. He has a mission for me, and He has a mission for you. It will require activating your imagination to find out exactly what that mission is.

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Everything Begins with a Vision

I believe that everything we accomplish begins with a vision. One of my passions is to help people get God's vision for their life. You have to see where you're headed before you can start taking productive steps toward it. Before you can do something, you've got to imagine yourself doing it. Before you can have what God wants and what you want, you've got to imagine yourself having it. Before you can be who you're supposed to be, you've got to imagine yourself being it. Napoleon Hill said, "If you do not see great riches in your imagination, you will never see them in your bank balance!"²



Imagine BIG

I recently read a book about success principles. It explained that as a baby you come into this world knowing what you want. When you were an infant, you knew when you were hungry. You knew what food you liked and weren't afraid to spit out what you didn't like. When my daughter, Kassidi, was a baby, I tried feeding her a lot of different pureed foods—squash, peas, carrots and fruit. She loved bananas and peaches. One day I gave her a little taste of corn. I know some people think it's strange, but I can't stand corn. I just don't like it. Well, when I gave my daughter some, she let me know pretty quickly and clearly she felt the same way. Out it came. I said to her, "I understand, baby, spit it out."

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18
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As an infant, you have no reservations about expressing what you like and what you don't like. You have no trouble making your wants and needs known. You cry loudly with no inhibitions when you don't get what you want, until someone comes along to give it to you. As you grow, you crawl around and start moving toward whatever holds the most interest for you. You are clear about what you want, and you go after it without fear. I can remember Kassidi crawling toward our dog's food bowl and digging in. I was horrified, but what can you do? Kids see what they want and head straight for it, sometimes faster than we can register what's coming.

So what happens as we grow up? Somewhere along the way, somebody tells us, "Stay away." "Don't touch that." "Get out of there." "Keep your hands off of that." When you get a little older, people start telling you, "You should be ashamed of yourself." "Stop crying." "Don't be such a baby." As you move into adulthood, you hear people say, "You can't get everything you want simply because you want it." "Money doesn't grow on trees." "Can't you think of anyone but yourself? Stop being so selfish." You hear these statements and

start putting limits on yourself. You stop going for what you really want. You stop deciding what you really want. You might even stop dreaming or imagining your life any better than it is. You stay stuck in a reality you don't like.

What If?

Ever hear of the game iMAgiNiff™? I don't know if you've ever played it, but I love it. It's so much fun! It's a simple game that tests how well you know, or think you know, your teammates. You pick a card that asks you to imagine what the other players are, from a list of provided options. For example, one card might ask you to imagine if your brother were a toy, and decide if he would be a Barbie doll, a chemistry set, a teddy bear, a Transformer or PlayDoh. Or it might suggest you imagine that if your best friend were a type of footwear, would she be flip-flops, ballet shoes, jackboots or stiletto heels. The point of the game is not to be cruel toward the people you're playing with, but to get you to use your imagination and start wondering, *What if?*

When you're a child, it's so easy to use your imagination. You do it all the time. When my sister and I were little, we would imagine we were different characters on the TV show *Gilligan's Island*. I could easily think of myself as Ginger, the redheaded movie star with the sequined dresses and lots of makeup. There was no shame in becoming someone else through our imaginations. There were no limitations on what could be. In fact, to our childlike minds, it was more ridiculous to think these big dreams couldn't happen. As a kid, play, through our imaginations, was natural and normal. But here's the thing: It's just as natural and normal to do this as adults. We have simply forgotten *how* to do it. From this day



Imagine BIG

forward, I want you to start imagining. Let your mind wander to things and places you usually don't let it go, and see where God takes you.

Seeing Success to See Success

Successful people use their imagination to create the future they want. This is not some weird science. This is not New Age-y. This is not creepy or bizarre. This is something that God wants us to do. He tells us so in the Bible.

The Hebrew word translated “meditate” includes the meaning “imagine.” God commands us in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:2 to exercise our imagination by meditating on and imagining what God says is true in the Bible.³ For Joshua and God's people in the Bible, this meant imagining and picturing themselves participating in the great acts of God in Israel's history and imagining themselves doing great things by God's power. For us, that means filling our minds with the plans and imaginations that God desires for us, and then taking the actions God shows us to take (see Jas. 1:22-25, which also speaks of this kind of meditating and imagining what God's Word says about us).

Imagine your future. What great things does God have for you? What is the big plan for your life? What if you had \$1 million, what would you do with it? If you could have or do anything you wanted, what would it be? Suppose you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go? Have you even given yourself permission to research that place to see how much it would cost?

Sometimes we assume things are so expensive or impossible that we don't take the time to look into the cost or research it further; it is never more than a mere passing thought. I was listening to a CD series by Keith Moore about imagining your



future when his words struck me. He said that when we are asked questions about the future, we usually say something like, “Well, I haven’t given much thought to it.” Keith said that that’s no different than saying, “I’m content to stay where I’m at for the rest of my life.”⁴ Are you content to stay where you are? Are you content with what you have? Do you wonder if God has more in store for your life?

Every goal, every dream and every success begins on the inside of you. In Genesis 15, when God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, He actually had Abraham go outside and then said to him, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them. . . . So shall your offspring be” (Gen. 15:5). Abraham would not have come close to counting them all, but God wanted him to get that image on the inside of him so strongly that he could see it happening. Abraham had to see it. That’s why God sent him outside to *look* at the stars. In essence, He was telling Abraham, “See your potential. See your future. See your dreams.”

The same is true with Joseph, whose story is told in the book of Genesis. Joseph had a dream inside of him as a young boy. God gave him that dream. And that dream is what kept him going through years of heartache, rejection and misery. He held on to that vision until it came to pass. Before it ever happened, Joseph saw his brothers and his dad bowing down before him. He saw himself in a position of leadership and authority. Of course, for quite a long time it didn’t look like those things would ever come true. Joseph was tossed into a pit. He was wrongfully accused. He was thrown into prison. But, sure enough, because Joseph held on to that dream—that vision—he eventually ended up sitting on a throne in Egypt next to the pharaoh. And one day his brothers came and bowed down to him just as he saw in his dream. But Joseph





Imagine BIG

had to hold on to the vision—the imagination—that was inside of him.

David is another example. He, too, had a vision. When he faced giant Goliath as a teenager, he remembered how God delivered him from the lion and the bear when he was protecting his sheep. He could picture how he conquered these predators. Then God put it on his heart that he could do the same thing with this Philistine enemy who led an army against the Israelites. He could see himself killing Goliath. David obeyed God, followed his vision and conquered the giant.

What is God trying to show you about your future? If your response is, “Terri, I haven’t thought that much about it,” then your lack of vision will keep you right where you are. Stuck. You have to see your future on the inside first. When you sit back and let things just happen *to* you, nothing will happen *for* you. It takes creating that mental image, that vision, so you can see what you are striving for.

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22
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Drafting a Blueprint for Your Dreams

My goal is to help you develop the blueprint of your dreams so that you can see them and begin building toward them. There’s something God wants you to fulfill during your lifetime, and it starts with a dream; it starts with vision. He wants you to get excited about the potential. He wants you to draft a sketch of your dreams and get them on paper so that you are able to see the possibilities come together in front of your eyes. Remember, whatever it is that God has called you to do, He is going to give you a pathway to get there.

Not having a vision is not being connected with God’s will for your life. “Where there is no vision . . . the people perish” (Prov. 29:18, *AMP*). If you can’t visualize anything about your



IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE

future, you are not moving toward anything, and you are not fully living—you are perishing. But having a vision, using your imagination, comes straight from God. It means having the right expectancy and the right anticipation about tomorrow.

Earlier, I referenced 2 Corinthians 4:18 in the *New International Version*. I'd like to show you another translation: "Things that are seen don't last forever, but things that are not seen are eternal. That's why we keep our minds on the things that cannot be seen" (*CEV*). I like that because it drives home the point that you should keep your mind on things that cannot be seen—your God-given imagination and dreams—the things that look impossible and may even seem ridiculous.

By creating this mental blueprint, your dreams can become more real to you than what you can see with your natural eyes. God is telling us that we are not supposed to base our faith only on what we can physically see, but on those things that He wants us to see in our minds. When God told Abraham, "Look up from where you are and see the stars," He wanted him to visualize what he could be, but Abraham had to have some kind of mental blueprint to really see it.

When I was a little girl, my parents began instilling in me the idea of developing eyes of faith. They told me I had to see the things I believe for with my spiritual eyes. "Don't be moved by what you see with your physical eye," they said. "Believe that what you see on the inside can happen on the outside." When I was seven years old, I trusted God to provide a piano. My parents actually left a space in our den for my piano and told me, "Act as if it's already there. Every time you walk by this area, walk around it as if you were trying to avoid bumping into a piano." This exercise may sound foolish—and believe me, I felt a little crazy acting "as if"—but it comes straight from the Word of God. And it works. Next, Mom and

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Imagine BIG

Dad told me to add another step of faith and point to that empty space and say, “Thank You, Lord, for my piano.” I did this every single day.

At one point, when I was starting to feel a little confused, I brought it up to my dad. “I have a piano. You say I have it. It’s there. I see it by faith. But how come I can’t ever play it?” Daddy replied, “You will, Terri. One day you will be playing that piano. You keep believing.” You know what? In a short time, my piano came, and it sat right where I saw it all along. The image began on the inside and then it showed up on the outside.

You need faith to produce your blueprint. Jesus said, “It shall be done to you according to your faith” (Matt. 9:29, NASB). This is more powerful than you know. One time, I wrote out a check for \$10,000 that I wanted to give to a ministry. I did so by sheer faith. It seemed crazy when I didn’t even have \$1,000 to give. But I wrote that check as a step of faith, and I put it in my dream book. (That’s where I keep all my dreams. We’ll cover that in a later chapter.)

I would lay hands on the check, believe in Jesus’ name and confess every day that one day I would give \$10,000 all at one time to this particular ministry. I did this so many times and believed it that I could actually see myself mailing that check off. God was faithful. He made a way for me to give that amount.

It shall be done to you according to your faith.

According to your faith you will possess the dreams and the desires that you have on the inside. If you have a small amount of faith, you will accomplish small dreams and small desires. The more you develop your faith, and the bigger that faith gets on the inside of you, you can achieve bigger dreams and desires.

Make Up Your Mind

There are some cardinal messages about dreams that I need to make clear. First, God hasn't given you the dreams He has given me, and vice versa. He hasn't given them to the person next to you. He hasn't given them to your spouse or your friends or your neighbors. Those dreams and desires are unique to you; so don't let others make you feel that your dreams are foolish, crazy or ridiculous because they aren't their own dreams. God puts those desires in you for a reason.

Second, just because God has given you a dream doesn't mean it will manifest automatically. You have to make up your mind that you will believe for it no matter what, and then start acting on it. You must persevere, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable it feels.

I'll be honest. I wasn't always good at making up my mind. In fact, years ago I got into a habit of letting other people make decisions for me, even when it came to meals. When I went out to eat with my best friend, I would ask her, "What do I want? Do I want a taco? Pizza? French fries?" How could she possibly know what I wanted to eat? Surprisingly, she sometimes did, and she made the decisions for me (at least for a little while).

You've got to stop settling for less than what you want. Motivational speaker Jack Canfield once said, "One of the main reasons why most people don't get what they want, is they haven't decided what they want. They haven't defined their desires in clear and compelling detail."⁵ I know it can be hard to dream again and get in touch with what you want. Canfield suggests honoring your preferences no matter how big or small. He suggests that saying things like, "I don't care," "I don't know" or "It doesn't matter to me" when you are confronted with a choice, no matter how small or insignificant it seems, is giving up control of your own life. Act as if you have

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Imagine BIG

a preference, even if you don't. Ask yourself, "If I did know, what would it be? If I did care, which would I prefer? If it did matter, what would I rather do?"


I took his advice and started with the small matters of my life. I decided which movie to rent. I decided where to eat after church on Sunday. I decided where to go on the family vacation. Once I started making those little decisions, I was able to move on to bigger things, like choosing the dreams for my life. When you practice making decisions in small areas, it will lead to making them in big areas.

Not being clear about what you want, and making other people's needs and desires more important than yours, devalues your opinions, your mission and your needs. This is simply a habit—one you can break by practicing the opposite habit.

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26



The Power of Imagination



Don't let your imagination lie dormant and allow yourself to become stuck in the routine of life. That's easy to do, especially as we get older and have more responsibilities. Our dream lists tend to take a backseat to the To-Do lists.

I read recently that when you perform any task in real life your brain uses the same process it would use if it were only vividly visualizing that activity. Your brain sees no difference whatsoever between imagining something and actually doing it. Imagine that! The study went on to explain that using your imagination, or visualizing your dreams first, makes the brain achieve more.

I have seen this principle explained in many books on success. There's even an example in the Bible. Genesis 11 tells the story of the Tower of Babel. The people were trying to build a tower that would reach to heaven. (Can you imagine completing this construction project before concrete mixers, cranes or



power tools were invented?) The Lord actually said of their efforts, “Behold, they are one people and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do, and now nothing they have imagined they can do will be impossible for them” (Gen. 11:6, *AMP*). Think about that. God said nothing they imagined would be impossible for them. That’s the power of imagination.

So where do you start? You begin with an idea, a fragment that eventually grows into a full-blown dream. With determination, faith and practical goal setting, it becomes a reality. Most of us are so busy doing things we have to do that we never get around to doing what we want to do. Or maybe we never take the time to think about what God wants us to do.

I want you to take some time and sit quietly. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you with His imagination for you. Imagine your life the way God and you want it. That’s right. Put this book down and breathe for a moment. Let your imagination run wild. No holds barred. No judgments. Allow yourself the freedom to imagine. Spend a few minutes visualizing the future you want. (You don’t have to sit there for hours.) What do you see? What does your dream look like? Who is there? What are you doing? How do you feel? Where do you live? Which city? Is it by a lake, an ocean or the mountains? What does your house look like? Is it brick, stone, stucco or . . .? What does your office look like? Where do you work—from home, or an office building? What is your ideal salary? What is the exact amount? Can you see that number? Can you give yourself permission to dream that big? These are the questions you need to ask yourself. Don’t be vague about your future. Vague desires bring vague results. Imagine big and in clear detail.

It’s a fact that we are creatures of habit. Every day we follow the same routines without even thinking about them;

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from the way we put on our shoes to the way we take our vitamins; from the way we make our coffee to the route we drive to work. We spend much of our time on autopilot. There are probably 200 different restaurants where you live; but more than likely, you only eat at four or five of them and limit your order options to four or five of the same dishes every time.

It's not until you stop and think about what you're going to do with the rest of your life that change happens. Are you doing the same things you did last year, and wondering why your life is no different? Make decisions that will lead to and support the goals you want to achieve. If you don't like the results you are getting in your life, change what you are doing. Start doing things that lead toward your dream. In the chapters that follow, I will explain what those steps are and give you plenty of pointers to start moving toward your dream.

What do you want out of life? Where do you want to go? Here's a thought: Would you get in your car and drive without knowing where you were going? Probably not. You'd waste time, gas and money. Why wouldn't you have the same approach with your life? We each have a mission—an assignment from God—and we have to know where we are going to accomplish that. Unlock the power of your imagination to help you find your destination.

To Dream the Impossible Dream

When we were children, we imagined constantly and were able to believe anything was possible. It makes me sad how many of us have stopped dreaming and using our imaginations. When Kassidi was young, I suggested she jot down all her dreams in a journal. Some of the dreams she has written down are to own an airplane and a house in the south of France, as well as one



in Paris, plus one in a ski lodge area. She has not placed any boundaries on her dreams. I have never thought about saying, “Oh, Kass, that’s a bit far-fetched, honey.” I wouldn’t dare do that. I want her to believe that nothing is impossible with God. If you can dream it, God can do it.

I’m telling you the same thing as I’ve told my daughter. Get that youthful imagination back in your life. And then find that childlike faith to believe that if God can give you a dream, He can surely bring it to pass.

I read a study from Harvard University where researchers discovered that students who imagine first, perform tasks with nearly 100 percent accuracy; whereas, students who didn’t visualize before they started only achieved 55 percent accuracy.⁶ This is more proof that using your imagination—visualizing your dreams—isn’t a bunch of feel-good nonsense. It works. Almost all Olympic and professional athletes now practice visualizing their intended outcome. In other words, they use their imaginations to train and compete.

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29
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In fact, I read recently that Jack Nicklaus, the legendary golfer who has now won more than 100 tournament victories and more than \$5.7 million in winnings, said, “I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp, in focus picture of it in my head.”⁷ Olympic gold medalist and motivational speaker Peter Vidmar said, “To keep us focused on our Olympic goal, we began ending our workouts by visualizing our dream from beginning to end. . . . When we won the gold medal, it was exactly the way we visualized it in the gym.”⁸

If you don’t know what you want, you’ll never find it. You’ll never imagine it. There is power in taking time to see beyond where you are right now. For a long time, I never gave a thought to the future. I think I was scared to dream, because I didn’t know if I was making stuff up or if it was really God’s





Imagine BIG

plan. But know this: Fear is not from God, and dwelling on fear keeps you from fulfilling His purpose for you. So start thinking today about what tomorrow could hold for you.

It's Never Too Late



I have received countless testimonies from people all over the world who have finally given themselves permission to dream. They know that if they can dream it, God can do it. I want you to give yourself permission to dream. I also want you to dream as big as you possibly can. I want you to enlarge your thinking. Start realizing there's so much more to life, so much more to do.

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Your life isn't over because you got married and have small kids or grown ones. Your life isn't over because you retired or because you are past a certain age. Your life isn't over, even though you've made mistakes, gone through some hard times or feel broken by life. One more thing: You're not too young to dream big. And it's never too late to live a dream-filled life and do all the things you've always wanted to do.



It's *Never* Too Late

I love this quote by nineteenth-century English novelist George Eliot: "It's never too late to be what you might have been." What a powerful truth! The people I have listed below are no different than you. They just took the necessary steps to pursue what was already in their hearts.

- At 11 months old, Brooke Shields was hired for her first television commercial as the Ivory Snow baby.

- At 4 years old, Shirley Temple began her film career, and three years later received an Academy Award.
- At 8, Mozart composed his first symphony.
- At 11, Michael Jackson sang the smash hit “ABC” with the Jackson Five.
- At 12, Pocahontas saved the life of Captain John Smith.
- At 13, Anne Frank began writing in what would later become a world-famous diary when she and her family were forced into hiding from the Nazis.
- At 15, Justin Bieber became the first artist to have seven songs from a debut album chart the Billboard Hot 100 list.
- At 18, Cassius Clay, later named Muhammad Ali, won the light heavyweight boxing gold medal at the 1960 Olympic games.
- At 18, Tommy Hilfiger opened his first clothing store.
- At 20, Debbie Fields founded Mrs. Fields Cookie Company.
- At 38, Terri Savelle Foy launched her ministry and terri.com.
- At 42, Joyce Meyer launched her worldwide ministry in Fenton, Missouri.
- At 45, Susan Sarandon won the first of three Academy Awards for Best Actress nominations and gave birth to her third child.
- At 45, Henry Ford introduced the automobile called the Model T.
- At 49, Julia Childs wrote *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*.
- At 52, Leonardo DaVinci completed the “Mona Lisa.”
- At 56, Gustave Eiffel completed the design for the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

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- At 58, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band were named Best Live Band of 2008 by *Rolling Stone* magazine.
- At 72, Michelangelo designed St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.
- At 76, Henry Fonda won his first Oscar after 46 years of acting.
- At 83, Winston Churchill completed *A History of the English Speaking Peoples*.
- At 90, Nelson Mandela adorned the cover of *TIME* magazine.
- At 98, Dimitrion Yordanadis ran a marathon in 7 hours and 33 minutes in Athens.
- At 99, Abraham and his wife, Sarah, gave birth to their son Isaac.
- At 100, Teiichi Igarashi climbed Mount Fuji.

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32
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Start Dreaming

An extremely brilliant writer named Dr. Seuss once said, “You have brains in your head and feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own and you know. And you’re the one who’ll decide where to go.”⁹

Where are you going? Where are you headed? For what are you believing? What are you focused on? What are some of the things you pray about? You may have heard this story about Kenneth Hagin: When he was alive, he would watch people pray at the altar. He’d walk up to them, gently tap them on the shoulder and say, “Excuse me, what are you praying about?” Most of the time their response would be, “Oh, nothing in particular.” Brother Hagin would shake his head and reply, “Well, that’s exactly what you’re going to get—nothing in particular.”¹⁰ I don’t



know about you, but it makes me realize we need to be specific in what we're praying about. We also need to be specific in where we're headed, how we are steering our imaginations. Unless you can visualize something different, you will never move beyond where you are today.

Earlier, I asked you to stop everything and spend some time sitting quietly in thought and allow your imagination to start moving. Did you do that? If not, do it now. Shut the door and turn off your phone, TV, iPod, laptop—anything that makes noise and will distract you. Sit in a quiet space.

Prolific author and speaker John Maxwell said, "Thinking precedes achievement . . . Nobody just stumbled upon success and then tried to figure it all out afterwards. The greater your thinking, the greater your potential."¹¹ "For as he thinks within himself, so he is" (Prov. 23:7, *NASB*). You have to take the time to think before you start taking steps. Imagine. Wonder. Dream.

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I want you to imagine your future. Imagine money in your account. Imagine yourself at your ideal weight. Imagine yourself as a foster parent. Imagine yourself driving your dream car. Imagine yourself teaching a class. Imagine yourself as a youth leader. Whatever your dream, you have to see it. You have to imagine the dreams and visions that God has for you. The late Dr. Benjamin Mays, educator and social activist, made this statement, "It isn't a calamity to die with dreams unfulfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream." Don't let this be the commentary on your life.

Just today, I was going through a stack of testimonies and comments from people who send me emails and write to me. I can't tell you how many of them share how they are passionate about their dreams, but they're hesitant to pursue or believe for them because those dreams seem impossible. I have permission to share with you what one of my readers wrote:



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Hello Terri, I just want to say thank you for your encouragement. I look forward to your letters each month. Everything you said makes me want to pursue my dreams even harder. Your question of where do I see myself in the next five years made me think and it just makes me want to get busy right now at this moment and go after my dreams. I have so many things I want to accomplish. I want to write a book, start a business, finish college, travel on missionary trips helping the poor and less fortunate. I have so many dreams, but it just seems so impossible at times because I don't have the resources or the right contacts to help me get where I want to be. I've been praying about it, and sometimes I even get angry because I just do not see anything happening. I know God is listening and hears my prayers. I don't know why it's taking so long for it to come to pass. . . . I will not give up, because every time I feel like giving up, something inside of me just will not let me.

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34
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Perhaps there are things you're believing God for, but they look so far out of reach. You don't have a clue how God can make them come true. Maybe you think it's foolish to even try to imagine. I know how you feel. Most of the dreams I have seem impossible. I don't know how God can accomplish them. I don't know the right people. I don't have the finances. I don't have the equipment or the personnel. Truth is, I don't know how they're going to happen. All I know is that God told me to dream. But I also have the track record of imagining my future and watching my dreams materialize!

So don't worry if you are imagining things that reach beyond the realm of reality. Don't worry if you can't figure out



IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE

exactly how they will actualize. Don't worry if they seem impossible. You serve a big God who wants you to dream big. Dream those impossible dreams. It's a sure sign it will require faith in the God who specializes in doing the impossible.

All you have to do is start to imagine.

“I Want” List

Learning to dream again can be difficult if you are out of practice, but it is an important part of becoming reconnected with what you want from life, determining if you are on the path to getting it and finding your dreams.

Here is an activity to stretch your imagination and get you thinking about what you want. Write down a list of 20 things you want to do, have or be. This exercise gives you permission to think and to imagine and to dream beyond where you are right now. Go ahead. Write them down in the space below.



- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____



Imagine BIG

12. _____
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FURTHER RESOURCES FROM TERRI SAVELLE FOY

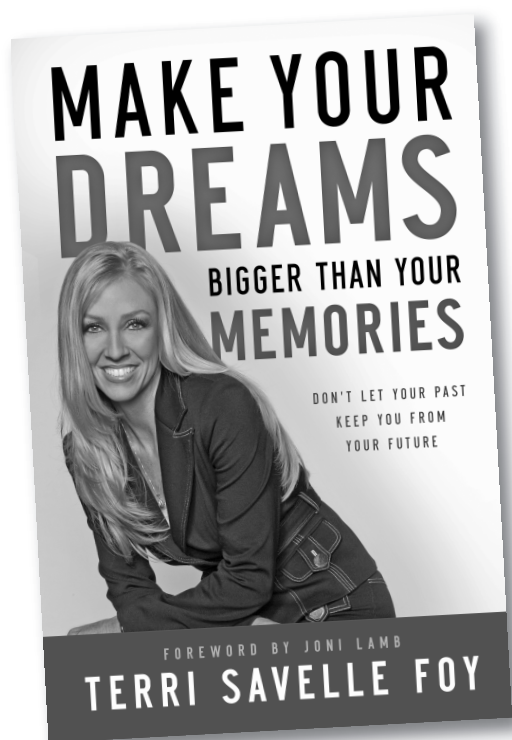


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LEAVE YOUR PAST IN THE PAST!



**Make Your Dreams Bigger
Than Your Memories**
ISBN 978-1-9421-126140

Holding on to the past and all its mistakes will only hinder you from taking hold of the future that God has planned for you. But it can be so hard to let it go! That's why you must dream extraordinary dreams. When you focus your mind and heart on reaching your God-given goals, the past cannot hold you prisoner any longer. In *Make Your Dreams Bigger Than Your Memories*, Terri Savelle Foy shares her personal journey out of a painful past into total freedom and walks with you, step by step, along the path to God's purpose for you. Your past does not define your future . . . so stop living as if it does! Turn your back on guilt, shame and regret to face the reality of God's love and the promise of His plans for you.

This is a life-changing book—one of the best I have ever read!

NANCY ALCORN

Founder and President, Mercy Ministries International
