

# Dreams

DON'T HAVE DEADLINES

Living Your Dream Life,  
No Matter What Your Age



**MARK VICTOR HANSEN**

New York Times Best-selling Author

W O R K B O O K

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DREAMS DON'T HAVE DEADLINES:  
*Living Your Dream Life,  
No Matter What Your Age*

By Mark Victor Hansen

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WELCOME to the workbook companion for *Dreams Don't Have A Deadline*, Mark Victor Hansen's program for realizing your most deeply-held aspirations no matter where you are on life's path. The purpose of this book is to provide an opportunity for you to explore the topics of the audio portion in an interactive format. It's a chance for you to see how the ideas of the program connect with your own experiences — your past, your present, and your dreams for the future. The chapter titles of the workbook parallel those of the audio program — with the exception of Sessions Nine and Ten of the audio, which are combined here as Chapter Nine.

We hope you enjoy using this workbook, and we're confident that our program as a whole will help you take the deadlines off your dreams!

## ONE: THE CURTAIN RISES AGAIN

WE'RE LIVING IN A TIME OF AMAZING DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE. In the first three decades of the twenty-first century, 75 million Americans are going to pass the age of 60. In the past, people in this age group were generally considered ready for retirement, which traditionally meant golf, fishing, or just sitting on the back porch. But in the new millennium, age is becoming increasingly irrelevant as a determining factor of what we can do, and what we want to do. In fact, chronological age is no longer a valid measure of our capabilities, our interests, or our physical health. To a much greater degree than ever before, our own intentions and desires will determine what we do in the world, regardless of what the calendar says — provided, of course, that we can set aside the preconceived notions of aging that influenced previous generations.

For most of human history, people did not keep track of time in the way we do today. Even in the great ancient civilizations, people did not think of themselves as 30 or 40 or 50. People's ages were reckoned by the attitudes they displayed, by what they could do physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

A young person was someone who had exuberance, but perhaps lacked wisdom.

A mature person retained youthful energy and willingness to take chances, but tempered it with knowledge and wise insight.

And an old person was someone whose life had begun to contract, not only physically, but also in a narrowing range of interests and ideas. An old person was someone who tended to think more about the past than the future.

There's no question that these ideas and associations are about to change. We're heading into a world in which the date on your birth certificate is going to be a lot less important than what you know and how you think and the value you can add to the society around you.

So let's begin by exploring some of your thoughts on what age means and doesn't mean and how your ideas about your own age may be influencing your present and your future.







However you may see yourself at the present moment, one thing is certain: Today there is no reason to limit yourself by what the clock or the calendar seems to tell you.

You can and should think in terms of things getting bigger rather than smaller, and better rather than worse.

You can and should focus on the future rather than past.

You can and should think about being able to cover more territory, to reach more people, and to go faster and further than ever before.

In short, you can and should take the deadline off your dreams and start putting them into action. In Chapter Two, you'll create a powerful tool to help you do exactly that!













Now review what you've just written: the inventories of your youthful hopes and dreams and your timeline — what you wanted to happen (even if you never told anybody) and what did happen. As read over your thoughts, ask yourself how much difference you see between the two categories. To what extent did you bring your deepest aspirations into the real world?

For many people there's a clear difference between what their dreams were and the reality that has come into being over the years. But remember: dreams really don't have a deadline! When you put the ideas and techniques of this program into action over the coming weeks and months, you'll see a lot more similarity between what you hoped to do and what you actually experience every day of your life!



To take the deadlines off your dreams, there are three reasons why it's important to create wealth — and to do it as quickly as possible.

FIRST, we need wealth in order to rid ourselves of anxiety about money and paying the bills. Those worries can really create frustration and anger, making it difficult to focus on more productive and interesting things.

SECOND, we need sufficient funds for us to enjoy the increased longevity that science has made possible in the twenty-first century.

THIRD, and most important, wealth is necessary in order for you to have the largest possible financial resources available to fulfill your biggest dreams, your most spectacular goals, and your most amazing aspirations.

In this chapter, we'll look at wealth from two points of view. We'll consider wealth in terms of prudence, safety, honesty, integrity, and meeting the necessities — and then we'll think bigger — about ideas, visions, and dreams about how wealth can be used not just to meet necessities, but to realize our dreams, our hopes, and our fondest soul desires.













Big ideas excite your 18 billion brain cells to work at a new velocity. By training yourself to think big, you can achieve big and create big wealth. This will enable you to enjoy the good things that your dreams bring to you. Just as importantly, you'll be able to contribute greatly and leave a legacy that perpetuates itself for the benefit of everyone.

## **FOUR: THE FUN FACTOR: DON'T FORGET IT!**

One of the most neglected elements in all areas of personal development is the “fun factor.” No matter how much you believe in your head that you want to realize your dreams — and no matter how much you feel it in your heart — unless there’s some moment-to-moment reward built into the process, your motivation will erode over time.

In other words, there’s got to be some fun built in, and this is especially true as we get older. Having fun is what makes our hearts sing. It’s what puts the wind beneath our wings. And fun is best when it’s shared and multiplied.

Here are a few questions to get you headed in the right direction. They’re more than just questions, however. They’re really suggestions. See if you can really give a specific answer to each one. If you can’t, it’s time to put that suggestion into action. And if at first you have to make some focused effort in order to have fun, don’t let that stop you. It will get easier as you get used to it!

When was the last time you subscribed to a new magazine? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you took a book out of the library? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you went to a new restaurant? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you read an out-of-town newspaper? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you explored a new part of your city? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you attended a religious service of a religion other than your own? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you made a new friend? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you laughed so hard you cried? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you did something totally out of character? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you joined a new organization? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you played with a child? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you tried to learn a foreign language? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you bought someone a gift for no reason? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you did volunteer work of any kind? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the last time you did anything that you haven't done in ten years, but that you used to do all the time? \_\_\_\_\_





## **FIVE: HAVING STACKED PURPOSES TO LIVE LONG AND PROSPER**

The concept of stacked purposes combines goal-setting techniques with the idea of multiplicity, which can be a powerful tool for the things you want to accomplish and the dreams you want to realize.

Sometimes there's a tendency to say, "I'd better focus on one or two things," or, "I don't have time enough to accomplish everything. I don't have enough time in the day, and at this point maybe I don't even have enough time in my life." This kind of thinking is a major mistake!

Your mind works better when it works more. Don't set limits on what you can accomplish, much less what you can try to accomplish. We are not here in the world just to achieve one or two goals. We're here to achieve everything we can, which is a lot more than we expect.

The Bible tells us, "Without vision, the people perish." In other words, in the absence of vision, we're not really alive. With vision, we flourish, prosper, grow, inspire, dream, and help others to do the same. With as much vision as possible, we achieve all our dreams.

What is your vision? As you set about answering that question, make a distinction between a vision and a goal. Vision is the full and complete image of what you're going to do. Your vision of yourself, for example, should be that you're someone who achieves your goals, get results, loves people, and loves life. The goals themselves are the building blocks of your vision.

In general, people's aspirations are disappointingly conservative. We've wanted security and retirement, and as a result we've been risk-adverse. We haven't wanted to look any farther than the 18th hole of the golf course or the end of our fishing poles — because if we did, we might feel tempted to really change our lives. We might have to stretch ourselves, not stress ourselves. We might have to get off the train that somebody else is driving. If we don't set goals — and if we don't use them as building blocks to fabricate a vision — someone else's agenda will always be there to take over for us.



Now write a list of 20 long-term goals that will bring you closer to your vision over the next five years. This is a multiplicity of objectives that, taken together, will allow you to become the person you want to be. Describe each of your 20 goals in one or two sentences in the space below.

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Most of us haven't created a large enough stack of purposes to drive and inspire us. The purpose of life is not to have as few problems as possible. The purpose is to turn your dreams into reality. So learn what your talents are, take a determined approach to implementing them, and then put that determination into action!

## **SIX: STAYING CONNECTED**

When we study the development of any great idea, we invariably find that it didn't happen in a vacuum. Even when it seems as if only one person was involved, others were always present to provide information, inspiration, and support. Often, a great idea has stayed dormant in the mind of a given individual until contact with someone else helped bring it into the world — and it was impossible to predict who that new person might be. This is especially true of people who created new innovations relatively late in their lives.

In the first three years of life, individual neurons in the brain connect with one another, and the extent to which this happens seems to determine the cognitive power of the individual. The amount of stimulation that a child receives determines the extent to which the brain cells connect. This is an important principle because there's a clear similarity between the development of the thinking capacity of the human brain and the development of the creative potential of society as a whole. Both really depend on the transformation of a large group of separate units into an interconnected network of communication and cooperation.

Today there's unprecedented opportunity for the individual members of our society — and even the people of the world as a whole — to become interconnected as never before. This is a result of the revolution in information and communication. There's never been a better time to take the deadlines off your dreams — but you must be willing and able to fully take advantage of this revolution in reaching out to others.

This involves both low-tech and high-tech approaches. For example, you don't need a computer or a Palm Pilot to meet at least one new person every day — but if you can do that, you'll be opening literally hundreds of doors, and some of them are bound to take you in exciting new directions. At the same time, it is essential that you be wired into the whole world of the Internet and high-tech communication. Studies have shown that people past the age of 45 are perceived as being out of touch with the new technologies. Although this perception is not borne out by the facts, make certain it doesn't apply to you.



Once you've understood the importance of getting and staying connected — and you've identified both the low- and high-tech means for doing so — you're ready to answer these all-important questions.

Who do you know — and who do you want to know? In the space below, write the names of people now in your life with whom you want to stay connected — and for our purposes here, connected means being in touch at least seven times a year. Then add a “dream list” of the people whom you'd like to meet, write to, e-mail, or telephone. This should be a list of influential, powerful, prestigious people with whom you want to work, play, grow, and do business. If you need extra space (and you should) use another sheet of paper.

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## SEVEN: THE GREATEST WEALTH THERE IS

To be truly healthy is the world's greatest wealth. Like any form of wealth building, this one requires some investment — not necessarily of money, but definitely of time, energy, and focused attention. There are many benefits, for example, to using the affirmation, “I am healthy, wealthy, happy, loving, and beloved.” Consider repeating this when you rise in the morning and before you go to sleep every night. Lull yourself to sleep and wake yourself up with these ideas and other nurturing ideas. Another great one is, “I am debt-free, stress-free, and will be set-free!”

In the space below, create some affirmations of your own that can help establish the presence of good health in your consciousness.

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Bear in mind: exercise is most effective when work is combined with pleasure, with an emphasis on pleasure. If there is no fun associated with keeping in shape, it's only a matter of time before motivation falls off. What are the things you really like to do, and how can you do them in ways that will enhance your overall physical condition?

**DIET:** When people overeat or eat unhealthy foods, there's a reason. There's probably also some level of satisfaction or pleasure that comes from this. Sometimes this is the greatest pleasure people have in their lives. If that is eliminated, it has to be replaced by something. Finding what this replacement should be requires insight, but it's what this program is really about. It's another way of identifying your dreams and translating them into realities.

Are you satisfied with the diet that you now follow every day, whether consciously or not? What changes ought to be made in order for your diet to move you in the direction of health, rather than the other way? Write your thoughts below.

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At the deepest level, eating right is about shifting your perceptions and changing your life in the directions that you deserve and choose. Less philosophically, there's no doubt that adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet can have health benefits — and it's certainly possible to do this without becoming fanatical about it. No complicated diets are needed, and there's solid evidence of major benefits. For example, a six-year study published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* found that women who ate diets high in fruits, vegetables, grains, and lean meats were 30% less likely to die of any cause than women who didn't eat such a diet.

**EMOTIONAL HEALTH:** In recent years there have been revolutionary changes in the ways people approach issues of emotional health, particularly as those pertaining to people past the age of 40. For example, the introduction of anti-depressant and anti-anxiety drugs has transformed the way people view emotional problems. These drugs are now advertised right beside the beer commercials during television sports events, and many millions of people are taking them. Even more dramatically, Viagra almost instantly became one of the world's best-selling medications.

There are many benefits to this pharmaceutical revolution, and no one should feel reluctant to participate in it — if that is what you need, and if a physician advises it. On the other hand, Americans have been conditioned to believe that “popping a pill” can relieve a headache or an arthritic shoulder. We should be aware that the issues of emotional health are more complex.

There are many well-documented, “non-prescription” ways to optimize emotional health — including getting enough sleep, avoiding negative stimulation (such as what the media constantly delivers to us), and dealing proactively with negative emotions such as anger and fear. But the most important thing is to recognize what makes you happy — or what would make you happy — and then do those things.





## **EIGHT: SPIRITUAL AWARENESS**

There is something in the human heart and mind — and perhaps especially in the educated and intelligent heart and mind — that yearns for an explanation of the world beyond the level of simple mechanics. We want and need to believe that the universe operates on a higher principle than the process of changing a tire on a car.

In this chapter we'll mention five areas of life in which the concept of a higher spiritual connection expresses itself. In each of these areas, this connection enhances our desire (and perhaps our ability) to realize our dreams.

**FIRST, THE EXPERIENCE OF PARENTHOOD**, which has a deeply spiritual component. Being a parent is a much more all-inclusive concept than was true a few decades ago. Today there are two-parent families, one-parent families, adoptive families, single-sex two-parent families, and all other possible combinations. But one thing is true of all forms of parenthood: You don't make this journey without glimpsing something beyond the purely mechanical view of life.

**SECOND, THE EXPERIENCE OF TIME**. As we age, time not only seems to go faster, it actually does go faster because time does not exist separately from our perception of it. As Einstein said, "Time goes faster when you're sitting on a hot stove than when you're sitting on a park bench holding your girlfriend's hand." That's called the theory of relationship. Time is perceived duration — and the perception speeds up as we get older. There is a spiritual message to be found in this experience: How can we make the most of the time that is being given to us?

**THIRD, THE EXPERIENCE OF NATURE**. We each need to find the place and space where we are best in contact with nature and feel our intrinsic spiritual wholeness. For some of us it's the forests and mountains while hiking, biking, or skiing. For others it's the beaches. Choose the place and space that makes your heart sing!

**FOURTH, THE EXPERIENCE OF COINCIDENCE.** In everyone's life, there are times when things seem to happen in ways that completely contradict the laws of probability. As we get older, the truly incredible coincidences become more apparent — and we wonder, "What could be behind something like this?" Coincidence is actually a quick glimpse into the spiritual world and a reminder that we should be paying attention to the spiritual forces that are at work at every moment of our lives.

**FIFTH, THE REALIZATION THAT LIFE WILL HAVE AN END.** Death is an inevitable reality. We shouldn't shy away from this crucial aspect of life's experience. Indeed, we can use the knowledge that life has an end to better understand and appreciate life while it's going on. In an interview shortly before his death, the great author and adventurer Ernest Hemingway was asked, "Why do you stand at an architect's slanted table and keep writing? You are in such pain with arthritis and a debilitating body. You've written best-selling books, won a Pulitzer Prize, been everywhere, met everyone, and done everything." Hemingway responded, "Because I still have stories to tell. People still want to read and watch my stories on the big screen. The pain passes, but the stories last." Like Hemingway, your story is yours to create, master and share, constantly reinvent, recount, and then be remembered. You are here to make a spiritual difference, now and forever, because the spirit of you is eternal.



## **NINE: THE POWER OF GIVING**

Please read The Eight Laws of Giving presented below — and as you do so, keep in mind the fact that giving is really the flip side of getting. Helping people to achieve their dreams is inseparable from achieving your own.

1. **GOD IS THE GREATEST GIVER.** God's nature is to give. In God's giving, He teaches us to give, be generous, and come from abundance. God can never run out of anything. He made it all, and in His giving He perpetually creates more.
2. **WE ARE MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD.** If we are God's greatest and highest reflection, our God-like greatness is expressed through our service and our giving to others. Your soul is here to serve and serve greatly. Your objective is to find the place where you can and want to serve in a spirit of absolute joy. Discover a way to utilize your extraordinary talent so that you experience it as effortless and infinite.
3. **THE BEST GIVING ALWAYS INCLUDES YOURSELF AS PART OF THE GIFT.** When you participate in the gift, its value is always more cherished and appreciated. You give your presence and your essence and the gift is worth infinitely more. When your soul and heart are part of the gift, the gift is permanently treasured and never forgotten. People sometimes say, "I have nothing to give." But you can always give your smile, your sincerity, your appreciation, your humor, your compassion, your hugs, your friendship, your advice, a pat on the back, your direction, and your personal example.
4. **THE DECISION TO GIVE IS THE FIRST STEP TO GIVING.** When Mark Victor Hansen heard Paul J. Meyer say that he wanted to give away a billion dollars during his lifetime, Mark was inspired to write down the same goal. Perhaps reading that someone has made it a goal to create and give away a billion dollars will inspire you to do the same or more. At the very least, it should expand your desire to give not just within your means, but even beyond your means!
- 5: **GREAT PEOPLE LOVE TO GIVE.** The world's great givers experience their true abundance of being. It's difficult to name a truly great person who was not also a great giver, whether of money, creative works, or just the inspiration of their presence. By the same token, giving also helps us to become great. You'll know this is true once you try.

6. SOWING ALWAYS MULTIPLIES AT REAPING TIME. “You can count the seeds in an apple, but only God can count the apples in a seed,” said Dr. Robert Schuller. One little apple seed that flourishes and grows can become over 10,000 apples in the fourth year of an apple tree’s life. The tree theoretically becomes countless apple seeds that have the potential of feeding everyone, everywhere. Your giving can be the one-seed gift that launches a future, a fortune, and a limitless potential.
  
7. GIVING ALWAYS HAS A MULTIPLYING AND COMPOUNDING EFFECT. Giving without expectation of returns — mysteriously generates compounding returns from the most unexpected places. Most successful people intuitively realize that giving is an investment — and when we invest, we naturally expect a return. Giving puts the universe in your debt. Paybacks come in different ways, at different times, and from different people, but giving literally sets up a force field of energy that returns to us like a well-thrown boomerang.
  
8. THE LAW OF RECIPROCITY. Whenever you give or do something for another person, you stimulate or trigger a desire in that person to do some similar kindness or like activity. No one wants to feel obligated or indebted. Great givers inspire others to get the contagion of giving. Time your gift giving. As Saint Francis said, “I shall pass this way but once. Any act of kindness I can do, let me do it now without delay or reservation, for I shall not pass this way again.”



## **TEN: BECOMING A LEADER AND MENTOR**

If you want to do something better, teach others how to do it. You will learn it in depth and learn to communicate it elegantly, eloquently, and effectively.

By becoming a leader of others, you bring the most out in yourself. So take advantage of that opportunity to the maximum. You may already be in a position of leadership. You may be the owner of a business, or you may supervise a group of employees in a company. You may be a physician or an attorney with patients, clients, and staff members depending on you. If that's the case, your leadership role is already clear and well defined.

There are other situations in which the leadership potential is more subtle. You may be a freelance or self-employed person with no official leadership responsibility. You may be a retired person, or someone who's just starting out in a new career. The surprising thing is, none of that really matters. There is always an opportunity for you to be a leader. Whether it's in your career, in your family, on your bowling team — or most importantly, in the many places in our society that badly need leaders, especially on a volunteer basis.

Just a few examples. You can coach a sport ... teach a class ... volunteer in a hospital ... tutor a student ... organize a book club ... become a docent in a museum ... or be the fund-raiser of all fund-raisers.

Here are five areas of life in which leadership opportunities always exist. Read through them, then decide which of them are best suited to your talents and capabilities.

1. Financial Leader
2. Health Leader
3. Relationship Leader (This role used to be performed by family members, now it's become the province of professionals or volunteers.)
4. Spiritual Leader
5. Intellectual Leader





## ELEVEN: A WHOLE NEW PARADIGM FOR YOU

In the first session of this program, we spoke about creating two timelines for your life. One was a simple chronology of what took place over the years, the other was a “wish list” of your hopes and dreams — some of which may have come to fruition, while others are yet to be realized.

As you look at those two timelines now, they should look rather different to you than they did when you created them. Specifically, the second one (the one about your dreams) should look not like the record of something that's over and done with, but a snapshot of a work still very much in progress. A key purpose of this program has been to provide you with both inspiration and practical tools for completing that work.

While it's true that we tend to think of our lives as story lines, suppose you were to look at your life in an entirely different way — as a jigsaw puzzle, for example, or as a landscape painting. Or even as a dream, in which time has a much more fluid and flexible meaning than it does in the everyday world of deadlines and due dates.

One of the most interesting alternatives to the linear view of our lives is the metaphor of a maze — or more precisely, of a labyrinth. There's an important difference between a maze and a labyrinth, although the two words are often used interchangeably.

A maze is a puzzle in which there are lots of false starts and dead ends. You can get lost in a maze, and you often have to backtrack, sometimes to the very beginning. A labyrinth, on the other hand, is a complicated, twisting, circuitous pathway — all you have to do is keep going and you get to the end. It may take you a long time to reach the end of a labyrinth, but the only way you can fail to reach your goal is if you stop trying!

Dr. Robert Schuller says: “God's delays are not God's denials.” So if you haven't achieved everything you hoped for by this point in your life, it may be that you have simply stopped moving forward. You can change that right now. Another possibility is that you've not only stopped moving, but you've stopped believing. You've stopped trusting in your own abilities and in the presence of a higher power that is always there to help you. Maybe you've even stopped hoping. If that's the case, now is the time to change!



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**Enhance your audio library with these great programs and authors  
from Nightingale-Conant that Mark talked about in  
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