

Dreams are necessary in our life's journey



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“We are the Music Makers and we are the Dreamers of Dreams?” Willy Wonka

He was wise, that Wonka. Supertramp, in its 1974 hit, criticized someone for being “nothing but a dreamer,” and not making their dreams come true by acting on them. It can be argued that tomorrow is, in fact, today's “dream” for it has yet to transpire. There are literally thousands of pithy, inspirational quotes about following your dreams. Hallmark movies are filled with such stories, all of which have happy endings. Dreams, the wide awake hopeful desires, are what motivate us. Call them hopes, goals, ideas or mental pictures. Yes, there's a fuzzy smokiness associated with “dreams,” which gives them the connotation that they're not attainable. But don't we raise our children on the premise to “follow their dreams” and explore their hopes and desires? Are we being honest, or are we hypocrites? Gloria Steinem once said that without dreams “leaps of imagination -” we lose the excitement of possibilities. Dreaming is a form of planning. Mike Tyson said he has to dream and reach for the stars. Even if he misses, he still grabs a handful of clouds. For more than 100 years we've been sitting around campfires, rowing our boats merrily, exclaiming that “life is a but a dream.” We're told to hold on to our dreams. We're also told to dream big. Martin Luther King had a dream, a great one, one that society is still struggling with. In his iconic 1963 speech, the civil rights leader simply wanted equality: “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’” “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” “I can't understand why, almost 57 years later, we're still struggling with this. Is it too much to ask? Why hasn't this “dream” become a reality?” Along similar lines, Harriet Tubman said every dream begins with a dreamer and “you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” Eleanor Roosevelt was also optimistic, noting “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” “I don't recall any major “dreams” when I was a youngster or teenager. My dad was a bit of a downer, a realist. One of his biggest dreams did come true, however, when the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and communism retreated from his homeland of Latvia, making a return trip possible. The war, cold war and communism definitely hindered his dreams for many years. But his dream of coming to Canada, settling down and raising a family did come true. He and my mom were thrilled with their rural Caledon homestead and life they built for us. “I considered myself lucky and blessed. I still do. But my dreams are now reduced, limited, curtailed. I dream and hope for great futures for my children. I encourage them to dream. They don't have to reach for the stars; I'm their biggest cheerleader and always will be. “I think all parents want something better, perhaps easier, for their children. We want them to succeed, to rise above challenges. “We try to teach them, prepare them for the battles they must fight. We give them all the tools they need “love, compassion, self-esteem, protection, support, money and an education. The rest is up to them. Mother bird's wings are large, more than capable of wrapping around all three of our kids and keeping them safe, warm and free from harm. She never tires. I don't know how she does it. This year, COVID-19 has interrupted countless dreams. It's sad and in some cases, they may be so far off track, they may never get back on their journey. Many dreams will come to an end. Will they be replaced by new ones? “Perhaps, but the sting of this nasty virus will be felt for a long time to come. “I have one child starting college, and another who recently graduated university. The future, right here right now, is still a bit uncertain. Career plans may have to change. Again, there's nothing more

deflating for your young minds than roadblocks and seemingly insurmountable hurdles. Sure, this too will pass, but its end can't come soon enough. Millions of people around the world want to get on with their lives, careers and dreams. We also need courage and strength. Oprah said the only courage anyone really needs is the courage to follow their own dreams. Dreams aren't enough, but they're a start. My wife and I do what we can, what we must. Okay, our kids may hang around the house longer than we anticipated, but hey, that's okay. Adults, who are nearing the end of their working careers, have their eyes on retirement and the freedom it brings. At this point, I don't have any post-working dreams. Sure, I'd love a little shack by the sea, but at this point, that's just a pipe dream. All we can afford right now is a hammock. I don't have any plans to stop working, at least not for another 10 years or so. Will I stop dreaming? No. And I hope people still have dreams, big and small. Martin Luther King's work is still not done. There are still billions of stars out there within our grasp!