

Chasing the dream



Gabby Douglas (from left to right), Aly Raisman, McKayla Maroney, Jordan Wieber, and Kyla Ross realizing their dreams as Olympians for Team USA Gymnastics. (Photo by by Ezra Shaw of Getty Images)

We have all had dreams. But when we think back on those dreams, we usually also remember our childhood. Why? As we get older, we aren't encouraged to dream anymore. We stop believing in what is possible and start to settle for what merely is. We lose our spark of individuality and become just another cog in the machine.

And yet, some of us still remember how to dream. We still plan ways to become a pilot, a firefighter, a police officer, the strongest man in the world, the fittest athlete in the world, or an Olympic Gold Medalist.

In less than two weeks, the world will show off its finest as we start the Olympic Summer Games in London. We'll cheer for our favorites, for Team USA, and for the spirit that makes these games possible.

But there are other games that some of us other athletes dream of competing in and taking the top prize. As soon as the traditional Summer Games are over, the Paralympics will begin, also in London. Tens of thousands are training for the annual Reebok Crossfit Games (which are a beast) and still others are ready to head back to the starting line while they train for another year of American Ninja Warrior.

In a recent post, "Many Are Called...Few Are Chosen," I gave you a small insight into the world of American Ninja Warrior and the sacrifices made by all athletes to reach their goal of total victory. For some, they have been dreaming about this since they first laid eyes on the show. This is their dream.

And dreams can cost money. So, meet fellow veteran and Purple Heart recipient Styves Exantus from Columbia, Maryland. American Ninja Warrior is his dream and he has made a pretty cool video talking about it. You can see Styves' video [here](#). He is willing to put himself out there to make his dreams come true.

But what about you? Yes, you, the reader.

What kinds of dreams have you put on hold or dismissed because you're not a kid anymore? Realistic or not, we owe ourselves the chance to at least go back and consider doing something we've always dreamed of doing. If we don't, we risk living a life full of regret and misery because we weren't willing to take a chance.

Maybe your dream isn't about athletics or competition. Perhaps it's your dream job or the place you've always wanted to live. It may also be a spiritual type of dream such as becoming a missionary or starting a non-profit. Those dreams deserve attention as well. I'm not here to judge your dreams; I just want you to give them a chance!

And you don't have to do it all at once either. Just taking a couple of steps each day in that direction will get you there. The hardest part is starting. Pick a dream, make a list of everything you need to make it happen, and then work on that list. It really is that simple.

The road will be hard, but it will be worth it. When you give your permission to dream, you release a part of yourself that has been confined. Your true self is able to shine! But shine not for the sake of yourself, but rather for others so that they may continue to dream and be faithful. This is part of the Glory of God.

"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth ... For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." James 3:13,15-18 (RSV)