

Got a Big Dream?

Here's How to Make the Change You Want

In March 2012, I made a bold move. I left my safe and secure, full-time job to become a freelance writer and my own boss.

Since then, nearly all of my work is professional writing published with my name, or for companies and businesses that I chose.

However, this leap of faith was not a decision I made overnight. It was a process that began several years before with a lot of thought, work, and planning. Here's some background on my story and how you can make that scary change yourself.

My Story

When I graduated college with a degree in journalism, I got a job in the marketing and communications field. That's where I continued for nearly 20 years.

However, in 2007, something changed. I had my daughter and my focus changed. I wanted to make a difference in people's lives and teach them the tough lessons I was learning as a working mother and in life. But how would I even start to get my voice out in the world? I couldn't simply leave my full-time job for an idea.

So, in December 2009, I started a blog and thought to myself, "I'll just start writing my stories, putting them out for the world to read, and maybe one day I can quit this job and be a professional writer."

For years, I wrote everything on my blog. I shared my struggles with motherhood and balancing a full-time career; about issues I had with weight growing up; and how my husband and I were dealing with furloughs and pay-cuts.

In the summer of 2010, I published my first piece with an online website and was thrilled to receive a check in the mail for it. I then started pitching pieces to other publications. I started finding companies who needed people like me with writing and social media skills.

Finally, in 2012, I was working almost two full-time jobs along with my freelance work. It was time to make the move and go out on my own.

How You Can Make the Change

Perhaps you have an idea percolating in your mind about what you really want to be doing for a living. Like my story, it's not an overnight path to success. Here are four things you can do now to make that change in the future.

1. Find your tribe - online and offline.

There are so many online places you can form those communities and make connections. Find Facebook or LinkedIn groups that speak to your industry or goals, and then read and participate in the discussions. Join some local Meetup groups.

2. Find the industry you want to work in and get involved.

Volunteer for organizations that compliment your goals and vision. These may not be paid gigs in the beginning, but they build your credibility and experience. If your industry is writing or speaking, start a blog, contribute to local publications such as your church or your children's school newsletter.

3. Make your LinkedIn profile work for you.

So many people tell me they can't go for their dream until they have a website. Websites take money and time. Opt for LinkedIn instead. It's free, and when people search for you online, your LinkedIn profile will always come up much higher than a website in search results.

4. Start now getting your financial house in order.

Knowing you won't be launching your new venture for a while gives you time to make sure you're financially ready. Pay down debt and save extra money each month for emergencies.

Going for your dream and making that big change is scary. But it IS possible! It just takes some planning, time and commitment.

- Leah Singer



Photo by Grace Garris