

Daring to Dream Together

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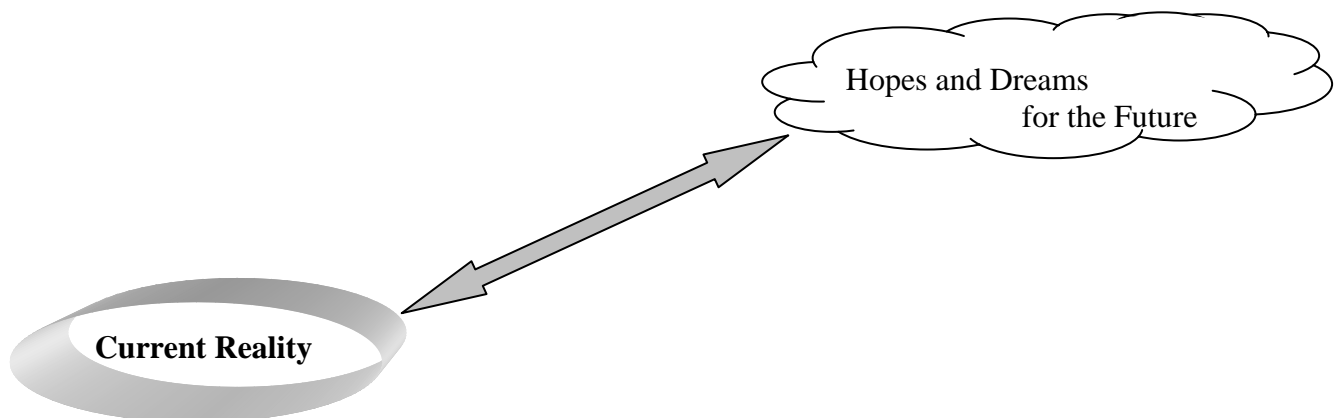
Do you wake up in the morning ready to greet the day with passion and enthusiasm? Do you dream about your next new adventure, or are you a little bored with the daily routine of your life? Do you ever wonder what happened to the dreams of your youth, secretly fearing that the best part of life is over? If so, maybe there is something you can do to turn things around.

Just as individuals make New Year's Resolutions, it is important for couples to spend time nurturing their hopes and dreams for the future. Couples often talk about their dreams for life together during the courtship phase of a relationship. However, the long-term vitality in a marriage is dependent upon reviewing personal and collective dreams and creating new ones on a regular basis.

This process involves making a vow to listen, reflect, renew, and modify goals together. It also requires that you both make a commitment to each other's personal growth. This commitment takes into account the knowledge that change is a normal part of all long-term relationships. If you talk about your dreams for the future, this is one way that you can continue to grow together not grow apart.

Peter Senge, a well-known organizational consultant, invites us to think about this process of renewal by presenting a challenge in the form of a visual image. This image attempts to describe a tension that invariably develops within us between our hopes and dreams and our current reality. Senge suggests that any decision or commitment we make is never static or complete; our world is always changing and evolving. Because of this a dynamic tension is created. It is up to us to pay attention to this normal and inevitable tension, to seize it as an opportunity, and to remain active, open, and involved. Senge's image is this:

Picture a rubber band that is pulled taut. On the top of the rubber band we discover our vision, our hopes and dreams for the future. On the bottom of the rubber band lies our current reality. To eliminate the growing tension that will inevitably begin to exist between the two, we are faced with a choice. We can either lower our expectations for the future, or we can raise (or change) our current reality. As individuals and in relationships, we find ourselves repeatedly confronted with this choice.



Robert Fritz states that, “Tension seeks resolution”. If we wish to maintain our hopes and dreams, both individually and as a couple, we must work together to effectively deal with this tension, to work toward changing the conditions in current reality that get in the way of actualizing dreams for the future.

As a couple, the sooner we can anticipate the tension that drags us down or makes us feel listless or bored, this is when we need to make time to brainstorm how to resolve and renew our sense of purpose. It is important to give ourselves enough time to actively imagine what might be required to move from current reality to hopes and dreams for the future. Below you will find a number of suggestions to help in this process:

- Listen to each person’s individual hopes and dreams for the future.
- Discuss hopes and dreams for you both as a couple and/or a family.
- Create a list of obstacles that could get in the way.
- Create a plan together that will help eliminate these roadblocks.
- Agree to support each other, being specific about what you will each do.
- Follow through on your commitments to bring the plan into reality.
- Schedule regular follow-up to check-in on the progress you are making individually and as a couple.

When we take the time to stop and reflect on what we want out of life, it puts us back in the driver’s seat of our own destiny. Planning and dreaming about the future gives us something to look forward to, it renews our sense of purpose and meaning, and it helps our relationship grow in strength and commitment because we are operating as a true couple rather than solo.

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