

How to Become a Big Thinker

7 Steps Anyone Can Follow to Develop This Critical Skill

Last week I wrote about how the mindset of a successful creative^[1] differs from less successful ones. I listed *thinking big* as the No. 1 characteristic. Over the years, I've heard from countless people who struggle with this.



I get it. When we're young, parents and teachers tell us we can do anything. We can become whatever we want! Then we grow older, and these same people tell us we must become more *realistic*.

Usually, that's just code for small thinking.

Pretty soon, their collective voices becomes The Voice in our head. As soon as we have a big thought, we check ourselves: *C'mon. Get real. That will never happen. You have to be more realistic.* And so it goes. We mistake The Voice for wisdom.

That was the mindset I had until I picked up *The Magic of Thinking Big*^[2] by David Schwartz. This book was originally published in 1959. I read it for the first time in the late eighties. It forever changed my approach to life and work.

Ever dreamed of launching your own self-hosted WordPress blog? It's easier than you think! Watch my free, twenty-minute screencast^[3]. I show you exactly how to do it, step-by-step. You don't need any technical knowledge. Click here^[4] to get started.

Since that time, I have become convinced that thinking big is not a gift, but a *skill*—one that anyone can develop. It starts by understanding the process and then consistently practicing it.

Here are seven steps to thinking big:

1. **Imagine the possibilities.** Give yourself permission to dream. I remember doing this when I was writing my first book. I imagined what it would be like to be a bestselling author. I thought about what it would be like to see my book on the *New York Times* bestsellers list. I've done this for every book I've written.

2. **Write down your dream.** This is the act that transforms a dream into a goal. Amazing things happen when you commit something to writing. I've written about that here^[5]. Writing down your goals forces you to clarify what you want, motivates you to take action, helps you overcome resistance, and gives you a way to objectively measure your success. I have experienced it first-hand again and again.
3. **Connect with what is at stake.** This is your rationale. Unfortunately, it is a crucial step that people often omit. Before you can find your way, you must discover your why. Why is this goal important to you? What will achieving it make possible? What is at stake if you don't? What will you lose? Your rationale provides the intellectual and emotional power to keep going when the path becomes difficult (which it will).
4. **Outline what would have to be true.** Rather than merely asking how to get from where you are to where you want to go, I like asking what would have to be true for my dream to become a reality. For example, when I set a goal of hitting the bestsellers list, I realized that I would have to write a compelling book, become its chief spokesperson, get major media exposure, and so on. I started with the dream and worked backwards. It's the same for any goal.
5. **Decide what you can do to affect the outcome.** This is where you transition from the big picture to daily actions. This is where people often get derailed. They can't see all the steps that will take them to their goal. So rather than doing something, they do nothing. You will never see the full path. The important thing is to do the next right thing. What can you do today to move you toward your dream?
6. **Determine when this will happen.** Someone once said that a goal is simply a dream with a deadline. A deadline is one way to make the dream more concrete—which is exactly what thinking big is about. A deadline also creates a sense of urgency that will motivate you to take action. Force yourself to assign a "by when" date to every goal. (If you get stuck, ask yourself, What's the worst that can happen if I don't hit this?)
7. **Review your goals daily.** When I was writing my first book, I reviewed my goals daily. I prayed over them. Each day I determined what I needed to do to make them a reality. It gave me a laser focus, especially when the dream looked impossible—when the publisher called to cancel the contract, when my publicist told me no one was interested in the book, when the publisher ran out of inventory right after the book hit the bestsellers list.

Thinking big is not a gift, but a skill—one that anyone can develop with practice. Michael Hyatt

- Tweet Quote^[6]

Don't listen to that mocking little voice that tells you to be more realistic. Ignore it. You can either accept reality as it is or create it as you wish it to be. This is the essence of dreaming—and thinking big.

Question: What is the dream that is near and dear to your heart? Go on, put it out there! You can leave a comment by clicking here.

Links

1. <https://michaelhyatt.com/7-ways-successful-creatives-think-differently-than-unsuccessful-ones.html>
2. <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0671646788/fwis-20>
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