

THE WATERMELON DRESS: GROWING INTO YOUR DREAMS

By Margaret Shepherd

"What if you slept,

And, what if, in your sleep you dreamed?

And what if, in your dream, you went to heaven and there plucked a strange and beautiful flower?

And what if, when you awoke, you had the flower in your hand?

What if? " (Deepak Chopra "The Way of the Wizard")

Right now, without thinking or pausing, write down three dreams that you hold in your heart. Dreams of what you want to be, do, or have in your life. Take fifteen seconds, five seconds each. When you are finished or at the end of fifteen seconds, consider the process. How readily did these dreams come to mind? How often do you think about them? How close are you to having them? How do you feel about your dreams? As you continue reading keep all of this in mind.

Last week we talked about thriving without striving. One of the essential requirements of thriving is to know what heaven on earth means to you, particularly in the areas of life where you are now striving instead of thriving. To define thriving clearly in all areas of your life is to define heaven in terms of your current existence.

Now we are moving on to new territory: DREAMS. In one of my favorite books, "Conversations With God," by Neale Donald Walsch, God speaking says, "I AM always your highest vision, your grandest thought." Dreams cause you to live far

beyond your current circumstances. They take you far beyond bettering your current life. Dreams take you into heaven territory. A whole new zip code not on any map you know. Dreams are Spirit singing its song through your imagination. God is your dreams.

One of the ways you can tell you are a human being, not a horse or a turnip, is that you have an imagination. Horses and turnips don't have "highest visions" and "grandest thoughts." They seem to be a pretty unimaginative bunch. (Not being a horse or a turnip, I can't say with full authority.) It's we humans who invented Post-it notes and compound interest and hair color and DVD players and ice cream.

It's part of that "being made in the likeness and image of God" business. What God does with Its thoughts and words, we do with ours. We create. And whether we create sameness or newness is up to us. Spirit plants seeds in our imagination and nourishes us like crazy and sits back and watches. And waits. Patiently. Patience is necessary for the manifesting of dreams because they are a process not an event. Growing into our dreams is one of those experiences in life where the journey is at least as much the gift as the destination. We are not ready to have them as soon as we desire them because we aren't developed enough yet. We must grow into our dreams.

One of my favorite cousins is the mother of a toddler. On a recent visit to their home she showed me a dress she had bought for her daughter. This is a child who is insane over watermelon. She begs for watermelon to eat, she draws pictures of watermelons. She has a rubber watermelon for her Barbie doll. She has a favorite T-shirt with a watermelon slice on the front. One day my cousin saw it in a children's clothing store window: The watermelon dress. It was pale green with a huge pink collar. The collar was trimmed in dark green and had black seeds here and there. The perfect watermelon dress. There was only one problem. The smallest size available of the watermelon dress was about three

sizes too big for our little watermelon lover. I began to understand why I was viewing the dress after she was in bed. Her mother told me, "I can't show it to her just yet. She has to grow into it and she isn't mature enough yet to understand about waiting and growing."

It is a common practice to buy clothes for children based on the expectation that they will grow into them. We also do this sometimes with toys or books or games. We have full faith that both their bodies and their minds are on a path of evolution and will progress systematically on that path. God is like that with us. We are inspired by Spirit to dream, to have aspirations, ideas, desires. These are statements by God of Its faith in our evolution.

Our dreams are planted within us--the word of God. And we are given all we need to realize them. Then Spirit patiently waits and witnesses. Probably hoping now and again we would wise up and get out of our own way. The patience of God observes us as we fathom, imagine, resist, fear, approach, avoid, cling to, and maybe, finally, create our dreams.

We actually get it backwards about the purpose of our dreams. We think they are about what they seem to be about. The perfect job, the perfect spouse, the great accomplishment. They are not. Dreams are for the purpose of your growth and evolution into a higher order of being. The material experience you seek is how God gets you moving and into the spiritual growth.

Think about it. If you are motivated by the dream of learning to play the tuba, in order to achieve your dream you are going to have to learn some things, create some working capital, perhaps change some of your attitudes and beliefs, be patient and brave, and interact with a lot of people on the way. And at some point you are going to have to trust that all you need is provided. From a source greater than what you can see in front of you. No matter what you think of yourself or the world. All of this is exactly the formula for your spiritual evolution.

It is the way you expand the possibilities of who you are. God is pretty sneaky if you think about it.

One of my very favorite movies is "Groundhog Day." Bill Murray plays the hero who falls madly in love with a character played by Andie McDowell. Murray's character is a jerk and McDowell tells him to get lost. As the story unfolds, Murray wakes up each day to find he is in the exact same day, repeating and repeating and repeating. He finally gets it that he can use this eternal day to better himself to achieve his heart's desire. He transforms himself into the perfect human being. In the end he gets the girl. But what he really gets is to be a fully actualized being. It's a great tale of how Spirit inspires us to grow into our greatest possibilities. And, as with all our dealings with God, everybody wins.

Sometimes your heart's desire shows up not as idealized yearnings but as discontent with your life. Things may be OK, comfortable, you may even be having a pretty good time. But there is an undefinable something missing. You might call it a purpose, calling, passion, fulfillment. This "something missing" feeling is divine discontent. Honor your divine discontent. It is God calling. If you feel a void in your life, *don't avoid the void!* Go to the edge of it and see what is there. It is the yearning of your soul! It is God calling.

You may not believe you are a dreamer. You may not have experienced divine discontent or positive yearnings. Your dreams may be buried too deeply within you or you may have anesthetized yourself to their urgings. What if you don't have dreams? Or what if your dreams are puny? Seeds that aren't planted can't grow.

When people are in poverty they seldom have dreams and desires and an active imagination. To envision a future you believe you cannot have is painful. So the poor person squelches his or her desires before they can cause pain. Some of us do the same with our dreams for similar reasons. Maybe we have had dreams

before, and they have caused us pain. It is safer not to have them. We trade that safety for an unfulfilled life. It may not be that we believe we can't afford them, but maybe that we are not qualified to have them, or brave enough, or talented enough, or lacking some kind of resources that seem unattainable.

This attitude misses the point of dreams. They are *supposed* to seem unattainable. We are *supposed* to feel unqualified and unworthy. This is what makes them dreams. Remember God's sneaky plan is to have us desire something that causes us to grow into it. Like children growing into new clothes that are too big.

If you are willing to live a larger life you can begin to let your dreams show themselves more clearly. This is the first step to manifesting them. To take this step you must know that God has inspired your dreams perfectly. They are precisely what your soul needs now. You must know that the journey is the destination; that the process of growing into your dreams is the gift greater than the goal achieved. You must know that you can depend on Spirit to provide absolutely everything you need to achieve your dreams. God put them there to be realized through you, and never withholds the means.

There is a watermelon dress waiting in your closet. God is waiting patiently for you to grow into it.

Go back now to the three dreams you wrote down earlier, or to whatever you wrote down, or to the blank page. Read them. How do you feel about them now? Can you see the hand of God in them, moving you to your highest possibilities? Turn over the paper and close your eyes for a moment. Ask yourself, "What am I willing to do next week to get clearer on my dreams, to make them more real in my awareness?" Whatever your answer is, write down a commitment statement to yourself, and trust that God is supporting your every step.