

I deserve the best life has to offer!

by steven august papa

I will not hesitate. I begin my journey today.

Setting sail on an ocean of possibilities, I'm venturing out on an uncertain sea of change in search of personal and professional fulfillment. Charting my voyage with equal parts map and inspiration, I exude confidence in the face of challenge. Bravely navigating with courage, determination and perseverance; the bounding main is choppy but I believe in myself. Buoyed by dreams, I will not hesitate. I begin my journey today.

- *"This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." -- William Shakespeare*
- *"Whether you think you can or think you can't - you are right." -- Henry Ford*
- *"If you hear a voice within you say "you cannot paint," then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced." -- Vincent Van Gogh*
- *"Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you." -- Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- *"You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them." -- Michael Jordan*
- *You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes.
You can travel in any direction you choose.
You're on your own. You know what you know.
You are the guy who'll decide where to go.
-- Dr. Seuss*

I'm going with the flow...

Tossed about by the ups and downs of experience, winding through the twists and turns of life; I find myself, at first, holding on tightly and refusing to accept what is.

Trying desperately to stay afloat, I'm forceful and controlling. Fighting with myself, fighting with others and forcing my way; I realize it doesn't work. It's never worked. I'm stubborn. I question. How do I handle my voyage? Do I continue to struggle or go with the flow?

- *"Change is what happens when the pain of holding on becomes greater than the fear of letting go." -- Author Unknown*
- *"Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around us in awareness."
-- James Thurber*

Finally, after much soul searching and review, I become conscious and aware I've been carrying the heavy burdens of yesteryear. Deep within my heart, I know I've got to change my way of thinking. Instead of rehashing what I've done wrong or how others have wronged me, with courage, I'll choose to think about what's right.

- *"Don't let yesterday use up too much of today." -- Cherokee Indian Proverb*
- *"Living in the past is a dull and lonely business; looking back strains the neck muscles, causing you to bump into people not going your way." -- Edna Ferber*

I want to think differently. I want to let go of the past and stop fretting about the future. The process is daunting but I know I can do it. Leaving the past behind and living in the present is in my best interest. By living in the here-and-now I'll be able to think more clearly and make better decisions. I'll free myself to explore life's possibilities.

- *"Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment." -- Buddha*
- *"We seem to be going through a period of nostalgia, and everyone seems to think yesterday was better than today. I don't think it was, and I would advise you not to wait ten years before admitting today was great. If you're hung up on nostalgia, pretend today is yesterday and just go out and have one hell of a time." -- Art Buchwald*
- *"I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes." -- Carl Sandburg, Prairie*
- *"If not now, when?" -- The Talmud*

It's time to forgive others. *Forgive myself. Let go. Flow.*

- *"The remarkable thing is that we really love our neighbor as ourselves: we do unto others as we do unto ourselves. We are tolerant toward others when we tolerate ourselves. We forgive others when we forgive ourselves." -- Eric Hoffer*
- *"...forgive them; for they know not what they do." -- Jesus of Nazareth*
- *"There are those who will tell you why it is wise to never forget the pain of the past... But if you look closely at the anger, sorrow, and bitterness that has hardened their faces, then you will also see why learning to forgive is the better of the two paths." -- Guy Finley*
- *"Most of us can forgive and forget; we just don't want the other person to forget that we forgave." -- Ivern Ball*
- *"One pardons to the degree that one loves." -- Francios De La Rochefoucauld*
- *"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." -- Mahatma Gandhi*

A new way of thinking...

- *"No one has everything and everyone has something of sorrow intermingled with the gladness of life. Don't take yourself too seriously. Don't think that somehow you should be protected from the misfortunes that befall others."*

-- *Creed for Positive Living* by Robert Louis Stevenson,

It's a new way of thinking and I'm apprehensive. Still, I promise to constructively face the real issues of my life by:

- talking to a counselor, therapist or spiritual advisor;
 - communicating with trusted family members and friends;
 - reading inspirational books, essays and articles;
 - attending support groups with those facing similar issues and experiences;
 - and, most importantly, embracing gratitude for all I've been given.
- *"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."* -- Melody Beattie
 - *"Today is life - the only life you are sure of. Make the most of today."*
-- Dale Carnegie

To achieve my goals I know I'll have to reach outside of the proverbial box and step away from my comfort zone. It's time to stop saying "but-I've-always-done-it-this-way" because I've learned the same old ways yield the same old results. And, as much as I might wish otherwise, there aren't any one-size-fits-all approaches to life. The creative strategy I prepare for my life is based on individuality, originality and humanity.

I'm not afraid; it's time to be realistic, take stock and ask the big life questions. What's working? What's not working? Of course I'm feeling hesitant. It's only natural to be fearful; change can bring about anxiety. But I'll take the good along with the bad in order to gain a clearer sense of balance and perspective.

By accepting my personal truths to the best of my ability, by accepting "what is," I'll be better able to open up to new ideas and approaches. Facing personal challenges makes more sense when I take the world as it is. With reality on my side, I'll find it easier to find a way to make my dreams come true.

- *"Dreams come true; without that possibility, nature would not incite us to have them."*
-- John Updike
- *"Commit yourself to constant improvement. Commit yourself to quality. Be honest. Be loyal. Be a self-starter. Be decisive even if it means you'll sometimes be wrong. Take responsibility for every area of your life. Be bold and courageous. When you look back on your life, you'll regret the things you didn't do more than the ones you did."*
-- *Twenty-One Thoughts on a Better Life* by H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Both simple and complex, I'm going to follow these five directives:

■ **Develop a unique and personal *creative strategy*;**

■ **Find the *courage to create*;**

■ **Believe in the *power of vision*;**

■ **Commit to finding a *fresh perspective*;**

■ **And *accept change* makes the world ever new.**

A new way of being...

- *"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage." -- Anaïs Nin*
- *"It's not whether you get knocked down; it's how you get back up." -- Vince Lombardi*
- *"When you take charge of your life, there is no longer a need to ask permission of other people or society at large. When you ask permission, you give someone veto power over your life." -- Geoffrey F. Abert*

Striving to achieve personal and professional goals; I recognize my individual journey gathers steam when I collaborate, communicate and conceptualize with friends, family and colleagues. I value the friendship of like-minded men and women. I respect their vision of the future and trust they'll respect mine.

Acknowledging that control issues, judgments and grudges are aspects of being human; I respect each individual's journey. Trusting that each of us finds our own way in our own time; I'll treat everyone with dignity, respect and compassion.

It's wise to free myself from the memories of relationships and situations that ended in anger or sorrow. It's in my best interest to let go of experiences that I didn't understand and wasn't able to figure out. I believe that one day, usually when I least expect them to appear, the answers will arrive. Until then, I'm going to concentrate on living in the present and freeing myself from heavy voices of the past. I will honor these experiences for their life lessons.

- *"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." -- Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Guided by *the power of vision.*

Power. Transcending physical sources of strength, talent and ability; power fuels the golden energy of inspiration, passion and wisdom. Windswept waters and turbulent times behind me, I'm gliding and going with the flow. I sail silently through the dark with humility and humor. I'm waiting patiently for daybreak. A glimmer of light. A golden rule; we do unto others as ourselves. I have infinitely more power to create with family, friends and colleagues than I can ever imagine on my own. Everything feels different. Daylight is here.

Vision. The ability to anticipate, conceive and dream that which will come to be is often called vision. Setting sail on an ocean of possibilities and buoyed by my dreams, I harness the power of vision in thought, word and deed. I have the power within to create the best life has to offer.

Reflections herald the arrival of dawn. And there before me, rising above the glistening surface, I finally fathom the wisdom of creative process:

Stepping outside of our proverbial box, we become empowered by the experience of change making the world ever new. Guided by the power of vision, authentic creativity materializes when we accept ourselves for who we are and discover our courage to create.

🌀 I deserve the best life has to offer! 🌀

From this moment on, I'm going to live my life in the present moment. I'll do my best to learn from, and accept, past experiences and then let them go. Bravely facing the future, I'm excited about my plans and goals. I believe in myself. I'm going to: develop my own unique creative strategy for living; find my courage to create; believe in the power of vision; commit to finding a fresh perspective; and accept change makes the world ever new.

I deserve the best life has to offer. I'm going to follow my dreams.

a note from the author



Collaborate. Communicate. Conceptualize. “There are three essential personal abilities that, when cultivated, empower us to step outside of our proverbial box and experience change making the world ever new. Whether we’re at home, school or the workplace; our willingness to collaborate, communicate and conceptualize makes all the difference in achieving our professional and personal goals.”

With inspirational and motivational conversations, essays and short stories, Steven August Papa warmly illustrates the power of vision as a key component to happiness and success.

| the power of vision



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Q Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did.

So throw off the bowlines.

Sail away from the safe harbor.

Catch the trade winds in your sails.

Explore. Dream. Discover.

-- Mark Twain