

Do one thing

USE THE POWER OF CONSISTENT PROGRESS TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS.

“I'm totally overwhelmed,” said Karen, one of my coaching clients. “Now that I know what I really want, I can't find the time to pursue it.”

A successful partner in a law firm as well as a devoted wife and mother, Karen had originally come to me because she felt an unsettling longing that something was missing from her life.

Through a powerful coaching exercise, she uncovered a passion that had been buried for years — the desire to be a writer. Although Karen was a successful lawyer, often using her writing skills to prepare compelling legal documents, she realized she was longing to write fantastically imaginative stories for children. It

was a dream she held as a teenager but had abandoned for a more financially rewarding career as an attorney.

Like so many others, Karen's challenge wasn't only discovering her passion; it was finding time to pursue it.

Start small

After years of postponing her dream, Karen's first impulse was to write for an hour a day, but a closer look at her calendar revealed that even an hour a week would be a challenge — a conclusion that left her discouraged.

To combat this, I had her make a list of actions that would move her forward, while requiring no longer than 10 minutes each to complete. Her list included more than 20 simple ideas, such as brainstorming two different titles, writing a one-paragraph summary of her main character, creating three possible

names for this character and asking her children which name they liked best.

Because each item on the list was so easy to do, Karen's confidence was quickly restored, and she was anxious to get started.

Are you longing to pursue a passion but overwhelmed by the whirlwind of your life? If so, then make a list like Karen's and do just one thing this week to begin. Although each task may seem insignificant by itself, starting small will enable you to take the critical first steps.

Remember, whatever you've dreamed of being cannot happen until you begin.

Stay focused

Karen continued to do a minimum of one thing from her list each week, squeezing each task into her schedule between meetings or while sitting in the stands during a soccer game. She also added new ideas to the list so that she was never without an assignment for the coming week.

Week by week, Karen wrote the first draft of a children's book, and before long, she was ready to find a publisher — an accomplishment that only a year earlier she had deemed impossible because of the other responsibilities in her busy life.

Consistent action taken toward a clear objective will let you accomplish almost anything over time. And like any discipline, the more you practice it, the stronger it becomes.

By consistently taking small steps toward your dream you make steady progress. But more importantly, you start to believe in yourself and your ability to make your passion part of your life. Soon, the satisfaction you feel becomes addictive, enabling you to sustain your consistency regardless of your circumstances.

See clearly

The real success in Karen's story was not the publication of her book. It was in how she learned to see herself.

The vague dissatisfaction that originally brought her to me was the result of abandoning her talent for writing. When she learned to see herself as a writer as well as a wife, mother and attorney, she saw the complete person she knew she was meant to be — one who was using all the talents she had been given.

But more importantly, she also learned to see herself as a person who was willing to follow her passion and achieve whatever she set out to do. The day Karen held her published book in her hands was one of the happiest she could ever remember — a joy that made her excited and confident to begin creating the next one.

The next time you feel the downward spiral of believing that your dreams will never come true, just do one thing. Each step you take will bring you closer to your passion and to becoming the person you were born to be. <<

JIM HULING is CEO of The Jim Huling Group, a strategic consulting company enabling leaders and their teams to achieve extraordinary results. Jim's leadership experience spans more than 30 years, including a decade as CEO of a company recognized four times as one of the “25 Best Companies to Work For in America.” Jim is also the author of “Choose Your Life! a powerful, proven method for creating the life you want.” He can be reached at jim@jimhuling.com.

