

Week Six

Step 6: Act As If— Take Your First Step

Now a warning. You may be feeling confident and excited. Hey, my dreams are in progress and all I have to do is wait patiently. Not exactly. There is a significant difference between those who Dream Big and those who truly *believe* in their dreams.

Demonstrate Commitment

If I said, “Demonstrate that you believe your dream will come true,” what would you do to convince me? We’ve all heard the saying, “Fake it till you make it.” The principle of *acting as if* is similar. In Step 5 you focused on specific dreams you’d like to create. In Step 6 you must now *act as if* you already have your dream to show your commitment.

Imagination is like a seed and it must be watered if it is to yield a harvest. What are you going to do while you’re waiting for your dream to manifest? You are going to take action by letting your imagination kick into high gear. In week six, you’ll begin taking some baby steps toward your dream and demonstrating your faith and commitment.

If you recall in Step 5, Tim wanted to help his sales rep achieve his dream of owning a condo. At the time it

seemed impossible because of insufficient income. Most people would probably stop right there. No income—no condo. Why even bother dreaming when we don't have the money. Tim, however, remembered how important it is to *act as if* we expect our dream to happen.

Make Believe

Tim referred his rep to a real estate agent and suggested he start looking to get an idea of what he wanted and the purchase prices. Looking at condos and imagining owning one was a powerful demonstration of faith. Then together they figured out how much more he would have to earn to afford the condo. Between the pictures of the condo and the excitement of looking with a realtor, his rep actually felt his dream moving toward him. By *acting as if* and *making believe* he accelerated the process and was able to buy his condo.

Today managers need to remember to motivate people by focusing on their dreams.

Believe in Miracles

Let's do a little soul searching. Would you have the courage, faith, and desire to look at condos or houses if you didn't have the money? Does it seem silly or irrational? If so, I'm asking you to put logic and fears aside and truly expect the best. I'm also asking you to believe in miracles. Believe in your dreams like Dayle Dunn and Carl Mehler did.

When I met Dayle and Carl, Dayle was a training professional and Carl was an architect. They are a happily married couple who love life and art. They dreamed of owning an art gallery and living by the ocean. Years ago they moved into their dream home on the ocean,

where they also have a spectacular art gallery. How did they do it? I can assure you it was not luck. They did it by *acting as if* and moving toward their dream.

One day, Dayle and Carl playfully discussed, “Wouldn’t it be fun to totally change our lives and live our dream? Imagine if we were gallery owners, surrounded by art and living by the ocean.” The more they talked the more excited they got until they finally decided to pursue the gallery.

Within two weeks they took their first *act as if* step and contacted realtors in Half Moon Bay, California. All the realtors said it couldn’t be done. To build an art gallery in a residence and get the sewer and other necessary permits was nearly impossible. Now many people might have stopped there and said, “Well, I guess it’s not supposed to be.” But not Dayle and Carl. They continued to look on their own and found the ideal property on the ocean zoned for both residential and commercial use.

Next they put their own lovely house on the market and rented a small, one-bedroom apartment in Half Moon Bay. This gave them the opportunity to adjust to their new environment and to begin designing plans for their new art gallery and home. Long before the gallery was even designed they both went to art fairs to meet artists and see what kind of art they would display for sale.

Meanwhile, many banks turned down their loan request, finding their unique project undesirable. Finally, they found the ideal lender. Just when things were looking good, the planning commission considered declining the entire project. This was especially frustrating

since they had worked hard making all the required changes to the property.

Did they give up? No way. They visited their neighbors and other business owners on the street and got their support in writing. Armed with a model of the project, slides, and support letters, the planning commission unanimously approved their art gallery.

I remember attending the opening gala of the Dunn-Mehler Gallery with Bob and sharing in their joy. They were glowing with happiness as they proudly gave us a tour of the spectacular art gallery connected to their dream house.

Carl said the reason they had no fear was they were not attached to the outcome. They had lived in a small apartment for a year and a half and had a great time. “If things didn’t work out, we’d sell the property and move back to an apartment,” Carl explained. “Things are not important to us. The fun is in trying and doing. Dayle and I are energized by the people we meet and the ocean, working with art, and enjoying ourselves. If we don’t succeed it’s not a failure—it’s an adventure.”

Here’s an interesting note: Ten years before they bought the property at the beach, Carl was impressed with an art gallery in Chicago. He obtained a poster-size picture of the inside of the gallery and kept that picture above his desk for years. Now he and Dayle are in their own special picture. The key is they consistently *acted as if* they expected their dream to work out. If you happen to be in Half Moon Bay, California, be sure to stop by the Dunn-Mehler Gallery and say hello.

For you skeptics, let me give you a personal example. Remember in Step 5, *Dream Big*, I mentioned I wanted to attract my divine mate. Recording my dream on audiotape and gluing pictures on my Dream Big board certainly helped keep my dream alive. But I still had to show faith and *act as if* I expected my dream to happen.

When I moved into my lovely new home as a single, I had a large walk-in closet with two built-in dressers and lots of poles for clothes. I put all my clothes in one dresser on the left and filled up half the pole space. The right hand dresser and pole space remained completely empty even though I could have easily used all the closet space. Why did I only use half the closet? Because I truly believed my divine mate was on the way, and I had to make space for this person in my life. My realtor thought I was crazy. Now I have the last laugh with an incredibly loving, devoted husband.

In addition, I kept one extra room, the den, completely empty because I imagined my partner as an entrepreneur like me in need of a home office. That empty room became Bob's office where he ran our consulting company activities before we moved to our new offices. By praying for my divine mate regularly and *acting as if* he were coming, I was rewarded with my wonderful husband.

Are You Willing to Work Hard?

Don't think it's easy; we must be willing to take a hard look at ourselves. Besides making my audiotape, using pictures, and leaving my closet half empty, I felt I had to get myself ready for my ideal mate. I sought out intensive personal counseling to identify any blocks or

behaviors that were preventing me from having the close, intimate relationship I desired. It was a painful and vulnerable process—and the best thing I could have done.

I also sought out feedback from male friends and associates about how they perceived me. Guess what? They were all surprised I was even interested in a relationship. One friend, Kurt, said, “You seem so happy and independent, as if you don’t want or need a partner.” What an eye-opener. Obviously, I had work to do. The hardest part for me was to admit I had no control and ask for help. I’m convinced the combination of my counseling, prayers, feedback, and *acting as if* all led to my soul mate, Bob.

Probably the biggest and most difficult *act as if* experience was when Bob and I bought our new dream house together. We both decided that one day, if we could afford it, we’d like to live in a really nice, large Mediterranean home with land, views, clay tile roof, and lots of light. In fact, we had pictures of our dream home on our board.

At the time we wanted to relocate to San Diego. We couldn’t afford our dream home but were content to buy a nice tract home. While we were out looking, our realtor told us there were some really incredible houses on the market at distressed prices. He then proceeded to drive us to an area full of gorgeous, custom—Mediterranean—homes at practically half price.

When he pulled up in front of a beautiful home with columns, I felt a bit uncomfortable and whispered to Bob, “This is out of our league.” As soon as we walked inside and I saw the canyon views, the arches,

the tile floors, and the sunlight streaming in, I thought, “We belong here.” The house was nearly twice the size of the tract houses we were considering.

Our realtor, Rick, said, “Let me see what I can do—make an offer.” Bob and I offered what we wanted to pay on a much smaller tract house and considerably less than the asking price. I thought Rick would refuse to present our offer but he went for it. We prayed for guidance: “If this house is meant for us and we can easily afford it, please let the builder accept our bid. If it is not in your divine plan now, please let the deal fall through and we will happily move into the tract house.”

The brand new house had been on the market for three years. The builder was in financial trouble and needed to pay off his construction loan. He accepted our low offer, which allowed us to move into our dream home about ten years ahead of schedule. If we hadn't *acted as if* and actually walked inside some luxury homes, I doubt we'd be living in our dream house today.

Acting As If Is Fun

At first *acting as if* seems silly and even scary. With practice, it gets easier and playful, and becomes a way of life. All it is, is making believe and acting out your dreams. Don't delay—move toward your dreams and take a baby step.

The *Act as If Principle*[™] is also powerful for creating prosperity—a feeling of plenty or abundance—in our lives. We have plenty of friends, plenty of love, and perhaps plenty of money. I'm convinced, however, that money by itself does not bring happiness. It is through our beliefs and reliance on our spiritual source that we

can attain peace and prosperity. We are rewarded with a life filled with friends, love, health, vitality, spirituality, and most of all, a sense of well-being. We can *feel* prosperous without actually being prosperous.

Show Faith in Difficult Times

People don't seem to understand that to attract more prosperity they have to *act as if* they are prosperous. For instance, I met a young single mom who was working as a bank teller. Her husband left her, she had no family in the area, and money was very tight. Despite these difficult challenges, she purchased fresh flowers every week, which for her was an extravagance. "The flowers are a reminder that my life is blooming and I am only experiencing a temporary setback," she told me one day. What a great outlook on life's challenges. It is important to show our faith when money is tight and not focus on *scarcity*.

Do the Little Things

By this I mean leave a standard or generous tip in restaurants. Give generously at your church service or to those in need. Buy gourmet coffee now and then if it makes you feel good. By not obsessing over our tight financial situation and *acting as if* all is well, we are demonstrating our faith that all is well. I am *not* suggesting we buy or charge things we can't afford. Just do little things to keep our outlook hopeful and positive.

Acting as if means we need to adopt a "do it" mentality and avoid the "prove it" mentality. The "prove it" mentality means, "You show me first exactly how I can have my dream without any risk of failure." If Walt

Disney had the “prove it” mentality, we’d never have Disneyland.

Are you ready to do it? Of course you are or you wouldn’t be reading this book. What can you do to *act as if* your dream is coming? If you are interested in doing TV commercials, sign up for an acting class. If you are hoping for a big promotion, buy yourself a new briefcase. If you are dreaming of buying a special car, take one out for a test drive. If you want to go on a cruise, buy yourself a cruise outfit and save it for the trip. You get the idea! In other words, do something to show your commitment and faith. Beware of your fearful voice who will try to stop you and ask “how?” Remember, don’t worry about the details. Just ask for guidance and help.

Following is a list of suggestions to help you feel prosperous and avoid scarcity thinking:

- Give to your church or spiritual source.
- Treat yourself to a massage.
- Get a house cleaner periodically.
- Get help with mowing the lawn or gardening.
- Order a special glass of wine instead of the house brand.
- Give money to a friend or family member in need without expecting payment.
- Donate your time to help a friend or comfort someone.
- Buy a little gift for a friend or loved one for no specific occasion.
- Get “full serve” gasoline once in a while.

Avoid these *scarcity* activities:

- Spending excessive energy on coupon clipping.
- Driving out of your way to save a minimal amount of money on groceries.
- Ordering the cheapest item on a menu.
- Asking people to split an entree when you really want your own. (A friend of mine dated a guy who insisted they split an entree! Is that cheap or what?)
- Undertipping for services.
- Wearing old clothes or shoes you no longer enjoy.

Summary of Key Points

- Imagination is like a seed and must be watered.
- Demonstrate you believe your dream is in progress and *act as if*.
- Adopt a *do it* mentality and avoid the *prove it* mentality.
- Act prosperous and treat yourself and others well when money is tight.

Exercise: Five-Minute Joy Booster

Every morning this week before you get out of bed, prop up the pillows, sit back, and take a few minutes to imagine one of your dreams. Then either say a little prayer, an affirmation, or read one of the quotes at the end of this section.

Exercise: Act As If You Believe

In your Dream Big workbook, write at the top of a new page Act As If and the date. To get warmed up focus on one or two dreams and jot them down on the

left, leaving extra space to write on the right side. Next, ask yourself, “If I know this dream is definitely on the way, what can I do to prepare and demonstrate my belief?”

For example, long before I ever became a professional speaker I dreamed about it. I made it a goal and wanted to keep my dream alive and not get discouraged. One day, Sparkles said, “Go buy new luggage.” Ms. Misery, my fearful voice, strongly objected with, “That’s ridiculous, the luggage you have is just fine. Besides, you can’t afford it.” Sparkles said, “If you buy the luggage you’ll get to use it as a speaker.” I listened to Sparkles and remember the joy I felt when I took that luggage on my first speaking tour. Buying the luggage was my way of *acting as if* I already had my dream.

What can you do to take one or two action steps toward your dream? To *act as if* you already have it? Write it down now in your Dream Big journal and then DO IT!

Dream Big Group Members or Partner

Share one or two of your dreams and ideas of how you can *act as if*. Make a commitment to do something in the next month to move toward your dream. Get support and ideas from the group members or your dream partner.

Message for the Spiritually Inclined

The following affirmations are recommended for creating prosperity:

Dear Lord or _____, Show me the way to attract great abundance and be of service.



Dear Lord or _____, Let all that is mine by divine right come to me now as I fulfill my life plan according to Your wishes.



God or _____ opens doors of opportunity to me and my faith leads me through them.



Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24)

I'll be traveling to your area so let's partner on a special program for your company or private group. Visit www.Barbara-Sanfilippo.com for topics, demo video and contact information.

Imagine the Best— Let's Practice the Process

Congratulations! In the last six weeks you have become one of a select group of people in the world to choose your future. You now have a powerful, proven six-step process to use any time you wish to bring your dreams into reality. In this section we'll review all of them to ingrain them in your mind.

Let's review:

- Step 1: Welcome Wake-Up Calls—Pay Attention to the Guiding Signs
- Step 2: Listen to Your Heart—Say “No” to Ms. Misery
- Step 3: Test the Waters—Take the Risk Out of Risk
- Step 4: Effort Less—Enjoy the Ride
- Step 5: Dream Big—Imagine the Best That Can Happen
- Step 6: Act As If—Take Your First Step

I'm sure by now your mind is full of exciting possibilities you'd like to create in your life. Let's choose your first dream and apply the six-step process straight through. This serves as a brief summary and gets you in the habit of using your new skills.

Right now imagine I snapped my fingers and instantly transformed you to your dream. What are you doing? Where are you? Whom are you with? Imagine every incredible detail. Please place the book down and

see one of your dreams in vivid color. Now write it down in your Dream Big workbook and let's work our way through the steps.

Step 1: Welcome Wake-Up Calls— Pay Attention to the Guiding Signs

What obstacles come up in your mind when you imagine your dream? Have you been ignoring any wake-up calls or signs? Perhaps you are over-scheduled and feel you have no time to enjoy life. Or you may keep repeating the same obstacles or disappointments. Jot down all the guiding signs and look through your list. What can you do to move in a new direction?

Step 2: Listen to Your Heart—Say No to Ms. Misery

Imagine again you have your dream. Let your heart encourage you. Earlier, you gave a special name to your intuition. Please ask for support now: "Dear _____, Please encourage and assure me I deserve this dream. Guide me and show me the way. Remind me that with your help anything is possible." Note for the spiritually inclined: This is a very powerful prayer when you direct your request to the Lord or a higher power. Be patient for the answers to your request. Try to quiet Ms. Misery or your fearful voice.

Step 3: Test the Waters—Take the Risk Out of Risk

Now that you've gotten some inspiration and direction from your spirit, fear is likely to crop up. It's important to minimize the risk by understanding fear. Fear in my opinion is simply "imagination and worry out of control." Therefore, to take the risk out of risk ask yourself, "What's the worst that can happen?" Write down all your fears and list all of your options. List some possible action steps and support mechanisms you can put in place to avoid getting discouraged.

Step 4: Effort Less—Enjoy the Ride

At this point it's natural for some frustration and anxiety to arise. Now that we are moving toward our dream we must "let it happen." If we are too attached to the outcome we may sabotage our progress. Take a hard look at all the people and situations in your life that are not supporting your dream. Perhaps you are trying to control the process instead of enjoying it. Dreaming big is meant to be fun. If you are efforting and struggling it's time to trust, relax, and let go.

Step 5: Dream Big—Imagine the Best That Can Happen

The previous four steps encourage you to listen, believe, and move toward your dreams. So now ask yourself the big question: "What's the best that can happen?" It's important to fuel the fire of your dream. Write it down, make an audiotape, and begin collecting pictures for your Dream Big board. Act quickly to keep the momentum going.

Step 6: Act As If—Take Your First Step

To truly set your dream in motion you must take a step and *act as if* your dream is imminent. What step will you take based on the dream you chose? If you want to write a book, sign up for a class. If you are dreaming of a new car, take it for a test drive. And remember don't worry about "how" it will happen. Just make believe and have a wonderful time. Feel the emotion and exhilaration as you anticipate having your dream.

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Expecting immediate results—be patient.
- Trying to logically figure out "how" things will happen.
- Letting your "fear" voice discourage you. Fight back!

- Listening to negative people.
- Skipping the Dream Big board exercise.
- Taking no action step—remember to *act as if*.
- Not asking God for spiritual guidance.

Keep Your Dream Alive

The most difficult thing for many people is keeping their dream alive. After all, it may take one, five, or ten years. The four most powerful things you can do are:

1. Look at your Dream Big board daily but at least once a week.
2. Practice Step 6, *acting as if*, and do something to reinforce your dream.
3. Organize a Dream Big support group or get a Dream Big partner.
4. Practice the *daily joy booster*.

Summary of Key Points

- Practice the six-step *make it happen* process.
- Avoid pitfalls.
- Keep your dream alive.

Exercise: Five-Minute Joy Booster

Every morning this week before you get out of bed, prop up the pillows, sit back, and take a few minutes to imagine one of your dreams. Then either say a little prayer, an affirmation, or read one of the quotes in the previous chapters.

Dream Big Group Members or Partner

Share one dream each and verbally walk through the six-step process to reinforce them. Ask group members for help.