

The Quest4Life Podcast Show Notes:

Season #3, Episode #31: Dream Killer

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For most of us, it's challenging to see the potential in others and watch them not arguing for their own potential or seeing their potential in themselves. There are many reasons as to why this happens.

Some of us have self-limiting beliefs, some of us have emotional triggers that knock us off our game, and some of us are just lazy, to name a few.

What all of us must deal with, especially in contemporary society, is distraction and distraction is a dream killer.

Distraction keeps us from finding peace and clarity.

Distraction keeps us from achieving insane levels of performance.

Distraction keeps us mired in the familiar.

Distraction keeps us stuck.

Living a life fraught with distraction is a rip off...

...and figuring out a way to minimize and/or eliminate distraction will level-up your mindset so you can achieve peak performance in all areas of your life, which is to say that your dreams can and will come true.

Distraction at its Core

At its core, deferring to distractions is an avoidance mechanism.

And if you're not convinced that you defer to the convenience of distractions instead of chasing after your dreams, imagine that you work a corporate job, but dream of owning your own business.

You know that there is a crap ton of heavy lifting that needs to be done to start a business and get it up and running. Oh, and you already have a full-time job.

Even though your corporate job pays the bills, it's crushing your soul. It's a slow crash and you can't wait to move beyond it.

Then one day, you make the decision to formally set up your LLC and begin building out your website and social media presence after work. Unfortunately, your workday was full of stress and, once you get home, all you want to do is to veg.

Before you know it, several hours have gone by and you're now too tired to set up your LLC and begin building out your website and social media presence. You figure, I'll go to bed, get a good night's sleep, and get to my business tomorrow.

All the sudden, 3 months goes by, and you haven't done any work on your business because you've found yourself pursuing the soothing comfort of distractions because your days are so stressful and hectic. Is it any wonder why people don't make their dreams come true?

Self-Sabotage

In addition to distractions serving as an avoidance mechanism, it can serve as something altogether more insidious: Self-sabotage. Behavior is said to be self-sabotaging when it creates problems in daily life and interferes with long-standing goals.

The most common self-sabotaging behaviors, according to Psychology Today, include procrastination, self-medication with drugs or alcohol, comfort eating, and forms of self-injury, such as cutting. In many cases, people engaging in self-sabotage aren't aware they are sabotaging themselves and connecting self-defeating behaviors to unfavorable consequences is no guarantee that a person will disengage from it.

How does this relate to distractions and killing dreams?

Engaging in distractions is a form of procrastination and people procrastinate to avoid engaging in things that evoke anxiety or distress (avoiding problems).

As previously mentioned, distraction is an avoidance mechanism, which begs the obvious question: If you have a dream, why wait to chase after it?

It's a fair question and I could go on listing examples as to why people let themselves be distracted as a form of avoiding problems or self-sabotage.

Approaches to Minimize/Eliminate Distractions

#1: Set Your Compass.

Think of setting your compass as a type of "north star" that helps you orient your days, weeks, months, and years. Once you've identified your dreams – whether they are short- or long-term goals – get clear on what you believe to be the things you need to accomplish daily, weekly, monthly, etc. to move closer to them.

From there, use a calendar and schedule, which is to say prioritize, those things that you will be uncompromising about completing every day.

Without clarity of thought and action and without calendaring the things that allow you to chase down your dreams, you will, invariably, pay attention to distractions. Another way of stating this is that “If something is important to you, you won’t succumb to distractions.

#2: Build a New Habit.

It’s likely that the most pervasive distraction in modern life is the smartphone. Recent research suggests that Americans check their smartphones an average of 96 times per day. Whether it’s FOMO or having an inflated ego that believes we are more important than we are or something else, think of how much time is spent each day could be spent on doing things that add productive value toward the accomplishment of your goals.

Thus, building a new habit requires us to first identify the distractions and determine livable ways to mitigate them (airplane mode; time limits). In effect, building a new habit allows you to shift away from the addiction of paying attention to things that undermine your progress toward living out your dreams toward engaging in things that truly matter.

#3: Change Your Environment.

People are spending more time at home, if for no other reason that more people than ever work from home. The challenge, of course, is that our home environment tends to be full of potential or actual distractions, such as our smartphones, televisions, internet browsing, snacks in the pantry and fridge, and the like.

There are also other distractions, such as the people in our lives and, whether we like it or not, other people can detract from you realizing your dreams. There are some people in your life that distract you because they want to distract themselves. There are some people in your life that don’t want you to achieve your goals because doing so, at least in their mind, reflects poorly on them not pursuing their dreams.

No matter the potential distraction, whether it’s other people or temptations, changing your environment is a credible option. This could be going to a coffee shop or library to change your scenery.

This could be setting aside a space in your home where you focus singularly on what you want to accomplish.

This could be getting out into nature and being alone with your thoughts.

And by setting your compass, building new habits, and changing your environment, you set the stage for minimizing and/or eliminating the distractions that lead to self-defeating consequences in the pursuit of your dreams.

Final Thoughts

Consider reflecting first on what your dreams are and what you're willing to do to chase them down.

What would it mean to you if you were able to accomplish everything you wanted to accomplish in this life?

From there, take this next week to assess those things that serve as distractions that are killing your dreams.

Are you willing to continue allowing that to happen?

It's a pointed question to be sure, but when you consider that the #1 regret people have as they approach the end of their life are those things they never attempted in the first place, not living out their purpose.

And remember that distraction cannot exist without your willing participation.

As usual, it's food for thought, Fellow Questers.

