

The Future Is Now

The potential to start over is always available in our lives. No matter what our age.

Dreaming

There are many ideas of what we would have liked have happened in our life or to come true. Sometimes we can feel like the opportunity to fulfill those dreams are gone. But, the reality is those ideas, hopes and dreams are like seeds that were planted in our hearts. And just like real seeds growing in nature, they need to be watered and nurtured to be allowed to grow into a tree that bears fruit.

The dream is not gone, it's not extinct, in fact it's still alive. Seeds have life in them. They have the potential to not only grow into a tree but into an orchard.

Some people look at a seed and see a seed, some look at a seed and see an orchard! What it can be and will be one day; if it receives water, nurture, care and is allowed to grow healthily. This also means there are weeds that may need to be pulled out and branches that need trimming.

Parenting

These analogies fit for parenting children and teens.

Raising our children is similar. There are hopes, dreams, abilities and DNA inside of them that if nurtured, will be allowed to grow into their life destiny. They can then fulfill their purpose in life and hopefully be fruitful to others.

What has been planted in them? What does their DNA speak of? What talent, interest, skills do they possess?

Our parenting role is to identify the seeds of passion and purpose. To nurture, protect, weed out unnecessary influences that are trying to sabotage their natural growth, and allow them to grow into a fruitful tree in the course of their lifetime.

Our mission with Freedom4U is to help teens find their passion and purpose. This focuses them in a healthy direction, grounded them, eliminating risky behaviors, and helping them gain confidence as they find their place in the world and meaning for their life.

We discovered this mission by listening to teens' hearts about why they don't party on weekends. These were kids that did not drink or go to parties. We asked them what they did for fun, how they dealt with life's stressors, what they did when their friend started drinking and using drugs.

What we found out was they had identified a passion, a dream of what they wanted to do one day. They had a focus and a purpose. This kept them grounded in their personal life. It allowed them the ability to make healthy social life decisions. They were able to find meaning in their current life and not have to escape by using substances. they were comfortable in their own skin, (a phrase you may have heard of).

We then sought to help other teens find their passion and purpose. As they found their personal passion and purpose, we observed this calmed down the risky choices of weekend behaviors. Teens who had once been using marijuana and alcohol to cope with life, reduced usage and

eventually stopped as they instead spent time volunteering in an area that they wanted to work in one day. Their dream became more inviting than the substance using social scene, where kids were numbing themselves and not finding ways to cope with everyday life.

What is the seed that's been planted in you, that was planted in you when you were younger? What was the dream you had of what you would become, of what you could do one day?

Maybe you have fulfilled the destiny planned out for you in your lifetime. That's awesome. Now your course of direction might be to help someone else fulfill their life's dreams. Maybe your life is providing shade and fruit to others now.

If you had a vision for your life, even years ago. The seed of that vision is still alive in you. Further, the seed is just the beginning. As it gets watered and nurtured, it will grow into a plant and then into a fruitful tree and hopefully an orchard.

The future is now!

Dr. Greg Allen is a Licensed Therapist practicing in Palos Verdes Estates and San Pedro. (drgregallen.com). He is also the founder and director of Freedom4U, a non-profit that seeks to guide youth towards their life purpose and thereby reduce risky lifestyles. (freedomcommunity.com). He also directs the non-profit Hearts Respond, seeking to unite communities to improve LA Harbor families. (heartsrespond.com) Freedom4U & Hearts Respond provide after-school services for middle and high school students in San Pedro to socialize, do homework, receive tutoring and become leaders.