

## **Dream Big-Part 1**

**By Keith Hall**

Have you ever thought about what you would do with your life if success were guaranteed? What really excites you and energizes you? Think about that...because most of us *don't* think about that! For many of us, music *is* that thing that excites us and gets our blood flowing.

Pursuing a career in music can be exciting and frightening at the same time, but if it is your passion and you are good at it, why not go for it? Doing what you love as your profession is an important part of your happiness as a human being, and if you end up doing something for which you have no passion, you could become extremely frustrated and depressed. When you are choosing a career path, you should weigh all of your options, but ultimately doing what you really love will bring the most satisfaction and joy in your life. The music business is a multi-billion dollar industry; maybe there is a nice piece of that waiting for you!

If you are in the midst of choosing or changing your career path, I hope that these tips will help. And if you are already on track, I hope that this article can help strengthen you to achieve your dreams...these will work for ANY profession.

During my career, there have been times when I have done some serious searching and prayer because I was unsure of which direction I was heading. It was a little scary because many times I was not sure where my next paycheck was coming from, but on the other hand, it was incredibly exciting because I knew that I was getting ready to start something new and it would lead to new experiences and contacts. I think this is a natural process for creative individuals who are constantly changing and seeking greater heights.

The first thing you must do when choosing a career path or seeking a change is to **DREAM BIG**. Too many times, we get forced into this little box and forget that 'all things are possible to him who believes'. We must think outside of that box sometimes and remove all the limitations.

I will ask you again; if you could do anything and your success was guaranteed, what would that be? This may seem like an unrealistic question, but if you begin to think like this, anything is possible. Yes, this will take some faith on your part, but finding the path that brings you the most joy and satisfaction is much better than doing something that you can 'tolerate' the rest of your life! If you do what you love and do it with passion and excellence, the money will follow. It may take some time, but I know in my life the joy of doing what I love everyday outweighs all of the other stress around me. Building a 'career' versus having a 'job' can be so much more rewarding.

Secondly, know: **You have been created with a purpose**. It is our ultimate goal as individuals to find that purpose, because when you are living in your purpose, that is where you will experience the most joy, fulfillment and success. We all have desires deep down but many times they have been suppressed because we think they are unrealistic. When we begin to allow our desires to come out and see that they ARE possible, we can begin to create habits that will lead us toward our destiny. What makes you excited and happy? What do you constantly think about and dream of doing? Your purpose is unique to you and your gifts and talents are there to help you fulfill your purpose. If you are in a profession that doesn't bring you joy or satisfaction, maybe it is time for a change...it is never too late. The best way to predict your future is to create it!

Next, I want you to consider this challenge: **Write down your dreams.** This can include everything from what kind of music you want to play, who it is with, what kind of car you want to drive, where you want to live, what kind of lifestyle you desire, family plans, what kind of drums and gear you want to play, where you want to travel etc...Write down every detail so that you can see, this is part of the process, when you start to visualize everything. Think big, know that nothing is ridiculous and don't apologize for having these dreams because these are unique to you!. Up to this point, many of us have hid many of our secret dreams, but it is time we wrote them down and had some of them become reality! After you write these down and can see them, you are now able to begin to organize these and determine what your priorities are.

Finally: **Find a mentor**-someone who is successful in this line of work. Spend time with them and find out what they have done to achieve this success. A mentor is a valuable asset, and you can use them as a sounding board for ideas. Personal experience is not always the best teacher, because sometimes someone else's experience can save you time, money and heartache. You should always be appreciative of your mentors and value their time and wisdom. My mentor is drumming legend Billy Hart. I used to drive Billy all over the place and carry his drums for him, buy him lunch, have him over for dinner and anything else I could do to spend time with him and learn. Every minute was a lesson with him, and there were so many times I wished I had been recording our conversations in the car or during dinner. I consider him to be one of my best friends now and call him all the time for advice. If you are thinking about doing something totally original, then find people that will be supportive of your work. Seek out others in your field and people in other fields who are 'trailblazers'. Surround yourself with others that are positive, having the same spirit and open mindedness toward new ideas. You can also find people with whom to 'partner', who can exchange ideas and share inspiration.

I grew up in Battle Creek, Michigan, which is not a cultural hotspot. I attended music school at Western Michigan University (where I now teach part time) and later moved to New York City to pursue a career in music. For a newly married guy from a small town in the Midwest with no money, this was a big move. (Actually, it was kinda crazy!) But I believed I had a purpose and had some goals I wanted to achieve. I also knew that if I did not go for it, I would kick myself the rest of my life! Thankfully, through God's wisdom and lots of hard work, I have achieved many of these goals and am on my way to achieving more.

I was blessed to make a living playing the drums and taught part time while living in New York. Presently, I am on the road quite a bit with singer Curtis Stigers and now make my home in Michigan with my family. I believe that probably many of us that read Modern Drummer aren't going to become as famous and sought after as Vinnie Colaiuta or be an innovator like Max Roach. However, all of us have the opportunity to make a living playing music and doing what we love while bringing joy to others. Perhaps you don't want music to be your main source of income, but want to play drums part time. That is great too, because you can use these principles for any aspiration in your life. The point is to do whatever brings you fulfillment and joy. Whether you dream about running a car wash, playing music in 80,000 seat stadiums or being a brain surgeon, it is possible. Life is too short, enjoy it and go for those things that you really desire.

Remember, dream big because you have a purpose, write down those dreams, and find a mentor to help you. In my next article, we will talk about how to set goals based on your dreams.