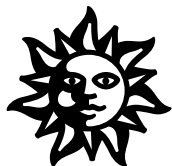


I WANT IT NOW!



I WANT IT NOW!

Analyze Where You Are in Life
Discover Your PASSION and
Achieve Ultimate Happiness

Na'Kisha Crawford, M.Ed



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Rancho Cucamonga, CA*



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*No one thinks that one person
could make a great change
but at the bottom of a great change
is the thought of one person
so dream what you want to dream.*



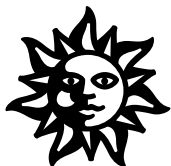
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*I close my eyes and I think of
all the things that I want to see
Now that I've opened up my heart
I know that **Anything I want can be.***

—*India Arie*





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I would first like to acknowledge and thank The Creator for having this fabulous plan for my life, for opening my heart and my eyes to the vision and for leading me to it. Life is for living with joy and abundance. Thank you.

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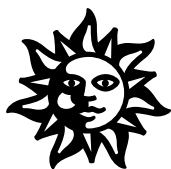
about anything. Thank you. My grandparents, Dee and Jay (both deceased) were and Nora Mae is absolutely wonderful.

My brothers and sisters, I love you guys. Thanks for being in my corner no matter which way I chose and thanks for understanding me even when you did not. My family is amazing. You have never met a more interesting bunch of people which would explain why once someone came around us, they never wanted to leave. We have undoubtedly had our share of problems but I have learned so much about life through your experiences.

My best friends are so special to me as I expressed to each of you personally on August 30, 2002. To my sorors of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. especially Eta Omega Chapter and Six Degrees of Determination, you have all been such a blessing. I have learned some of life's toughest lessons and enjoyed some of life's best times with you. Thank you.

I have really had a lot of great support over the years and I acknowledge and thank all of you. It is very important to me that I acknowledge those of you that I have motivated because you keep me inspired. Thank you.

For those of you that helped me to turn this vision and dream into reality, I thank you.



INTRODUCTION

I was once told to jump in there and let it flow when I had something to say that I felt was important, so here it is. I am very passionate about the things that I feel, and I want to share with readers the things that I have learned. Which brings me to the point, why I wrote a book about my experiences and the real life lessons that I have learned.

I enjoy sharing with and helping others, and I have always known that my occupation would somehow involve those things. As a young person, most of us have a hard time determining what we are going to be in life, and in fact, we find that a tough decision to make even as mature adults. Our hobbies or the specifics of how we spend our spare time may change in life as we become more experienced, cultured, or knowledgeable, but our passions remain a core part of who we are, of our identity. I have always been passionate about helping others, and this book is an expression of that core passion that makes me who I am.

It is my goal to inspire and motivate others. I want people to find what makes them happy in life, to

find their passions. Life challenges each of us with experiences and lessons that, if we share them with others, will make the same or like experiences for others just a bit less challenging, a bit less harrowing perhaps. Discovering those things that make you feel good is a learning game, but getting to the point where you can accept both those things that are enjoyable along with those that are not so much fun as a natural part of life is a bigger objective for our learning. Many people believe that life is going to be hard regardless, so when something feels too good, they believe something has to be wrong. The truth of the matter is that life is indeed hard, but the truth is also that time keeps ticking. We can either accept that having hard times means that there is no room for personal growth and development or for improvement in our selves and our lives, or we can seek to find all of the wonderful things in the world that make us happy while learning from our harsher experiences.

I share my beliefs and experiences to, hopefully, inspire you. My plan is to offer you some suggestions to get started on working toward your goals, and perhaps to help some of you get back on track and stay there. I want people to identify their professional and personal goals, or to revisit them as the case may be, and to have the confidence to step out on faith and to make changes in their lives. Some of us have become overwhelmed because we have been so busy taking on other people's problems that we have for-

INTRODUCTION

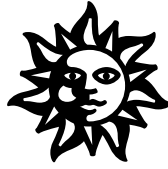
gotten about our goals, for example. For such readers, it is time to figure out how to put yourself back into the equation.

Some people wonder if they should take chances now or wait for those life-altering experiences to land in their laps, while many others are working to see how far their chosen careers will take them. Now is the time to evaluate where you are in life, discover what you want and go out and get it. It is time to start working on your personal journey toward ultimate happiness, to put yourself back into the equation, and to seek others who support your interest in personal growth and development.



Ist

PART OF THE PLAN



GET TO KNOW ME

In life, be sure that you take the time to get to know yourself. No other person is more important for you to acknowledge and understand than you. Acknowledge those experiences in life, the good and the bad, that have made you into the person you are so that you will recognize progress and growth.

Before this moment, I have never spent so much time thinking about the things that I would like others to know about me. I am usually a very open, very uninhibited person, but I realize that there are certain things that I just let others assume about the type of life that I have led. So, here are the facts, and let's start with change right from the beginning: I was born and raised in Oakland, California, until my parents decided to move to Modesto, California, which is

about an hour away. At that time, I thought it was the worst thing that could have happened, but it was not long before I became grateful for that transition.

Until about the eighth grade, which was the point in my life when I moved to Modesto, I thought that the entire world was like Oakland. A big city, urban America, is what I came to love as my home. Although drugs and violence plagued many of our communities, there was always a bright side. I was still a child, but I was old enough to understand what was going on around me. I came from a very close-knit family (including my extended family), which was the beginning of so many life lessons for me. In fact, I have come to understand many of my childhood experiences as lessons since becoming an adult, and I wish that I could point out precisely what those lessons were to the same people who unknowingly taught them to me.

In many cases, my family has taught me what not to do, and I believe that this is valuable. In fact, they have provided me with examples in some cases, step by step, of what not to do. However, the funny thing is that no one has ever pointed out to me that they were doing something that I should not, but results alone speak louder than words. I have watched several people, including my own family members, struggle with drug and alcohol abuse, violence, single parenting, unemployment, lack of education, and being poor; but we still managed to make life fun from time to time.

More intriguing to me, however, is the fact that I have watched so many of my generation fall into the same category that our parents fell into, which baffles my mind. I grew up very close to my mother's family. Everyone was young and fun, including my grandmother, who also happens to be one of the strongest women I know.

Most of my mom's family lived in the Oakland area. We celebrated just about every holiday together, but sometimes we encouraged the wrong types of activity and behavior. The saddest thing about this situation was that no one knew any better. There was really no guidance and several examples of the wrong things to do, the wrong ways to act. Unfortunately, no one realized that they were setting themselves up to fail. The things that were going on in my family were part of what was going on in Oakland.

A few years after I left, many of the girls that I hung out with had dropped out of school. Too many had gotten caught up in a lifestyle that would be the death of their dreams. Some had gotten pregnant, while others had begun to use drugs or to date drug dealers, who provided them with both a means to self-destruct and the cash that required that they do nothing else. In fact, only a couple of them were still in school, and because the local public school system was steadily deteriorating, some were being graded solely on attendance. I feel very fortunate to have left when I did, and I thank God and my parents for my escape.

Although I moved from Oakland, however, I would not escape some of the factors that shaped who I was. My family and I continued to be met by many of the same social problems that still plague our inner cities today. Money and unemployment were factors, and drugs, alcohol, and violence had not gone away just because we had moved to a new locale. I had a lot to carry as a child, but I never let these factors steal my spirit. I can not explain why I was able to break so many of the cycles that I had grown up around and within, but I do know that God carried me those times that I could not walk.

I went on to do great in school, and in fact, I liked school and never really got into too much trouble. I liked most of my teachers, and I liked participating in class. I learned to be outspoken fairly early, and I am really glad that I did speak up even though it sometimes got me into trouble. I enjoyed sports, and all in all, I was pretty involved in all of the right things. My parents were always very proud of me, and I always expected to get the most out of life. I never remember dreaming about what I was going to be when I got older, but I always knew that I would be successful. I still feel today that I am going to reach success beyond the stars. I just know that God has this place for me.

I went to college at San Jose State University in San Jose, California, where I had a blast. It was there that I came into being. I was challenged on so many levels, met some wonderful people, and learned who

I WANT IT NOW!

I was, indeed who I am. I grew as a young woman and a scholar. I did all of the things that I wanted to do, and I have very few regrets. I have always thought that it was important not to have many regrets, so I did the things that I wanted to do, the things that I thought were best for me at the time. I majored in Sociology and graduated with honors in 1996, after just four years. After taking time off from my education for one year, I returned and earned a Master's Degree in Education, Counseling in 1999.

I went on to be the first in my family on my mother's side to graduate from college, and the first to earn a Master's Degree on either side of the family as well. I was very proud of myself, and my family was overjoyed. I attribute much of my success to them because their experiences taught me so much about life. I was happy to be up there serving as proof that it could happen for all of those who were to come after me; but perhaps even more than this, I felt an obligation to my ancestors, women, and others who had experienced similar lifestyles, for so many of them were denied the opportunity to become educated. Most importantly, I learned what it means to persevere.

I am at a point in my life now where it is extremely important to achieve my passion. Since my Master's is in Education, many will assume that I wanted to be a teacher or something like that, but I would have to answer honestly with a "not really." Let me back up and clarify that I am not interested in

being a school teacher, not a teacher in the traditional sense, but my dream is to teach others how to determine what they want and how to reach their passions. I have always thought that at some point in my life I would be a good school teacher though, maybe post-secondary, after I become more patient and experienced. I am a firm believer that you should work to find those things that you love in life, those things that are important to you, and this is what I am doing for myself.

I know that in the end my life will make perfect sense. I do not have all of the answers, but I am not going to wait until I do before I make my life work. The totality of my life will come together, all of the pieces fitting together like a puzzle. Those things that I never understood will become clear, and those things that I have never been able to see will appear before me. That is the way that I expect life to turn out for me, and I believe that it is God's plan. I believe that He has this plan for all of us, if we believe in him. Have faith, and your experiences will come together to lead you in the direction of your dreams.

EXERCISE

Get to Know You

Write the appropriate number next to each category.

- 1—Not Satisfied
- 2—Somewhat Satisfied
- 3—Satisfied
- 4—Very Satisfied

Categories:

- Career/Job _____
- Love Relationship _____
- Physical Appearance _____
- Spirituality/Religion _____
- Social Life _____
- Financial Status _____
- Family Life _____
- Car/Mode of Transportation _____
- Living Situation _____
- Education Level _____
- Political Awareness & Involvement _____
- Community Involvement _____
- Economic Awareness _____
- International Awareness _____
- Computer Literacy _____

If you selected Item 1-2 for any of the above categories, write down 3 steps that you can take to move them to a level of satisfaction.