

Is This What You Want? **by Rose Jonas, Ph.D.**

You have developed a dream, of a life or work that's far different from today's reality. It holds excitement, adventure, risk. You share it with your nearest and dearest, even your best cheerleader; and you are shocked to hear derision and discouragement.

"Oh, you can't do that," they tell you, and then trot out the reasons why not: it will take too long, you don't have credibility, no one's done that before, you'll have to start over and give up everything you've accomplished thus far, you'll never make any money at it.

Watch yourself carefully while people are drubbing your dream. How are you responding to the naysayers? Are you agreeing with their compelling logic, clearly seeing the truths they've kindly laid out to you and the sharp stones they've pointed out to you that clutter the path you were about to trudge? Do your shoulders sag under their wisdom as you turn back to the broom of whatever today's drudgery is?

Or, do their responses anger you, and you say to yourself, as you mull over their words, "So what?" Yeah, you hear everything they say, but you want this; you really want this.

Keep watching yourself. In the next few days, what actions do you take on behalf of that dream? Do you call dance studios to start classes, or a seminary to find out how to apply? Do you apply to take the LSATs so you can go to law school? Do you start a plan to figure out whether the market wants your product?

The "so what?" in combination with your subsequent actions are the truest test of the dream's depth and how much you want it. If you will take the actions, you want it. If not, it may be a daydream, something to push you around the molasses clock of a boring workday. Or, it may be a dream you can't go for now. Other life responsibilities are in the way, you don't quite see yourself in the role, you don't have the courage or the drive.

If you **ONLY** dream, don't feel bad about yourself. Just acknowledge that today's facts block the dream; put it away and dust it off again when you're ready. You'll be amazed, in life, at how you'll keep treasured dreams and eventually work to make them come true.

If you want it, go for it; and let "so what" and drive take you forward. When you're about halfway there, the skeptics will start believing in you, may even take credit later for having been your inspiration. Whatever. It's astonishing what you can do when you want to.

If you don't see the behaviors, however, don't kid yourself. Tuck away the dream, pick up the broom and sweep on.