

MAPPING AN INTENTIONAL LIFE



BELLEVUE CLUB MEMBER DANA V. ADAMS CREATED A GUIDE TO HELP YOU LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE.

A few years ago, Dana V. Adams felt stuck. She had built a successful real estate career, had a nice home in Kirkland and four thriving young boys. But she couldn't ignore a nagging feeling there was more to her story, that she was supposed to be doing something more impactful with her life.

"There was this low-lying intuitive knowledge that I was not maximizing my skills and how I could contribute to the world," she says.

From a young age, Adams's mother had taught her to use the power of goal setting. In her mid-20s, she began formally, systematically writing down her life goals and the steps necessary to achieve them, a process known as life mapping. Around the time she felt stuck, she turned to the skill to uncover the reason behind the unsettled feeling she was experiencing.

WRITTEN *by* LAUREN HUNSBERGER

••• PHOTOGRAPHY *by* TARYN EMERICK



“I REALIZED I was very bothered by the fact that I had certain goals that were in alignment with the life I wanted, but I was not doing anything to get closer to them,” Adams says. “There was a gap that existed, and so I began asking myself: What’s in the way; why am I not achieving these goals?”

Her unattained dreams included becoming a public speaker and author and helping more people improve their own lives. She says the answer to why she constantly put those goals on hold surprised her.

“We all tell ourselves stories about ourselves. Oftentimes they start when we are very young, and unfortunately they often result in very harsh, repetitive negative thoughts,” Adams says.

Suffering from multiple childhood traumas, including her mother taking her own life and an unreliable father figure, Adams says she had many residual stories about who she was and what she was capable of doing. She had been in counseling since age 12, but still lacked actions she could take to change those stories, which she says held her back and created the gaps in her dreams.



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“I had to make a conscious choice to replace the negative thoughts with positive affirmations and loving, nurturing, wise thoughts. I decided to eliminate the inner critic that kept trying to keep me in check,” she says. “I had to distinguish the difference and see that potentially old thoughts and beliefs were stopping me.”

This realization led her to expand on the life-mapping process. Previously, she used life mapping to methodically organize and schedule her priorities. But it lacked an emotional, introspection piece that dug into why some goals stayed on paper for years without any action while others were easily accomplished and checked off.

Adams found that those reasons often coincided with the opinions she held about herself, beliefs like “I’m not good enough, smart enough, skilled enough.”

She began writing about some of these complicated feelings and issues. She found that when she started digging into her beliefs, values, inner thoughts and goals, it helped her see things more clearly and rewrite those narratives. Once she did this, everything fell into place.

“The goal became to create something tangible to help people, myself included, take a look at some of these complicated concepts—not in a confronting, judgmental way, but in a helpful way,” she says.



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RANDY GINN

With permission from Bill Cohen, the creator and author of *Life Mapping*, she embarked on creating a tool that expanded the life-mapping concept to a new level. In 2018, she began writing a book and companion guide called *Live Your Gift*. By May 2019, the materials were written, designed and available for purchase. Since, she has expanded her vision to include online and in-person workshops that individuals or professional organizations can attend to go through the program.

“It gives you a little shield because it provides an elevated awareness surrounding the intentions for your life. That allowed me to start taking steps I hadn’t before,” she says.

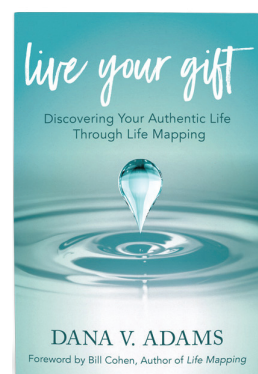
Soon she will release a version of the companion guide for teens who might struggle with the challenge of transitioning into or out of high school and college. She plans for it to be available in early 2020.

“It helps them create a clear set of goals that are specific to get where they want to go,” Adams says. “With all the outside pressures they face, they need to hear that they have permission to realize and design their own lives.”

As for her own life, creating this process and book serendipitously helped her cross off some of those goals she had been ignoring.

“Currently, I’m living a calmer life today because I’m honoring my intuition and what I was called to do. I’m living in integrity,” she says.

“The biggest message I have is that I’m an average person who had major challenges to overcome, some going all the way back to my childhood. But if you desire a better life, you want something different, and you’re resisting it, you’re supposed to pay attention to that resistance. Address it head-on. That’s what it took for me to change the way I was thinking.” ■



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