

Besides God, You Are Your Biggest Believer

If there's one thing you need to know right now, it's this: *the most important person who needs to believe in you is YOU. Your dreams start with you, and you don't need to share them with everyone. It can be just you and God knowing your dreams.*

Think about your favorite superheroes or celebrities. Do you think Beyoncé ever woke up one day and said, “Nah, I’ll just be average”? No way. Every success story starts with a person who believes in their own potential, even when it seems impossible.

But let's be real. Believing in yourself isn't always easy. Maybe you've been told your dreams are too big, or maybe you've told yourself, “I can't do that.” Those thoughts are just negative thoughts they aren't the truth.

Believing Like a Boss

Take Harriet Tubman, for example. She was born into slavery, but she didn't let her circumstances define her. Harriet believed in freedom so deeply that she risked her life to escape and then go back to free more and more slaves. Again, and again and again to help others. That belief fueled her bravery.

Here's what you need to know:

- **1st believe that you are capable.** You've already done hard things, like learning new skills or helping a friend.
- **You are enough.** Your talents, dreams, and ideas are valuable just as you are.
- **You are not alone.** Millions of people past and present believe in you, even if you don't know it yet.

Your Confidence List

Grab a piece of paper and write down three things you love about yourself. Maybe you're great at math, an awesome friend, or really good at soccer, or Basketball. Next, write one thing you want to get better at. This isn't about perfection—it's about recognizing your strengths and areas to grow.

When you start to believe in yourself, amazing things happen. Remember I was young too. Your parents were young once also.

Turning Dreams into Goals

Everyone dreams of something. Maybe you want to be a doctor, an artist, a lawyer, or an athlete. Maybe you dream of inventing something amazing or helping people in your community. That's great! But here's the truth: a dream stays just a dream unless you turn it into a goal.

Goals are like a roadmap. They show you how to get from where you are right now to where you want to go. Dreams inspire you, but goals give you direction.

Think of it like this: if your dream is to bake the world's best cake, the goal is the step-by-step recipe that helps you make it.

Big Dreams, Clear Steps

Some of the greatest achievers in history started with a dream and turned it into specific goals. Take Madam C.J. Walker, for example. She dreamed of helping Black women take pride in their beauty and improve their confidence. But she didn't just stop at the dream, no she set clear goals to make it happen.

She started experimenting with haircare products in her kitchen. Do you understand young children reading this? In Her kitchen is where Madam C.J. Walker started at. She practiced making them better, and she set a goal to sell her products to her neighbors, then to her city, and eventually across the country.

Her dream was big, but her steps were crystal clear.

So how do you turn a Dream Into a Goal?

Let's say you have a dream to become a professional basketball player. That's amazing! Here's how you can break it down into goals:

1. **Start Small.**
What's one thing you can do today? Maybe it's practicing your dribbling for 20 minutes or shooting 50 free throws after school. Most importantly as you're in high school make sure your grades are up to par. Keep at least a 90 average unless you get a scholarship.
2. **Make it Specific.**
Instead of saying, "I want to get better at basketball," say, "I want to improve my three-point shot accuracy by practicing three times a week."
3. **Set a Timeline.**
Give yourself a deadline to complete your goals. For example, "By the end of this month, I'll be able to make 8 out of 10 three-pointers in a row."
4. **Track Your Progress.**
Keep a journal or a chart to track how you're doing. Celebrate small wins along the way—they matter.

Activity: Your Dream Map

Ready to turn your dream into a goal? Here's an exercise:

1. **Write down your dream. Just like a vision board, you can have a dream map board.**
It can be as big as you want!
2. **Break it into steps.**
Think about what you can do this week, this month, and this year to move closer to your dream.
3. **Set a goal for this week.**
Make it something you can do in a short time to get started.
4. **Find your support.**
Who can help you? A teacher? A friend? Your family? Write down their names, and don't be afraid to ask for advice or help.

Believe and Achieve

Every goal you achieve brings you closer to your dream. Remember, people like Malcolm X, Simone Biles, and even those you look up to didn't succeed overnight. They dreamed big, then put in the work step by step. You don't have to know every detail right now, just take the first step. The journey will come together as you go.

The Legacy You Inherit

Have you ever heard someone say, “*Know where you come from to know where you’re going*”? It’s one of the most powerful truths you can learn. I didn’t learn this until I was in college. So, for you children reading this, it’s your parent's job to teach you about your family, That’s just my opinion. Now, as you continue to grow into adulthood if you want to learn more about your family, I’d recommend Ancestry.com to anyone wanting to know about their family.

The reason I say this is because Every dream you have today is built on a foundation of people who came before you. People who paved the way. You’re ancestors broke down barriers, and dared to imagine a brighter future. I say this because my grandparents came from South Carolina on my mother and Father's side. When you know their stories, you’ll realize that you are part of something much bigger a legacy of resilience, brilliance, and possibility.

A History of Greatness

Think about the people who made a difference, not just in their own lives but for the world. People like:

- **Frederick Douglass**, who escaped slavery and became one of the greatest speakers and writers in American history. He taught himself to read and write even when it was illegal for him to do so.
- **Katherine Johnson**, the mathematician who calculated the flight paths that helped astronauts land on the moon. She thrived at NASA despite being underestimated because she was Black and a woman.
- **Mae Jemison**, the first Black woman to travel into space, who dreamed of the stars when others doubted, she could reach them.

These people had big, big dreams, not to mention their faith in God was very strong. They were ready to face challenges just like you. Remember everyone faces obstacles poverty, racism, and fear. These people I just mentioned didn’t let those obstacles stop them. They looked to the future and believed they could make a difference. So, be ready to take on any challenge that comes your way. Children, I don’t care if it’s the state exam or any test you have to take, be ready to face those challenges because it’s a part of life. As for the Adults reading this if your children see you have fear when it comes to any goal you set you can’t expect your children to mimic you. I’m not saying they have to be followers because I’m not. But I am saying you are your children's biggest role model. So, pray about any challenge and dream you want to accomplish.

The Power of Representation

Your Story Matters

Here's something else to think about: one day, *you* might be the person someone looks up to.

Maybe you'll be the first in your family to graduate college and get your P.H.D. or the first to start a business. Maybe you'll inspire others by being an incredible parent, teacher, or mentor. Your story is still being written, but it matters more than you know.

Your Legacy Tree

1. **Find Your Roots.**

Talk to a family member, like a parent, grandparent, or aunt, and ask about your family history. What struggles have they overcome? What are they proud of?

2. **Write It Down.**

Create a "legacy tree" by writing your name at the top and the names of people in your family or community below. Add what they've taught you or how they've inspired you.

3. **Add Yourself.**

Think about how you want to contribute to the legacy you want to build or add to your family's legacy. Write down one way you can make a positive impact, whether it's at school, at home, or in your neighborhood.

Remember someone's got to Carry the Torch.

For all you young kids out there and even some adults. I want you all to know the next time you doubt yourself or feel like your dream is too far away, remember this: you're standing on the shoulders of giants. Every step you take is part of a larger story, one that stretches back through time and reaches into the future. Remember God's got a plan for us all.

Because the legacy you inherit is powerful. Now it's your turn to carry the torch and light the way for those who come after you.

