

9

“Reaching your Dreams by Choosing Optimism”

Word Count: 780

Name: Shirin Deepak

Address: 1635 Grand Junction Alpharetta, GA, 30004

Phone Number: (678) 672-0053

Denmark High School

Date of Birth: 7/14/2004

“Reaching your Dreams by Choosing Optimism”

780 words

Reaching your dreams is like finding treasure, a pot of gold, in your backyard. The gold isn't far away. It isn't easy to find either, yet every citizen of the world craves it. It is a universal aim in the global community for each individual to reach his/her dream, which highlights the importance of the tools used to achieve this. Those tools are in our hands, so we must choose the right ones in order to be successful. In the journey of reaching our dreams, optimism will prove to be one of the most powerful tools that will guide our expedition.

Being able to approach obstacles with a positive outlook and with a goal in mind captures the true exigence of optimism. It thrives in the notion of transformation-- being able to find inspiration from a seemingly negative situation. When I decided to use the powerful tool of optimism to reach my dreams, I was greatly inspired by a book rooted in the idea of transformation: *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. Coelho writes the tantalizing tale of a young boy named Santiago who has a stimulating dream that encourages him to pursue a journey to find treasure. Santiago travels through the desert seeking to materialize his dreams, and he meets an alchemist on his expedition. In their conversations, the alchemist teaches Santiago what it means to take a situation, find the meaning of it, and, finally, reach success through embracing inspiration. Santiago finds that transformation, whether it was from metal to gold, an animal to an omen, or a negative situation into a positive one, ultimately helped him in discovering his treasure, which happened to be back where he first started the journey-- like it was in his backyard. It was an inspiring novel, and Santiago's words still resonate with me to this day: "It's the possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting" (Coelho 5). With that positive thought, Santiago made a personal choice to approach his dreams with determination

and persistence, which would ultimately lead to his own happiness. I found that we all have the potential to make our dreams come true, and I knew that I could achieve this potential by choosing to transform any dampening situation I came across into one that would shine as bright as gold. I knew that I could achieve this potential by choosing optimism to reach my own dreams.

Reaching your dreams by choosing optimism has proven to be something that takes effort and determination: two things I aimed to embody after reading *The Alchemist*. Through those endeavors, I am now a proud owner of a nonprofit organization in which I make and sell bracelets to donate all the profits to local medical organizations. It is what makes me happy, but I didn't know that for a long time. I used to think that all my happiness would come from the grades I received and the college I went to, despite those things bringing me stress. This isn't uncommon. According to a study conducted by The Princeton Review, over 50% of American high school students reported being stressed out due to the fear of doing badly in school and not getting into their desired college. I would often question myself: does the extent of my dreams lie in what would happen in the next four years? After reading *The Alchemist*, it was clear that my dreams entailed much more. I wanted to make people happy, and I learned that the best way to do that was through optimism. I took what put me in a negative state of mind, and I transformed it into a source of inspiration to help people who were suffering from the stresses of life. I did this through dedicating my non-profit organization to help those people. Today, my business has donated over \$400 to local medical facilities that support teenagers suffering from mental and physical health issues due to illnesses like cancer. I owe this success to the positive mindset that *The Alchemist* motivated me to have. My treasure used to seem so far away, but by utilizing my powerful tool of optimism, it wasn't so distant after all.

Paulo Coelho writes in *The Alchemist*, "Remember that wherever your heart is, there you will find your treasure." Every single person in this world holds the potential to find their gold, but it is up to the individual to host optimism in their hearts in order to fulfill it. When we find inspiration, our dreams aren't as far away as they seem. With optimism, we can successfully seek out our own treasure and transform every situation we come across into pure gold.