

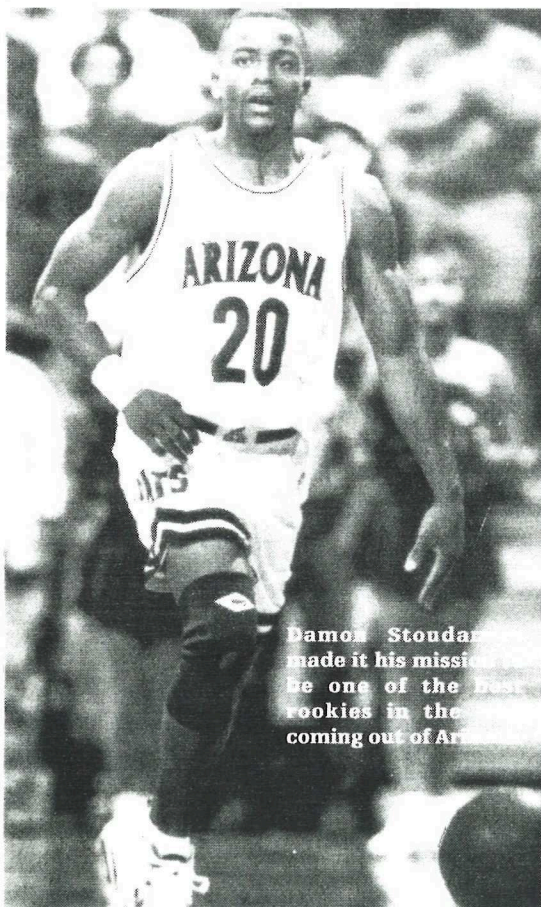
FOUR STEPS FOR ACHIEVING YOUR DREAMS

By Jeff Janssen

Success seldom occurs by accident or chance. Most often it is the result of planning, preparation, and perseverance. The following four steps serve as a guide to help you identify, pursue, and achieve your dreams.

1. Dare to Dream

It is often said that success is created twice—first in the visions of your mind and then in actual reality. Virtually every success attained by the world's greatest athletes and coaches once began as a seed of thought, hope, and inspiration in their minds. They envisioned the scholarships, awards, and championships in their minds, and then worked hard to achieve them.



Damon Stoudamire made it his mission to be one of the best rookies in the league coming out of Arizona.

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Your first step to success is to engage in "possibility thinking." Spend a few minutes thinking about this question—"What could I achieve if I really set my heart and mind to it?" Forget about limitations and obstacles for now and tap into the power of your imagination.

2. Define Your Mission

After exploring your future possibilities, begin to narrow in on the few that really inspire and motivate you. Pick one or two that you really want to go after at this time in your life. Envision them in great detail as if you had already achieved them. By specifying the few possibilities that inspire you and describing them in detail on paper, you create a mission for yourself. Missions are powerful long-term goals that provide you with an important sense of meaning and motivation. Missions create a strong sense of purpose as well as the energy to pursue your goals.

The 1996 NBA Rookie of the Year, Damon Stoudamire, understood the importance of defining a mission at an early age. Despite doubters because of his small size, Damon defined missions for himself to earn a college scholarship, win Pac 10 Player of the Year honors, and win the NBA Rookie of the Year award. These missions, created first in his mind,

gave him the motivation to make them come true.

3. Commit to Your Mission

The difference between wishes and missions is commitment. Commitment is the single most important factor that differentiates champions from the average. While everyone wishes they could be successful, only a few make the commitment to pursue their dreams. Commitment entails action. It means determining your destiny not by fate or luck, but by determination, sweat, and hard work.

On the same sheet of paper that you described your mission, specify the actions that you need to take to give yourself the best chance of reaching your mission. I encourage you to involve your coach to get his/her insights on the specific things you can do to achieve your mission. Once you have detailed the actions that lead to your mission, sign the sheet as if it were a contract to signify your commitment. Post this sheet somewhere you can see it often (locker, bedroom, etc.).

4. Take Advantage of Each Day

Finally, successful athletes like two-time Olympic Gold medalist Michael Johnson recognize the importance of quality training on a daily basis. Johnson understood that consistent quality practices were the key to long-term success. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, his quality practices added up to increased confidence putting him in an ideal position to win Gold in the 200 and 400 meters in Atlanta. In this way, successful people view practices as important investments in their overall mission rather than dreaded sacrifices.

By using these steps to identify, commit to, and pursue your mission, you set yourself up for success. For once you get your heart and mind headed in the right direction, you'll never have to worry about your feet.

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