

3 Scriptures to Change the Way Your Child Dreams

The gymnasium was full of high school students. They filled both sides of the bleachers from the first row to the last and all the way from one end of the gym to the other. There were also hundreds of students in chairs on the floor in front of me.

I was as ready as I could be with a message to encourage them. As I shared, I included Scripture relevant to God creating us on purpose with purpose for purpose: "But now, O Lord, You are our Father,' we are the clay, and You are our potter; and we all are the work of Your hand" (Is. 64:8).

"You brought my inner parts into being; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will praise you, for You made me with fear and wonder; marvelous are Your works, and You know me completely" (Ps 139:13-14).

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

I was impressed from the very beginning with the students' attention and quick responses. They were eager to be encouraged and challenged.

When sharing elements of my story and how I believe God created me to glorify Him, I kept asking them about their dreams. "What's your story?"

I wanted students to think about who they were designed to be and what they were created to do. I challenged them to be realistic and to persevere and be diligent to achieve the dreams they could.

I then heard myself say something that until that day I had only said when speaking to parents and teachers:

Grieve what isn't, accept what is and work on what you can.

It's absolutely appropriate and even essential that children dream about their future. It becomes a problem when their dreams aren't realistic. To keep trying for something that can never be will only lead to frustration, deep depression, and possibly despair.

Although dreams have many positive facets, I believe they're relevant to suicide in at least three ways. That's why I'm including the topic in my programs more and more:

- If teens' dreams aren't realistic and they don't have a "plan B," discouragement defeats them.
- If teens' dreams are realistic, but they don't have the skills and/or character qualities necessary to accomplish them, anger creates *danger* (As we say at Celebrate Kids, "wishing it so won't make it so.")
- If parents have dreams that teens don't have for themselves or that teens don't believe they can reach, pressure persuades them to give up and give in.

Walt Disney was right about a lot of things, but not everything.

- He said, "Dreams are forever." I believe, "We should dream forever."
- He said, "No matter how your heart is grieving, if you keep on believing, the dreams that you wish will come true." I believe, "No matter how your heart is grieving, if you keep on believing in yourself, you'll think of new dreams."
- He said, "If you can dream it, you can do it. Always remember that this whole thing was started with a dream and a mouse." I believe, "If you can dream it, you may be able to do it. Many great things start with dreams."

At the conclusion of my chapel, many students hung out with me. I loved chatting with them and hearing about some of their dreams. After a while, I noticed a girl on my left approach me with a notebook and a pen. She waited and then took advantage of silence: "You said something about grieving our dreams and accepting what's going on. I needed that. I loved the way you said it. Do you remember?" Before I could give her the three statements, many in the crowd agreed with her that it was valuable to them, too.

Grieve what isn't, accept what is and work on what you can.

Our teens need parents and others who dream realistic dreams for them and explain how they can fulfill them. Teens need people to teach them how to make the dreams come true.

Teens need parents and others who help them realize when dreams aren't realistic. Teens need people to walk with them through the disappointment and to give them permission to grieve the loss of dreams. Teens need people who help them move on.

Our teens need healthy role models—people who adjust their dreams and keep dreaming. People who don't give up, but alter their course of action.

Who will you be? What will you do? {eoal}

Dr. Kathy Koch ("cook"), the founder and president of *Celebrate Kids, Inc.*, based in Fort Worth, Texas, has influenced thousands of parents, teachers, and children in 30 countries through keynote messages, seminars, chapels, and other events. Among other groups, she is a featured speaker for the Great Homeschool Conventions and Hearts at Home. Among other books, Dr. Koch is the author of *8 Great Smarts: Discover and Nurture Your Child's Intelligences* and *Screens and Teens: Connecting with Our Kids in a Wireless World*.