

DANIEL ARMSTRONG'S

LIVE YOUR DREAMS NOW

Read About It! | **Write** About It! | And **Do** Something!



THE FIND A TREE PROGRAM FOR YOUTH

EXCERPT SAMPLE

Live Your Dreams Now

Read About It! Write About It! And Do Something!

Daniel Armstrong



Daniel Armstrong®

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESS STORY IS A DREAMER

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DEDICATION

**For my mother, Marie Armstrong,
who has always believed in my dreams.**



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PATHWAYS TO YOUR DREAM

FOR YOUTH

1. **Look Within: Identify What You Enjoy Doing**
2. **What's Your Dream?: Imagine Your Future...It All Begins with a Dream**
3. **Explore Life: Try New Activities and Explore New Interests**
4. **Learn About Your Dream: Read About It**
5. **Depend Upon Yourself: Accept Responsibility for Making Your Dream Come True**
6. **Mistakes Happen: Learn from Them**
7. **Earn the Trust of Others: Keep Your Word**
8. **Face the Challenge: Don't Quit**
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17. **Be A Leader: Be An Example**
18. **Start a Business: Make Something, Do Something, Sell Something**
19. **It's Not a Birthday Party: Knowledge + Action = Your Dream**

LIVE YOUR DREAMS

Living your dream can make your life fun and exciting. Living your dream can make you happy. Living your dream does not happen by chance or by luck. You have to take action to make your dream come true. Living your dream is like pursuing a great adventure, like climbing to the top of a mountain. It will be hard. Sometimes you may think you cannot get there. Sometimes you will fall down. Your dream can come true if you keep climbing and never give up. First you must decide what your dream is, and then you must get started. This book will show you how to go after your dream. When you climb the mountain toward your dream, if you want to get to the top, you must start with the first step. This book will show you how to take those first steps toward your dream.



School Building in Accra, Ghana



Basketball players practicing in Nima

FIND A TREE

I once lived in the country of Ghana in West Africa. I lived in the capital city of Accra. Accra has lots of traffic and tall buildings. There are many people walking around. It is a busy place. People there often walk around with things on their heads, such as containers of water or large buckets of fruits and vegetables. When I was not working, I would visit a neighborhood called Nima, which was in a very poor part of the city. There were many beautiful homes in Accra, but in Nima, people lived in homes that looked like shacks. Some people did not have running water in their homes. They had to walk to large tanks and then collect their water in buckets. Then they would carry the water back to their homes.

One day someone told me there was basketball court in Nima. I decided to visit it. When I arrived at the court, I found the baskets were very old and would shake after each shot. The ball that the players used was old and worn, but the players didn't seem to mind. They were happy to meet me, and after we played a game they asked if I would teach them how to play. After that, I went to the court every day to coach and play. Small children would gather around to watch their new tall American friend teach the older boys and girls how to shoot and play defense.



After several weeks, I sat down with the players after practice and we talked for a while. I asked them about their lives. I also asked, “What are your dreams?” Many of them wanted to travel to America. Some dreamed of playing professional basketball. There was a set of twins named Jonas and Jonathan. They told me their dream was to teach one day in their own school. They asked me for the money to build it. “I don’t have it,” I said, “but if that is your dream, you should find a tree and just start teaching beneath it.” The next day, Jonas and Jonathan found a tree in Nima and began telling children that if they wanted to learn math and how to read, they should come to the school under the tree.

At first, just a few students came, but they enjoyed it so much that soon more students followed. Then more and more students started going to the school under the tree. Jonas and Jonathan were so happy. They were real teachers! Word spread throughout Nima about the school under the tree. A businessman heard about it too. One day he visited and saw how the children were learning and enjoying themselves. He told Jonas and Jonathan, “I really like your school under the tree. The children are learning. This is great! How would you like to use one of my new buildings as your schoolhouse?” Amazed, Jonas and Jonathan said, “Great!” Their dream had come true.



Jonas Teaching

READ ABOUT IT!

Find a book or website and read about Ghana.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

What did you learn from the story about Jonas and Jonathan starting a school under a tree?

DO SOMETHING!

1. Tell your classmates about your dream.
2. Ask your family members and friends what their dreams are.
3. List your family and friend's names and their dreams.

LOOK WITHIN: WHAT DO YOU ENJOY DOING?

Living your dream begins by studying yourself and determining your talents and interests. Activities that you are good at doing are your talents. What are you good at doing? For some, it may be using a computer. For others, it may be playing sports, while some others may have a talent for painting or building things. There are other activities you may simply enjoy, whether you're good at them or not. Those are your interests. Perhaps you will want to do one of your talents or interests for a living someday. Our interests often change, and that's all right too. What would you like to do one day?

WRITE ABOUT IT!

What are you good at doing?

WRITE ABOUT IT!

Write about what makes you happy.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

List ten things you are good at doing.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

List ten things you would like to do one day.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

FIND A TREE PATHWAY #2

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM?: IMAGINE YOUR FUTURE... IT ALL BEGINS WITH A DREAM

The first time I thought about going to Africa was when I was nine years old. I saw a movie on television called *Born Free*. It takes place in Kenya in East Africa and is about a lion cub whose mother had been killed. A man and woman named George and Joy find the cub and name her Elsa. After raising the cub until she is a full-grown lion, they decide to set her free. First they must teach Elsa how to live on her own.



Children in Zimbabwe



Riding a camel in Egypt in front of a pyramid



Washing my face while visiting the countryside in Zimbabwe

I was fascinated. I wanted to go to Africa! I wanted to see the animals. Although I was just nine, watching *Born Free* gave me a dream. For a school project, I read about Africa, made a map, and wrote a report on what I had read. I had started the first steps toward fulfilling my dream by reading about Africa. Later, after I finished college, I took the next step. I traveled there. Today, I have visited several countries in Africa, and I have lived there. My dream of going to Africa came true. After being inspired by the film *Born Free*, I got started on my dream by reading about it. Next, I wrote about it. Then I took action. I did something.

When I was in second grade, my father gave me a magazine about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I read it many times. I admired Dr. King and his efforts to make the United States a place where all people are treated the same, no matter what color they are. I read about Rosa Parks and how she refused to cooperate when a bus driver demanded that she give up her seat just because she was black. Mrs. Parks and Dr. King worked to end unfair laws. They were part of a campaign called the Civil Rights Movement. I studied Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech. I had read it so many times that I memorized it.



**Martin Luther King, Sr., my mother,
and me**



Rosa Parks and me

READ ABOUT IT!

1. Get a book about a person who lived his or her dream.
2. Read about that person.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

What did you learn from reading this book?

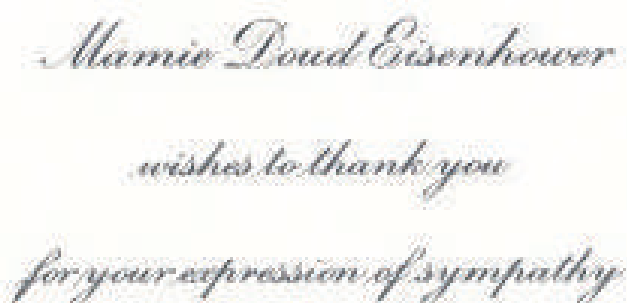
DO SOMETHING!

1. Draw a picture of the person in your book, showing that person living his or her dream.

2. Describe the person in your drawing to your class. Tell what the person did to live his or her dream.

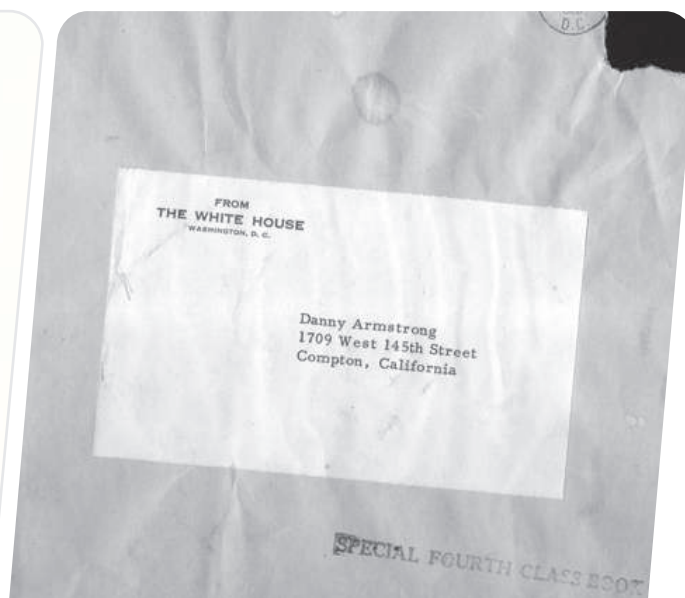
Later, my family traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, where Dr. King had lived. While in Atlanta, I met Dr. King's father. Later in life, I met Rosa Parks. Meeting Dr. King's father and Rosa Parks was a dream come true for me. I realized that this dream started by reading about Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement. My dream in college was to work in government and politics. That was an interest I developed as a child. Fortunately, my mother supported my dream. When I was six years old, former President Dwight Eisenhower died. I drew a picture of him and sent it to his widow, Mamie. My mother helped me mail it. In response, Mrs. Eisenhower sent a thank-you card to me.

Earlier, when I was three and a half years old, I wrote to President Lyndon Johnson. I told my mother what I wanted to say, and she wrote the letter. I could not write yet. I received a magazine back from the White House. When a person wants to be elected as president, as mayor, or as some other government official, he or she runs a campaign to get votes. That is called politics. I worked in my first political campaign in second grade. A classmate's mother, Doris Davis, ran for the office of mayor in our city, Compton, California. I can remember riding in a car with Mrs. Davis as she campaigned. We handed out flyers to the citizens of Compton, asking them to vote for Doris Davis.



Mamie Doud Eisenhower
wishes to thank you
for your expression of sympathy

Thank You card from Mrs. Eisenhower



Envelope from the White House

Later, as a college student, I worked at two Democratic National Conventions, where the Democratic Party's candidate for president is selected. At these conventions, I met many leaders of our government. I was living my dream. This dream started when I was three and a half years old. Do not wait. You can start at any age. Before I was ten years old, I had met Dr. King's father, written to a president, and worked in a political campaign. Start living your dream today! Read about it! Write about it! Do something!



**Former US Senator
Alan Cranston from California**



My family traveled to Washington, DC when I was nearly six years old. Here I am (right) along with the future 38th President of the United States Representative Gerald Ford (left) at the US Capitol.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

Life would be so exciting if one day I could...

If you had three wishes, what would you wish for?

1.

2.

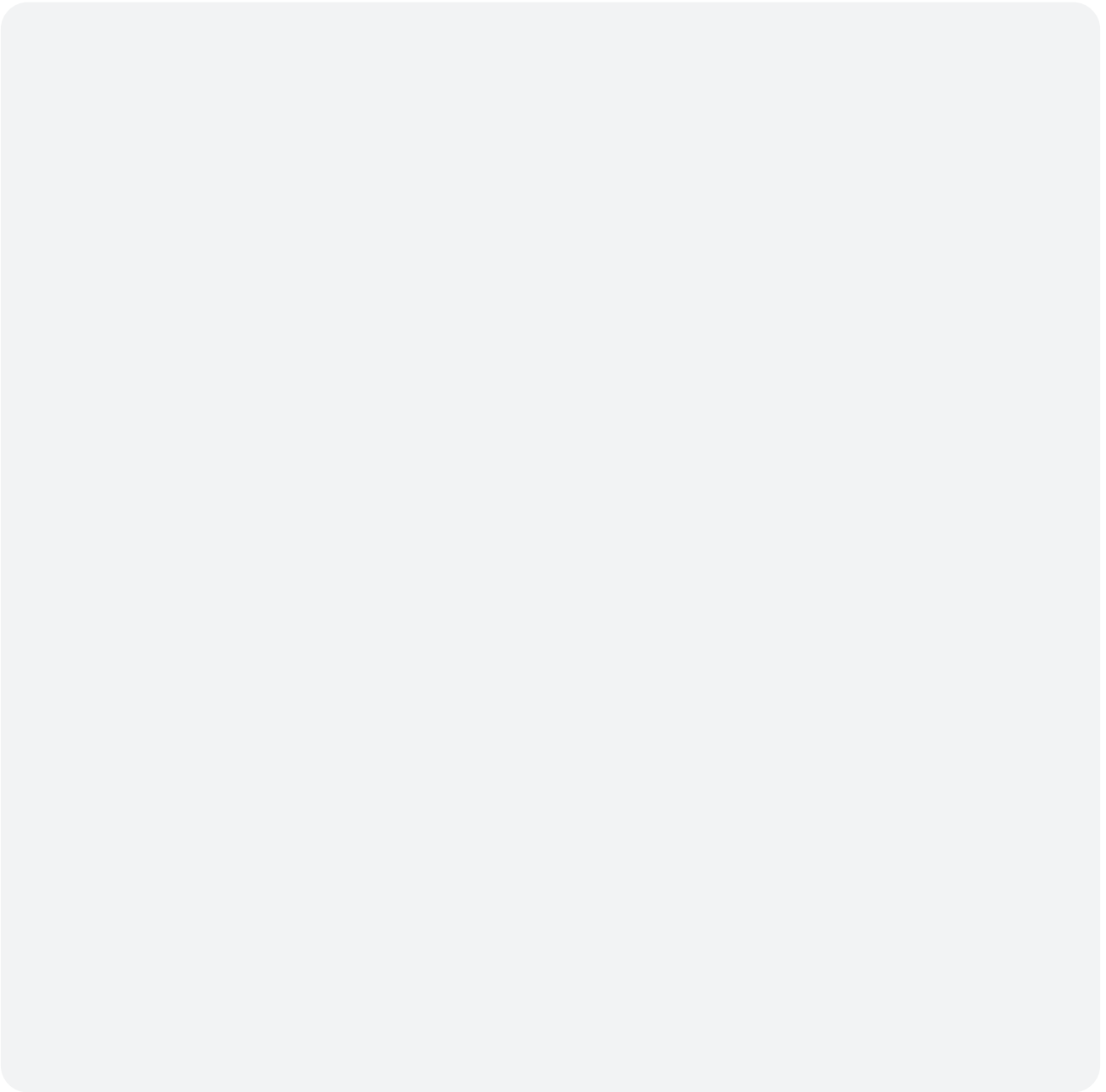
3.

Complete this sentence:

My dream is....

DO SOMETHING!

A dream board shows other people doing things that you dream of doing. Make a dream board. Find pictures from magazines or the internet and paste them on your dream board.



DO SOMETHING!

Draw a picture of you living your dream.

FIND A TREE PATHWAY #3

EXPLORE LIFE: TRY NEW ACTIVITIES AND EXPLORE NEW INTERESTS

Many people do not know their dream. If you do not, you have to begin exploring new interests. Your interests are activities or objects that catch your attention. If you try new activities, you may find something that you want to learn more about. Keep looking until you find something really cool. When I was growing up, my mother and father made my brothers and sister and me take classes and visit places we did not want to go. We had to turn the television off, read books, see plays, take art classes, and more. I never wanted to do these things. All I wanted to do was play basketball. My parents understood that for me to live my dreams in life I had to explore life and try new things.

READ ABOUT IT!

1. Go to a library and walk around looking at books and the pictures in them.
2. Read about different topics.
3. Make up a list of topics that interest you.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

Write about the new things that interest you.

DO SOMETHING!

1. Ask your friends about their interests.
2. Visit a museum.
3. Visit different websites, but ask your teacher or parents for permission first.

List five new activities you would like to try.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

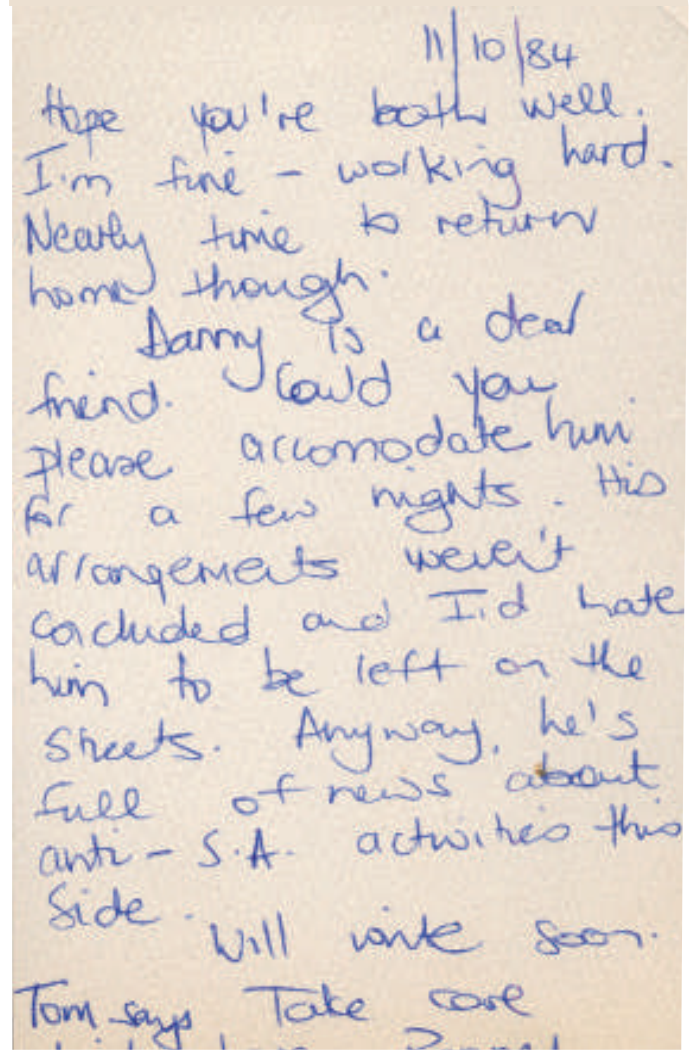
List five new topics you would like to learn more about.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

A SCHOOL IN AFRICA

After I finished college, I was able to live my dream and travel to Africa for the first time. I went to Zimbabwe in Southern Africa. My purpose was to study the schools and youth programs there. I had read about Zimbabwe and Africa before going, but I was still unsure of what to expect when I arrived. I did not know anyone in Zimbabwe. A friend promised to find a job for me teaching in a school and a place to live. The night before I was supposed to leave, he told me he had been unable to find a job or a place for me to live.

Another friend, Penny Andrews, told me she had friends in Zimbabwe. She wrote a note for me to give to her friends, asking if I could stay at their home for a night or two. I was nervous, but I knew this was my dream. I arrived in Zimbabwe and expected to see animals like I had seen years before in *Born Free*. When I arrived in Zimbabwe's capital, Harare, however, there were no elephants or lions. Instead I saw tall buildings, cars, and streets busy with people going to work. It was not what I had expected.



11/10/84
Hope you're both well.
I'm fine - working hard.
Nearly time to return
home though.
Larry is a dear
friend. Could you
please accomodate him
for a few nights. His
arrangements weren't
concluded and I'd hate
him to be left on the
streets. Anyway, he's
full of news about
anti-S.A. activities this
side. Will write soon.
Tom says Take care

Note from Penny Andrews

I went to the address on the card that Penny had given me. No one was home. I did not know what to do. I went to the house next door to find out when Penny's friends would be returning. I knocked. An old man opened the door.



He asked who I was and where I was from. I said, “Los Angeles, California, in the United States.” He said, “My name is James, James Logan, and I am from Hollywood, California. Come on in.” James had been living in Zimbabwe for many years. He and his family welcomed me into their home and allowed me to stay with them for a month until Penny’s friends returned.

Once I had a place to live, I began to research Zimbabwe’s schools and youth programs. One day I visited a school. It was surrounded by a wire fence and looked new, with several large classrooms made of brick. Students wore uniforms. Everyone was very nice, and the students were very courteous to me and their teachers.



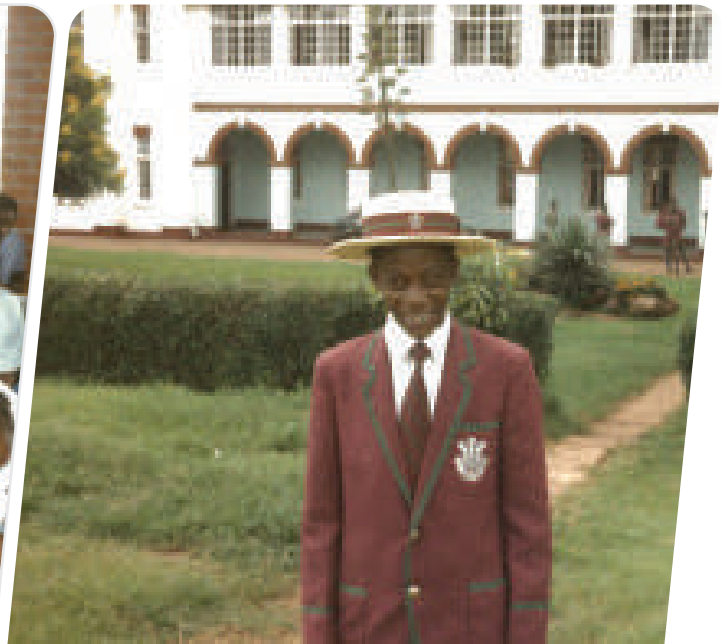
My home in Zimbabwe

The teachers never had to raise their voices or tell the students to be quiet. The students did their work. One teacher explained to me the lessons he was teaching and showed me the books they used. Surprisingly, he then complained about his students. He said, “Daniel, these students arrive at school an hour before the school day starts, waiting to get into the classroom. At the end of the day, they don’t want to go home. They want to stay at school learning!”

The teacher then told his class to keep reading while he took me on a tour of the school. We came back an hour later. The students were still reading. No one was talking, and everyone was in his or her seat. I was shocked. I told the class that in America if a teacher left a classroom for an hour, most students would not continue to do their work. The teacher explained to me that his students had dreams and knew that if they wanted to live their dream, they would have to learn.



Students in Zimbabwe



**A student in Zimbabwe in his
“best dress”**



School boys in Zimbabwe



Teaching basketball in Zimbabwe

READ ABOUT IT!

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Get a book or go on the internet and read about that place.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

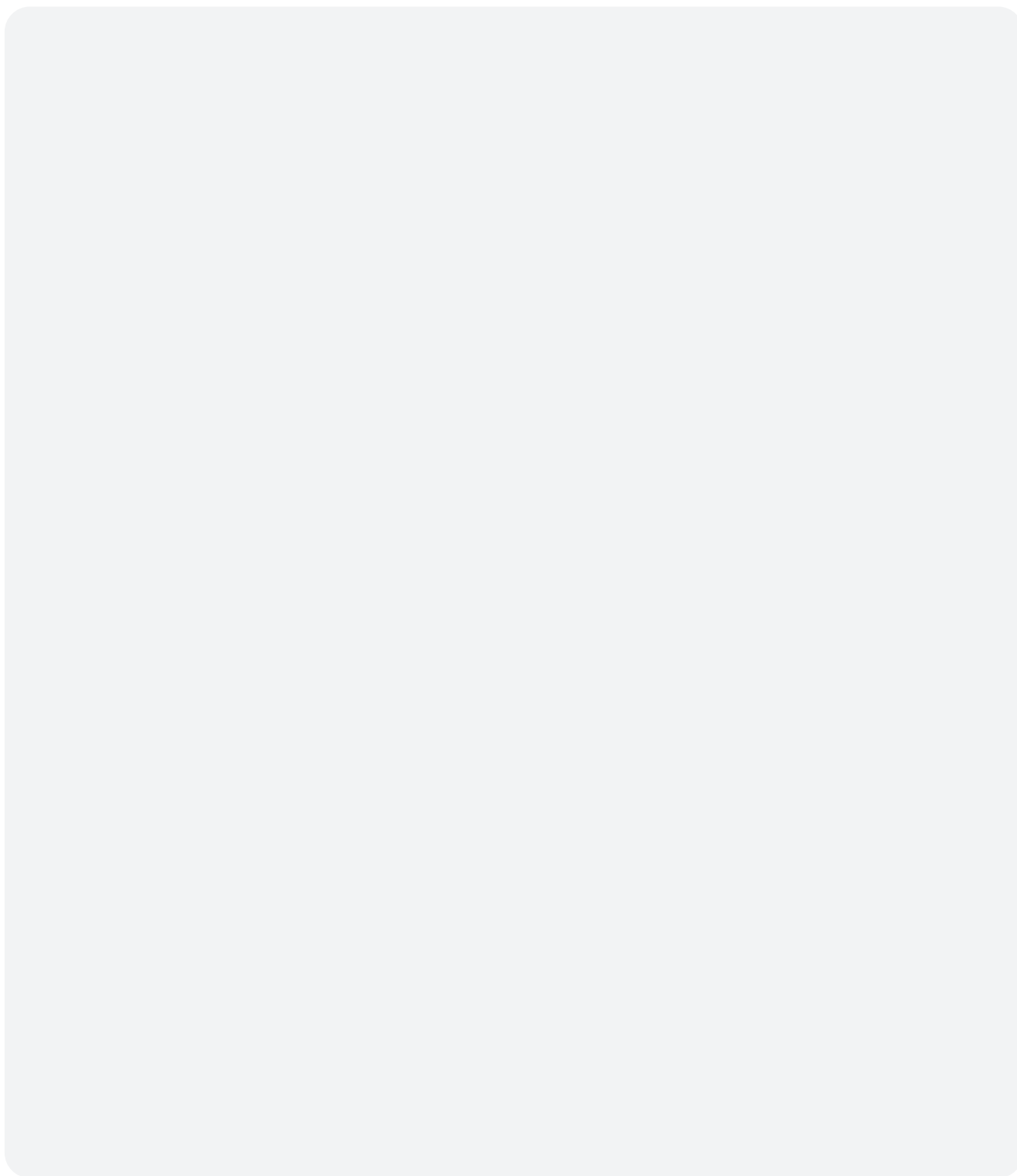
Write about the country you would like to visit.

What is that nation's history?

What language do they speak?

DO SOMETHING!

Draw a picture of that country's flag.



SCHOOL AND YOUR DREAM

Living your dream will require that you read, write, and do math well. Doing well in school will provide you with the tools you need to live your dream. Many dreams will require that you go to college after high school. My mother and father understood this. When I was a little boy, they set up a special savings account at our bank. Every time I received money, part of it had to go into that account so that we would be able to pay for college someday. I did not know what college was when I was a little boy, but I knew that it was a place I would have to go if I wanted to live my dreams.

My parents made sure I did my homework every night. My brothers and sister and I had to turn the television off and do our homework first. One time my father made me quit the basketball team at school when I got poor grades. One year my mother planned a birthday party for me and invited my friends over. My report card arrived a few days before the party, and I had received several low grades. My father said I would not be able to attend my own party because my grades were not good. He made me stay in my room and study while my friends celebrated my birthday. My father knew that if I wanted to live my dreams I had to do well in school.



My Dad and Mom

READ ABOUT IT!

Go online to learn about a college.

WRITE ABOUT IT!

How will you use math in your dream?

How will you use science in your dream?

WRITE ABOUT IT!

How will you use writing and reading in your dream?

List five actions you can take to do better in school.

1.

2.

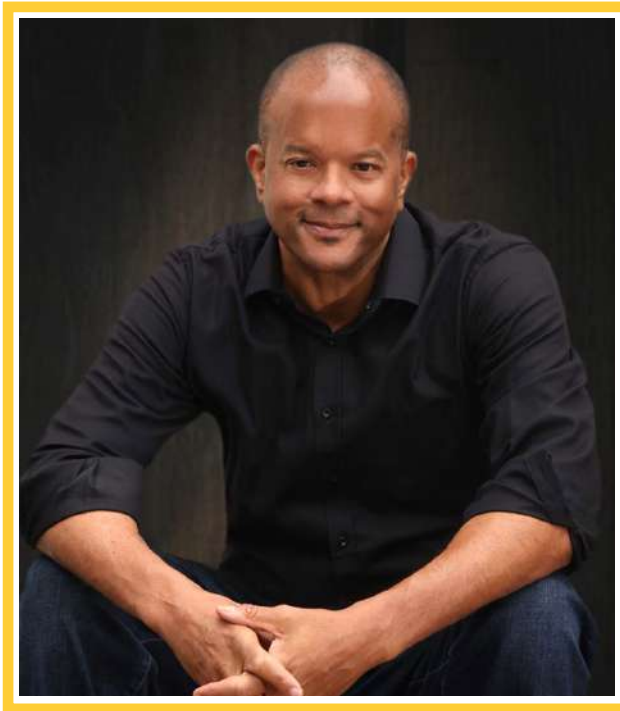
3.

4.

5.

DO SOMETHING!

1. Visit the website of a college or send the school a letter to request information about the school.
2. Get a jar and begin saving coins for your college fund.
3. Do the five actions listed above to do better in school.



DANIEL ARMSTRONG

Daniel Armstrong is The Dream Mentor and author who motivates and empowers people to make a difference in their lives and the lives of others through his program, Find A Tree. Based on his book, *How to Live Your Dreams: Find A Tree and Get Started*, Daniel's Find A Tree educational program has been credited with transforming many incarcerated gang members and underachieving students throughout Los Angeles, teaching them to identify and take the necessary steps toward achieving their dreams.

Raised in Compton, California, Armstrong earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Columbia University. Armstrong also holds a Juris Doctorate and a Master in Business Administration degree, both from UCLA. Armstrong was a Ford Foundation Fellow in 1984, when he received a grant to study youth development in Zimbabwe. Armstrong began Find A Tree in 1999 after spending two years working in Ghana, West Africa.

For more information on Daniel Armstrong
and his Find A Tree program, visit
www.DanielArmstrong.com.



Daniel Armstrong®

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESS STORY IS A DREAMER

LIVE YOUR DREAMS NOW

READ ABOUT IT! WRITE ABOUT IT! AND DO SOMETHING!

Live Your Dreams Now is an inspiring youth workbook written by Daniel Armstrong—The Dream Mentor. It combines vivid anecdotes and practical exercises to create an interactive journey, wherein readers 10 to 14 years old learn valuable lessons in resilience, perseverance, self-reliance, and resourcefulness.

Live Your Dreams Now is based on the proven fundamentals of Armstrong's Find A Tree empowerment program and the foundational questions: "What is your dream? ...And what are you doing about it?" This workbook helps youth become introspective, confident, proactive, and forward-thinking.

Live Your Dreams Now asks engaging questions in a clear and direct format, making the key points as easy to comprehend as they are to apply into children's daily lives. With positive reinforcement from front to back, and strategic challenges in every chapter, the takeaways are in the results they manifest. The only thing left is to help your children or students live their dreams now!

"Find A Tree opens the doors to a whole new world that children can not only dream about, but make it a reality. This step-by-step approach gives every child the opportunity to succeed and follow their dream!"

STELLA CONTRERAS

Parent Facilitator | Los Angeles Unified School District | Los Angeles, California

"[Find A Tree] emphasizes the importance of doing something now to make your dream a reality. My students are realizing you can start now. It is never too soon."

IRENE GERMAINE

Fourth-grade Teacher | Nuevo Vista Elementary School | Bell, California

"The Find A Tree concept is itself incredibly powerful...[it] is something that will forever be with our students."

AMBER YOUNG

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