

The Childhood Treasure of Faith

L. Carol Scott, PhD

As one of the 7 Childhood Treasures™, Faith is belief in the impossible, belief in something you cannot fully comprehend or explain. It is belief in a dream or possibility that defies reason and logic. With no earthly reason to believe, you believe anyway.

The third year of life is when your development made you ripe and ready to build this brilliant capacity for Faith. Robert Rabbin, in his book *Invisible Leadership*, wrote of a young girl he saw in an airport. “She had a glorious bright look. Energy and enthusiasm would rise within her like waves Her life welled up from deep within her, unconditioned and unafraid, raw and vital.” Bar none, that is the best description of a three-year-old I have ever read. He ended his verbal imagery of this child with “She must have dreamed beautiful dreams.”

Indeed, three-year-old children do dream beautiful dreams, mostly when awake. Three-year-olds are exuberant with life force. They throw down the practical tasks we give them and run toward their dreams with complete abandon. They lack both ego and self-doubt.

Three-year-olds begin to move away from the egocentric toddler life that revolves entirely around them and their perspectives. They stop consuming the world primarily through their senses of touch and taste, and also through kinesthetic awareness. Their visual and auditory perspectives on life start to dominate their sensory experience. They start to *really* see and hear the wider world beyond their immediate experience.

But they don't see and hear as we adults do. To their still pre-logical minds, the world is an incredible place, full of magical, awesome events and mythic beings. They are wonderstruck again and again by what, in their limited experience, is simply impossible, fantastical.

Their lives, at any and every moment, are comprised of intensely vivid imagery with surround sound, or even “sense-surround.” They lack an adult's ordered, no-nonsense logic and, so, their explanations of their experiences are fanciful and seldom accurate in the scientific sense. The moon follows them as they ride in a car, and a tall man on the street is the giant who chased Jack down the beanstalk. Morning dew on the grass is diamonds and they are wealthy beyond compare.

In this sensory, pre-logical wonderland, you could have built enough Faith to sustain you for a lifetime. If you did, then you still have the ability, like the White Queen in Alice's Wonderland, to believe in six impossible things before breakfast each day. You still have the capacity to dream big—Really Big—dreams for your life, and you believe in them enough to pursue them.

What often happens to three-year-olds is that their capacity for Faith is narrowed, squashed in them, by adults. Even well-intentioned grown-ups find the three-

year-old's flights of fancy charming and laugh at their "silly" ideas. We tell them that what they imagine is fantasy, not true in the logical "real" world we live in. We teach them the scientific explanations for what they see as fantastic. We tell them that what they dream cannot be reality. We do these things, we believe, with their best interests at heart. But we also prevent them from building the Childhood Treasure of Faith. We prevent them from being adults who dream big dreams and reach for them.

If your childhood did not support the capacity for Faith, you can build it now. It's never too late! You can become a dreamer of dreams. I invite you to try the following activity, with enough privacy to allow you to be audacious in your answers. I advise you to share your responses with *nobody*!

Fill in the blanks on the following items (for all, assume there are no barriers): If I could visit any place on earth, I'd go to _____. If I could meet and have dinner with any living person, I'd choose _____. If I became nationally famous, I'd want it to be because I _____. If I could develop any single skill I do not now have, I'd choose _____.

Be wild! Think Big! Choose the answers your three-year-old self might have chosen!

There! Four Big Dreams have been born. Will you pick just one of these dreams into which you will pour some love and attention? Whichever one you choose, will you spend five minutes each morning for the next month bringing form to your dream? If so, each day spin an active and comprehensive multi-sensory image of this dream. First, see yourself in the situation you've described. Create visual images of your dream as it comes true. Make them as vivid as possible. Add other senses: What do you hear, smell, and taste? How do you hold yourself and move? What sensations touch your skin?

When your logical adult self steps in to tell you how impossible this dream is, you might want to just say, "Shhhh. I'm dreaming now." To build Faith, build dreams. Be the White Queen and imagine something impossible before breakfast. Before you know it, dreaming one dream every day might make space for you to dream two and, one day, six! Before you know it, you will find yourself taking a step closer to one of them.