



Freedom Dreaming: What Do You See When You Dream About the Future?

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Freedom Dreaming is a tool for survival that has been used for centuries by people of color to create space to exist despite societal constraints faced in their daily lives. While Freedom Dreaming can be used to imagine a future without societal constraints and oppressive forces, it can also be used each day to support our mental health and emotional well-being.

As we take time to look to a hopeful future, a space can open between our reflections and actions that can help us find hope and healing. The small but mighty choices we can make each day can help us explore who we truly are, see new possibilities for ourselves and others, and set daily goals aligned with our deepest hopes.

As a young person of color, my daily freedom dreams started with choosing vibrant, bold clothing. This choice was an extension of my desire to bring as much light into daily life as possible while also expressing my personal style. I also made the conscious decision to take a slow walk every day, even if for just a few minutes. I would make an effort to pause to admire and touch the leaves on trees or to notice the blueness of the sky or the sounds of nature around me.



After intense periods of productivity, I learned to let myself rest without the pressure to be productive. In moments where I felt I wasn't reaching my goals, I chose to seek laughter and joy in my favorite television shows and to use this joy as fuel to keep my engine going. In these small, intentional daily choices, I was able to create moments of liberation from unrealistic societal pressures, affirming that I deserve to exist as I am in these moments.

I believe you can reap the benefits of daily Freedom Dreaming for your mental health and emotional well-being as well.



Here are a few reflection questions and examples to help you get started:

1. Your Current Freedom Dreams: What are your Freedom Dreams today?

- What small acts of care or joy have you practiced today that resist the demands of dominant culture?
- How have you allowed yourself to embrace ease and pleasure in your daily life recently?
- When did you last make a decision that put your well-being and desires above societal expectations?

2. Exploring New Freedom Dreams: Could you explore new Freedom Dreams?

- What boundaries or norms imposed by dominant culture would you like to challenge within the next 24 hours?
- How can you practice generosity or connection with others in a way that defies societal expectations?
- What would you do differently if you gave yourself permission to rest without guilt?

3. Nurturing Acts of Pleasure and Joy: How do you nurture joy?

- What do you find joy in that the dominant culture dismisses as unproductive or frivolous?
- What forms of self-expression feel liberating to you, and how can you amplify them in your daily life?
- What acts of care do you desire to give or receive that honor your identity and needs?

4. Seeking Support: How do you find support and resources?

- Is there a friend or trusted adult you can talk with about your dreams?
- What resources, information or inspiration do you need to prepare for action?
- Are there people with similar interests with whom you can collaborate?

5. Taking Action: How do you take action, reflect and try again?

- With your freedom dream in mind, what small steps could you take today toward your dream?
- Are there neighborhood or local initiatives, activities or volunteering where you can make a difference?

6. Reflect & Adjust.

- Ask yourself what's working. What challenges have you faced? How do you reflect on your efforts and learning – and try again? How would you refine your approach?

Examples of Freedom Dreaming actions

- Take care of your mental health and emotional well-being
- Reclaim your personal style
- Connect with nature in daily life
- Make generosity a daily commitment
- Indulge in intentional rest
- Express love of self, affirm your strengths
- Offer encouragement and joy to others
- Engage with issues you care about online and in-person
- Offer and receive care without shame or guilt from others

