

Big Dreams★

From Small Spaces

52 Devotions for Young Women
Who Want to Change the World

Group
Loveland, Colorado



Group resources actually work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



Relational

Learner-to-learner interaction enhances learning and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

Big Dreams From Small Spaces

52 Devotions for Young Women Who Want to Change the World

Copyright © 2012 Group Publishing, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without prior written permission from the publisher, except where noted in the text and in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, visit group.com/permissions.

Visit our websites: group.com and group.com/women

This resource is brought to you by the wildly creative women's ministry team at Group. Choose Group resources for your women's ministry and experience the difference!

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-0-7644-8843-6

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Printed in the United States of America.

Contents★

Introduction: Don't Give Up On Your Dreams!	6
Leave the World a Better Place	8
Take Bigger Steps.....	10
When Life Gives You Lemons—or Coworkers Cause You Chaos..	12
Beauty's All Around.....	14
Coffee Talk 1	16
A Picture Is Worth a Lot of Hugs.....	18
Coming Home	20
Just Do the Next Thing	22
God Said "No"	24
Coffee Talk 2.....	26
Housekeeping 101	28
All Wrapped Up	30
Snail-Mail a Hug.....	32
Help Me Forgive Me	34
Coffee Talk 3.....	36
She Delivers More Than Mail	38
Date Night.....	40
Four-Legged Grace.....	42
A Yearly Reminder of the Bigger Picture	44
Coffee Talk 4.....	46
Help! I Need a New Brain!.....	48
A Checklist for God.....	50
Never Without.....	52

Contents cont★

Know When to Say “No”	54
Coffee Talk 5	56
Three Ice Cubes	58
Dream Big, and Cast Away Fear!	60
Mud Comes Before a Fall.....	62
Grateful for Losing It All	64
Coffee Talk 6.....	66
Keep Your View Clear	68
Bad Plant Mama!.....	70
The Test of Authority	72
Wide-Mouthed Women.....	74
Coffee Talk 7.....	76
My Pink Cross	78
Tornados and Entertaining Angels	80
Control Freak	82
And the GPS Said... <i>Recalculating</i>	84
Coffee Talk 8.....	86
Beyond My Wildest Dreams.....	88
May I Have This Dance?.....	90
Perfection Not Required.....	92
Post-It-Note Love.....	94
Coffee Talk 9.....	96
Where Did My Strength Go?.....	98
Face to Face	100

Pinterest Perfect	102
Rainbow Sightings	104
Coffee Talk 10.....	106
Back to Beautiful	108
Forever Hold Your Peace.....	110
Golden Trust.....	112
Roller Coaster Day	114
Coffee Talk 11	116
The Lesson of the Library Book	118
Living in My Car	120
Diaper Changes Can Be Meaningful	122
Dreaming of Horses	124
Coffee Talk 12.....	126
Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained.....	128
Rest Is Not a Four-Letter Word.....	130
Small-Town Girl, Big-City World	132
Secret Dreams	134
Coffee Talk 13.....	136

Introduction:

Don't Give Up On Your Dreams!

“Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin.”

—Zechariah 4:10

Big dreams start small. They may start as a simple daydream, a conversation with a friend, or a note in a journal. More than an impulse, dreams have a way of drilling into our hearts, causing us to weep, talk fast(er), and obsess about how—and why—we should be chasing our dream at all costs.

You may be dreaming of finding work that matters, a relationship that lasts, or a way to serve God that will make a real difference in the world. You may even feel frustrated or impatient, ready to live your dreams but feeling limited by your circumstances. Maybe money's an issue. Or you have to finish school. Or you have young children at home. That doesn't mean your dreams are unattainable!

The stories in this book, from women *just like you*, remind us that with a little faith, a little effort, and a little help from our friends, *anything* is possible. We *can* change the world, or at least our little corner of it. We just need someone to believe in us, to encourage us, and to remind us that God is bigger than our dreams.

Included are 52 devotions, enough to last you a year if you only read one a week (but we won't discourage you from reading them more quickly)! Each includes a Bible passage and a reading, as well as a "Take a Step" idea to nudge you into action right away.

And mixed in with these devotions, you'll find "Coffee Talks" to help you talk about what you're learning. Use them when you and your friends get together for coffee (or breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert...you get the idea!) or as a small-group study.

Throughout the book, you'll also find creative but simple ideas to help you put your personal stamp on the place you call home. These tips will help you make your space an inspired and beautiful place to live.

As you connect with God—and your girlfriends—through the pages of this book, we hope you will be inspired to dream even bigger dreams. Take a small step of faith today, and just watch what happens...

“Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.”

—Ephesians 3:20



Leave the World a Better place

“You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!”

—Matthew 25:23

I remember the place well. It was just a few miles from campus. Two bedrooms, one bath, with a fenced yard. It was a castle compared to the married-housing barrack we’d been living in! It was perfect. Well, almost. A previous tenant had decided to wallpaper the one bathroom with contact paper. Orange, flowered contact paper. I knew—although we were renting—that contact paper had to go.

Shortly after we moved in, I got to work. You can imagine the labor involved in ripping that old stuff out. I used adhesive remover, my blow dryer, steam, a putty knife—anything I could think of to get that horrible stuff off of the walls of that tiny bathroom. I worked until my shoulders ached. I finished after about three days, and while they were nowhere near perfect, they were better than they were when I started. Then I got busy putting up the lovely pale blue and green striped wallpaper I had found on clearance. It was beautiful!

I felt like I had conquered the world when I was finished. I would turn on the light and just admire my work. It made me feel connected and at home, even though I was actually 600 miles from home. I learned that regardless

of whether I was renting or owning, I could make my space better. I could leave it better than it was when I got there. Now that's always my goal when I move to a new place.

That's true of life, isn't it? We all want to leave the world a better place. To make it brighter or prettier; more just and good. To share God's love and grace even in small ways. Whether that means painting those bright green walls in your first apartment to make it your own, reaching out to your neighbors, or finding ways to serve your community. Wherever we are, let's strive to leave things better than we found them.

| Sue Brage | 

Take a Step

Pick one small change you can make in your space. Maybe you can paint a wall, add an area rug, or make some new curtains. As you work, pray about how you can leave the world a better place just by being in it.



Take Bigger Steps

“You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.”

—Psalm 139:16

My freshman year in college, I attended a leadership orientation for my scholarship group. As is typical with these types of events, we got to partake in a variety of icebreakers. One such task, though relatively simple, proved amazingly hard for me.

Picture this: you and a partner are outside. Small balls on the ground. Your partner directs you to the balls, and the object is to throw the balls to tag the other players out by listening to your partner's instructions. Oh, and did I mention you're blindfolded? Well, you are. As are the other people you are trying to tag. Since I went first, my partner actually had to lead me out of the room where we were meeting to the playing space outside.

Here's where I ran into my problem. I couldn't see. I didn't know what to expect next. Any step could be my last (not really, but just play along). The next step could plunge me into a huge, gaping abyss.

Even with my partner leading me by the elbow and reassuring me I was on solid ground, I literally could not tell my legs to take bigger steps out to the yard. I was taking little baby steps. My partner eventually dragged me the rest of the way down the path. Why would I be telling you this?

This is a message the Lord has been driving home to me through a variety of circumstances. Even if we can't see or think one moment ahead, he has already been there and back again.

I was slightly appalled at how even though someone was telling me, "Hey, it's okay, take bigger steps," I absolutely refused to take bigger steps for fear of plummeting to the ground and making a fool of myself. This seemingly inconsequential scene has stuck with me and provided an encouraging picture that no matter what dreams or plans are before me, God is worthy of our trust.

God has beautiful, fulfilling plans for you. It's OK if they are just beyond your grasp or above your comprehension...they're supposed to be! Isaiah 55:8-9 says: "'My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,' says the Lord. 'And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.'"

Can't you just hear the Lord saying, "Hey, it's okay. I am right here. Take bigger steps"?

| Samantha Maloy |

Take a Step★

Tap a 6-inch ruler to a regular 12-inch ruler, and place it on your desk or nightstand to remind you that God always takes bigger steps than you do, and that is the reason you can trust him.