



# The Complete VISION BOARD KIT™

Using the Power of Intention and  
Visualization to Achieve Your Dreams

**JOHN ASSARAF**

AS FEATURED IN *THE SECRET*

Includes: book, DVD, blank paper, and inspirational words & images

ADVENTURE

# THE VISION BOARD BOOK

How to Use the Power of Intention and  
Visualization to Manifest the Life of Your Dreams

JOHN ASSARAF

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*This book is dedicated to all the dreamers  
who dare to step out of their comfort zones,  
and go after a life filled with purpose and  
an abundance of everything they desire.*

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# INTRODUCTION

## “Why Would I Want to Create a Vision Board?”

Why would you want to create a vision board? The simple answer is: *to help make your dreams come true*. You can use a vision board to achieve success in as many ways as you define that word: success in your health, wealth, relationships, career goals—in all aspects of your life.

Creating your own vision board is easy, and it's incredibly powerful. Once you see the kinds of results it will create in your life, you'll say, “Why didn't someone tell me about this before?!”

In the most basic sense, a vision board is a flat surface onto which you paste a collage of pictures that represent the life you want to be living. For example:

- the house you want to live in;
- the car you want to drive;
- the relationship you want to be a partner in;
- the family life you want to uphold;
- the adventures you want to explore;
- the accomplishments you want to achieve;
- the kind of person you want to be;
- the kind of difference you want to make in the world.

From the simplest possessions to the greatest impact and legacy, whatever you want your life to be and to mean, you can find pictures to represent these desires on your vision board.



That's what a vision board *is*—but that doesn't tell the whole story. A vision board is one tool (an especially powerful tool but just one of many) that you can use to create the life of your dreams. In this little book, we're going to explore the board itself and also the ideas behind it. We're going to learn how to put these ideas to use and thereby master the art of *creative visualization*. We're going to learn how to unleash the remarkable ability that every human being has to imagine incredible things and, through the course of time and the power of imagination, *to have those things come to pass*.

I've been using this principle since I was a teenager. I've used it to win at basketball, to overcome a debilitating illness, to make millions of dollars in business, and to find my soul mate. I've also worked with thousands of others who have done the same thing. In fact, you'll meet some of them in this book as they describe how they've used vision boards:

- to find the life partner of their dreams;
- to compete successfully in outrageously challenging athletic events;
- to create multimillion-dollar businesses;
- to help themselves recover from serious diseases;
- to resolve long-standing legal disputes;
- to help their kids achieve their own dreams;
- to multiply their income;
- and much more.

Some people think the whole idea of vision boards is mystical or "out there." Actually, there's nothing mystical about it. There's even some

pretty compelling science behind it, and we'll take a brief look at some of that science in this book, too. But you can skip that part if you like, and it won't detract from your ability to dig in and start transforming your life *right now* by making your own vision board.

That's the point of this little book: *to help you do it*. It's not meant to justify it, dissect it, or complicate it, but to show you what it is, how it works, and most of all, how to do it.

## **My Dream House**

I learned about vision boards in 1995. The moment I heard about the practice, I acted on it: I wrote a list of goals, gathered a collection of magazines, cut out pictures that represented those goals, and pasted them onto a series of bulletin boards. I had no idea what events this simple technique could set in motion, but I soon found out.

I put all kinds of pictures on that board: watches, motorcycles, cars . . . I even found a picture of a home I'd love to live in—an aerial shot of a big, white, contemporary ranch house estate built onto a hilltop with orange groves, a pool, and gorgeous views. I had no idea where the place was or what it might cost. I didn't care; it just looked like an amazing place to live.

Later that year, I felt the impulse to move. I had just spent a decade in Indiana building a real estate business, and I was ready for new horizons. I hired someone to manage the business, packed away all my furniture—including all my vision boards—into storage, and relocated to western Canada.

I spent the next few years involved in a series of businesses and consulting roles. By 1999 I was ready to settle down, so I went to San

Diego, where I'd always dreamed of living. I started real estate hunting, and within months my broker had found us a beautiful home. I had furniture and other boxed stuff shipped out from Indiana, and my family and I moved in.

One morning in May of 2000, I sat with my six-year-old son Keenan, opening cartons that had been sealed for five years, when I suddenly came across my old vision boards. I pulled one out of the box, and when I saw what was on it, I stopped what I was doing and stared at it. There, glued to that board I'd made in 1995, was a photograph of an amazing house: it was that sprawling contemporary estate I'd cut out of my copy of *Dream Homes* magazine back in Indiana. I had forgotten all about this photo. Now, as I examined it, I realized how strikingly similar the house in the photo was to the house Keenan and I were now sitting in.

No, that wasn't right. It wasn't *similar* to this house; *it was* this house.

Because our house was located on a hillside at the end of a long residential road, there was no way you could see the property from the angle in that photo unless you were hanging in the air in a helicopter or hot air balloon. Since I'd never seen our new home from that unique angle, I hadn't recognized it. But there it was: the very same house I had clipped out of that magazine in 1995, glued to my vision board, and then stashed away and forgotten.

When I cut the image out of the magazine, I clipped away all the text. Although I had gazed at that picture hundreds of times, I'd never seen any information about where it was, what it cost, or any of its features. *It was just a picture.* I'd never even known it was located in California—let alone in San Diego—until this very moment.

I could hardly breathe.

What were the odds that I would end up in that very same house? How would you even begin to calculate those odds?

Even now, nearly a decade later, I can hardly find the words to express what an impact this event had on me. This truly phenomenal experience launched me on a quest to learn everything there was to know about what vision boards are, how they work, and why. Understanding and sharing this amazing process as deeply and as broadly as I could became my most compelling mission in life, culminating in the creation of *The Complete Vision Board Kit™* and the little book you now hold in your hands.

## How to Use This Book

This is not a book you necessarily have to read from beginning to end. Feel free to skip around, reading whichever parts beckon to you most. You'll get around to the other parts on your own rhythm and in your own time. There is no *one* "right" way to create a vision board and no *one* "right" way to write about the process, or to read about it, either. Feel free to highlight portions, write in the margins, mark it up; make this book your own.

Think of this as a cookbook; it's not some piece of literature to read in your armchair but a practical guidebook to use in your "kitchen"—that is, in your *life*. Lay it out on the counter and get it messy; experiment, have fun, and make things that taste delicious. The purpose of vision boards—sometimes called "treasure maps" or "dream boards"—is to help you cook up a storm that will ultimately make your dreams come true.

Note: One thing you *won't* find in this book is any full-color reproductions or samples of actual vision boards; the limitations of a little book like this simply couldn't do them justice. Instead, we've featured on my website a wide range of real-life vision boards that people have used to transform their own lives: [jobnassaraf.com](http://jobnassaraf.com).

## **Dare to Follow Your Dreams**

Each of us has a certain number of years to get what we really want in this life, and we cannot know what that number is. What we *can* do is put ourselves on track to create the life we most earnestly desire, and then put ourselves on that track with the focus of a laser.

It's easy to dream. It's even easier to make excuses for *not* achieving our dreams. Millions of people do it every day, finding dozens and hundreds of ways to settle for less than they really want. They stay stuck in jobs they hate, in relationships that don't work, in a life that is only a small fraction of all that it could be.

You and I both know that it doesn't have to be that way. *You don't have to settle*. And in stepping up to create the life you truly want, the first step is to become absolutely clear about *what* you want. And this is where I want to encourage you—no, *I dare you*—to think big. I mean *really big*. The question isn't whether you have goals. The real question is: What are your biggest, most audacious dreams—and what are you going to do to make them real?

# Part I

# The Power of Vision

## 1

### HOW VISION BOARDS WORK

A vision board is a way of creating clarity around the life you want to create for yourself. By choosing a series of powerful, meaningful images and affixing them to a display that you look at multiple times every day, you focus your attention on what matters to you most and make that your destination.

Making a vision board helps you attract into your life things that you want to have, to experience, to achieve, or to become. By surrounding yourself with images of the life you want, you cause your life to shift and move in the direction of matching those images.

#### **A Story in Pictures**

At its core, a vision board is a set of visual images that represent the story you are telling yourself about who you are and what your life is like.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are constantly telling ourselves stories. Many of those are stories that someone else told us. When we were little, for example, our parents told us stories. Maybe

our older brothers or sisters read us stories, or maybe it was the baby-sitter. In school, teachers read us stories, and we told each other stories, too. And we retell ourselves these stories with that little voice inside our heads, repeating them hundreds and thousands of times a day.

In earlier times, children grew up hearing the stories of the tribe, the village elders, the bards or minstrels. These days, we grow up steeped in stories told by television, movies, and comic books. From the earliest bands of prehistoric hunters and gatherers to people of the postmodern electronic age, one thing about human life has never changed and never will: we knit the fabric of our lives through stories. And the most powerful stories are the ones we repeat to ourselves through the words and the pictures we hold in our minds.

The stories we tell ourselves shape our lives. They shape who we believe we are, and this belief translates into who we become.

The purpose of this little book is to help you *consciously choose* the stories you're telling yourself about who you are and what kind of life you lead. A vision board is really nothing but a story in pictures. It's the story of your life—of the life you *want*.

Here's a great example of how this happens, from my friend Sally Huss.

## A Family from a Sketchbook

By Sally Huss

*By the time she was in her thirties, Sally Huss had been a tennis champion (a U.S. Junior champion and Wimbledon semi-finalist), had worked in Hollywood for Samuel Goldwyn, Jr., and had run Paul Simon's music publishing company. Her life had been rich in accomplishments—  
but she felt there was still something vital missing.*

I had graduated from college with a fine arts degree but had never done anything with it. Now I began writing little stories and making little drawings to go with them. Every day a new story arrived for me to draw and paint. Soon I was filling notebooks.

One day, a beautiful woman appeared in my drawings; she was married to a handsome, wonderful man, and they had a darling son who had a pet rabbit. As I would look back over these drawings and reread the stories, they came to life, and I fell in love with them.

Not long after that, I met that handsome man. Two years later, we were married, and a son arrived the following year. Five years later, our son got a white rabbit for Easter. Last October [2007], that handsome man and I celebrated our thirtieth wedding anniversary.

Even today, I continue to draw and write what is in my heart, both in notebooks and on vision boards, and life has continued faithfully to fulfill my dreams. I have also shared this practice with many others, who often call to tell me about the wonderful things that have happened in their lives as well.



Sally wrote down stories of the family she wanted. She drew pictures and kept going back to look at them again and again. In the process, her whole being became focused on what mattered most to her. In time, those stories and drawings unfolded into her life and came true.

That's exactly how vision boards work.

## **Images Are Seeds of Future Events**

If you think of your goal as a fully grown tree, then the images you choose to represent that goal are its seed. You know the expression



“Mighty oaks from little acorns grow”? It’s true of mighty dreams, too. Whether or not we realize it, everything we do and every event that unfolds in our lives begins first as an image in our mind.

When you plant a seed in fertile soil, two things start happening. First, the seed begins to stir and change. And second, water and other nutrients start flowing toward the seed.

The moment Sally started drawing those pictures of that handsome man, these two processes began. The same thing happened the moment I glued that picture of my San Diego dream home to a vision board in Indiana.

As the image of your dream takes root inside you, you start to shift the way you think and act. That image starts percolating in your mind, both consciously and subconsciously, and you start putting out feelers and taking action, day by day, that moves you closer to your dream.

At the same time, just as naturally-occurring water and nutrients flow toward a seed planted in the earth, resources in your environment start flowing toward you and the picture you hold in your mind. Just as the DNA of a seed draws specific nutrients from the soil and nitrogen from the air, the images on your vision board help focus your intention and draw from your external environment those resources, connections, people and energies you need to fulfill those pictures. This process is sometimes called the Law of Attraction.

There is nothing mysterious or fantastic about the Law of Attraction, it’s simply the way the universe operates. It is the way every plant grows to fulfill the blueprint of its DNA. It’s the way every achievement, great or small, unfurls and sprouts from its original idea.

Here's an experience from another friend, Patrick Burke, that beautifully illustrates how the Law of Attraction is set in motion by the clarity of a simple visual image.

### A Little Thing By Patrick Burke

*It was a little thing, but sometimes the littlest things mean the most. Patrick had just left a corporate job and was starting his own business, money was tight, and providing for his young family was difficult. Still, he yearned for his wife to have that new watch she needed. He knew she would genuinely love it—and he also knew he couldn't afford it.*

I went through a catalog and clipped a photo of an elegant Omega timepiece that I felt would suit my wife's tastes. I knew it was out of reach, but I stayed on the lookout anyway, believing in my heart that somehow I would find that perfect watch for her.

Two weeks before Christmas, I was in town hunting for presents. It was nearing the end of the day, and I knew I had run out of options. The watches I'd seen were all well out of my range. But I couldn't bear the thought of giving up.

Just as I was about to quit and go home, something told me to stop in at a particular retail shop that had a fine jewelry department. I went in, looked through the case, and asked the salesperson if I could hold one item. Looking at this elegant little Omega watch sitting on my palm, I made a decision. It was easily 30 or 40 percent more than I possibly afford—but I decided to buy it anyway and worry about the finances later. It was the perfect watch.

As the salesperson brought me the credit slip to sign, he said, "Here you go, sir—and in light of the holidays, I'm throwing in the two-year extended warranty, valued at \$300."

I looked at the slip and realized it showed a sizable discount subtracted from the list price. The salesperson nodded.

"Right," he said, "with this great one-day sale we're having, your discount is 40 percent. Aren't you glad you knew about it?"

I was floored. I hadn't known *anything* about their sale. But with this whopping one-day-only discount and his gracious gift of the two-year warranty, my wife's watch was now mine—and just under budget.



For Patrick, that picture of the perfect watch was a seed, and the moment he planted it in the fertile soil of his mind, it began to stir and send out roots. Before long, it had sprouted and flourished.

## **The "What" Precedes the "How"**

One reason so many people fail to achieve the things they genuinely want in life is that they get bogged down in worrying about the "how." As a child, when you would think of something you really wanted—a bike, a trip to Disneyland, to become an astronaut, *anything*—the first thing you probably heard was something like this: "How are you going to do *that*?"

Most of us have been taught to pursue our goals by mapping out a logical series of steps to take us there. *Start at the beginning. One step at a time. Rome wasn't built in a day.*

So we take our big, beautiful dream, set it to the side, and ask ourselves, "Where do I start?" Pretty soon we say, "Oh, get your head out

of the clouds! Get realistic!" And just like that, millions of dreams are snuffed out every day.

Creating a vision board takes the opposite approach. Instead of fussing about the "how," it focuses all your attention on the destination—the "what." Rome may have not been *built* in a day, but it could very well be *dreamt* in a day. I'm not saying it isn't good to plan or to consider a logical sequence of steps. It's just that this is not usually the most effective way to make a dream come true.

There was no logical, step-by-step way Patrick could have bought that watch, and he knew that. But he didn't get hung up in the *how*: he focused on the *what*.

Think about a pivotal event in your life—an event that completely changed the course of your life in a positive way. Then ask yourself: did that event happen as a result of your careful, logical planning?

Creating a vision board focuses your mind on the destination. If it's something you want strongly enough, and the image is burned into your mind and heart deeply enough, then in the influence of that powerful, magnetic, gravitational attraction, you'll *find* the how. But you can't *start* with the how. The what must come first.

One of my favorite expressions of this idea is this famous quotation from *The Scottish Himalayan Expedition*, by William H. Murray:

When I said that nothing had been done, I erred in one important matter. We had definitely committed ourselves . . . This may sound too simple, but is great in consequence. Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation),

there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves, too. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings, and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way. I learned a deep respect for one of Goethe's couplets:

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it!  
 Boldness has genius, magic, and power in it.<sup>1</sup>

That boldness of commitment that Murray talks about is exactly what the images on your vision board help you to create within yourself. And I don't know of any better example of this than the story of Ruben Gonzalez.

## An Olympic Dream By Ruben Gonzalez

*In 1984, watching the winter Olympic games on television, Ruben Gonzalez sat mesmerized as he witnessed a little guy named Scott Hamilton take the Olympic gold medal in figure skating. In that moment, an unstoppable Olympic dream was born.*

When I saw Scott take that gold medal, it gave me hope. If he could do it, I could do it! I decided that I was going to compete in the luge in the next winter Olympics, four years later.

1. The "Goethe couplet" referred to is actually based on an extremely loose translation of Goethe's *Faust* (1806–1832), lines 214–230, made by John Anster in 1835.

On the face of it, this was a ridiculous idea. I was not a great athlete, and I lived in Houston—not exactly the nation’s winter sports capital. Most serious competitors in the luge start learning the sport around the age of ten; I was *twenty-one*.

I wrote to *Sports Illustrated* and asked them where you go to learn how to luge. A few weeks later, they sent me an 8 × 10 photograph of a guy racing on a luge. I framed that picture and hung it up in my room, right by my bed. Every morning, the first thing I saw when I woke up was The Luge Man. The last thing I saw at night before turning out the lights was The Luge Man. All night long, I would dream about the luge and the Olympics. Seeing The Luge Man was a constant reminder that I was training for the Olympics. He reminded me to eat right, work out, and surround myself with winners.

The funny thing is, I never did find out the name of the guy in the picture. He’s obviously a beginner: he’s not pointing his toes, he’s holding his head way up, and he’s wearing a raggedy old suit (it’s pretty clear that he’s been in a lot of crashes). He’s just a guy that probably nobody has ever heard of. But none of that mattered. *He was doing the luge*. To me, he was The Luge Man, and his picture helped me stay focused on doing what I needed to do to reach my dream.

And by focusing on my dream, eventually I *became* The Luge Man.

Four years later, I qualified for the Olympic team and competed in the 1988 Calgary games as an Olympian. I competed again in France four years later, at the 1992 Albertville games, and again in Salt Lake City in 2002, where, at the age of thirty-nine, I was

chosen as one of the 200 Olympians who carry the famous torch that starts the games and symbolizes the Olympic spirit.

There's still one more chapter to the story because I'm doing it again. In 2010, I'll be competing in the winter Olympics in Vancouver, becoming the first athlete ever to compete in four different winter Olympic events covering *four different decades*. At the age of forty-seven, I will be competing against athletes who hadn't even been born when I competed in my first Olympics back in 1988.

Visualization isn't a theory or some vague idea. It *works*.

## Why Does It Work?

William Murray says that when you commit yourself, when you clearly and powerfully focus on a specific goal, then "providence moves too." But how? Just what is this "providence" he's talking about? Why do vision boards work?

Some of the stories you'll read might seem too amazing, too "coincidental" to be true. As you read them, there might be some part of you saying, "There must be hidden mirrors somewhere!" My story of finding myself in the house of my dreams might seem that way. But it's no more magical or mysterious than flipping a light switch and having your living room light up. There are principles at work here, and if you use them diligently and accurately, they simply do what they do. It's not magic. Vision boards work because they apply some fundamental laws of nature—laws as basic to how the world works as gravity.

When you look at someone like Sally, who's been happily married for thirty years, it's easy to think, "Man, is she lucky! She found the perfect guy, and they're still happy together thirty years later!" But "luck" is an

illusion; it's what you call a situation where you can see the results but don't see the process that *produced* the results.

Was Patrick "lucky" to find the exact watch he wanted at a steep discount? Was it "blind luck" that I happened to end up living in the very same house that I'd admired in a magazine years before? No, it was neither luck nor magic; it was simply nature following its course.

Images are seeds of future events, and when you choose those seeds carefully, plant them in fertile soil, and nurture them well, they will produce the plants, trees, and orchards you desire.

## **The Basic Ingredients**

There are eight basic ingredients that figure into the process of making a vision board and using it to realize your dreams:

1. Goals and Dreams
2. Intention
3. Visualization
4. Beliefs
5. Affirmations
6. Meditation
7. Positive Action
8. Gratitude

We'll briefly explore each of these ingredients in the next eight chapters, after which I'll introduce you to more friends who have vision board stories to tell, and take a look at how these principles have been with us since the dawn of time.



## 2

# YOUR GOALS AND DREAMS

## The First Step

If you could have absolutely anything in the world, including *doing* anything and *being* anything, what would it be? Say there are no limitations to the question. Imagine that you could have *anything*. Have you got a picture of what that looks like?

*You can have that.* In fact, you can have absolutely whatever you want.

Do you notice the thoughts that run in your head in response to that statement? If you're like most people, your mind might react immediately by coming up with all sorts of reasons why this isn't possible. And that limiting inner dialog that tells us why the destination is "impossible" is exactly what keeps so many of us from ever making the journey.

You can use a vision board to help realize goals and dreams of any shape or size. It might be a new career or greater success in your current career, a new car or nicer home, a new wardrobe or change of scene, a new friend or life partner. But no matter what it is, large or small, physical or experiential, the first step is to create a crystal-clear idea of what you want so your brain knows what you're looking for.

### **Telling Your Brain What to Look For**

The human brain is the most complex, powerful machine in the universe. Right now, as you're reading this page, your brain is processing

more than 400 billion bits of information every single second. The reason you're not completely overwhelmed by all that input is that your brain filters out all but the tiniest fraction of that input. Your *subconscious* takes in all 400 billion bits, but you are *consciously* aware of only about two thousand bits—that's one *out of every two hundred million* bits.

The part of your brain that does this filtering is a fine network of nerves at the base of your brain called the *reticular activating system* (RAS). The beauty of the RAS is that you can tell it exactly which bits of information to look for.

Think of it as a search engine, like Google. Imagine you're looking for a certain kind of wristwatch. Would you go online and print out *all* the information on the internet? Of course not; you could never look through that mountain of printouts. Instead, you type "lady's Omega wristwatch" into your search engine, and it combs the internet for the specific information you requested.

That's exactly how the RAS works, and it works thousands of times faster and more efficiently than any computer search engine. But if you don't tell it what to look for, it doesn't know. Without clear instruction, the RAS can only try to pick up clues from all our random thoughts and emotions, and ends up going in all directions at once.

Which is exactly what most people's lives feel like.

If Patrick Burke had thought, "I wish I could find a good present for my wife," his RAS would have had little to go on. But he gave himself a focused, specific image. As a result, out of the 400 billion bits of sensory information he was picking up every second, his RAS was able to pick up on the clues that led him to that particular showcase in that particular store. He may not have known consciously *why* he was walk-

ing into that particular store or had any conscious awareness of the special one-day sale taking place. But his subconscious, being tuned to the "affordable Omega watch" frequency by repeated exposure to that image on Patrick's vision board, saw all the clues it needed to nudge Patrick in the right direction.

"The journey of a thousand miles," wrote Lao Tzu, "begins beneath your feet." In the journey of transforming your life, asking and honestly answering the question "What do I want?" is that first step that lies beneath your feet.