



## Trashmagination Podcast 5: Dream Board and Gratitude Box

Welcome to Trashmagination, a podcast about reimagining trash. I'm Carla Brown.

\*\*\*

It's the beginning of a new year, and I have been doing goal setting. I learned a process from my friend Leanne Cusumano Roque where you lay out annual possibilities and then choose your actual annual goals.

Today I want to share two other ways I work on goal setting. Both projects involve making something, which should appeal to all of you who love to make things, but they are not about using up trash.

My goal with Trashmagination is not only to show people how to make cool stuff from trash. It's also to share a mindset of creative reuse. My goal is to **help you look at what you have and that your first thought would be** "what can I make with this so it will be more useful or inspire me more?"

For goal setting, this means looking at ideas that others might disregard, or ideas that don't normally go together.

So I was reading this book called *The Creative Architect* by Pierluigi Serraino, which is about a 1950s creativity study of the top architects of the day. The researchers were trying to understand what causes someone to become a creative genius. On page 216, it said:

"Creativity is the reassembling of existing knowledge... Creativity involves associative memory working exceptionally well to bring together concepts and ideas routinely thought to be far apart." Wow I love that – let's read it again.

So Trashmagination is all **about reassembling & bringing together concepts and ideas routinely thought to be far apart.**

So my **goal-setting projects involve reassembling memories and ideas to give you guidance on your goals.**

Dream Board - <http://trashmagination.com/dream-board/> and <http://trashmagination.com/what-makes-me-happy/>

To make my dream board, I kept a list of what makes me happy - evolved into these categories:

- **Sources of Passionate Energy** – a lot of physical activities BODY
- **Sources of Peaceful Energy** – quieter activities like folding warm laundry and campfires, but also things I might see such as treehouses and strings of lights - SPIRIT
- **Sources of Intellectual Joy** – things I read but also some events, tv shows, things I like to learn – MIND
- **Family Life**
- **Nature**
- **Teachers**
- **Public Figures**
- **Food**
- **Favorite Places**
- **Songs**

Then looked for photos. People say to look in magazines, but **the things I love are rarely in magazines**, so I searched on images.google.com and saved the images, or I took photos of things that I own, then printed them out in color. I don't have a color printer so I put them in a Word document and then got them printed.

Then I got a big brown piece of kraft paper – as big as my kitchen table – laid out all the images. My goal was to lay them out in a circle to show how the love of one thing can be related to the love of something else.

In general, items on my left side of the dream board related to internal processes like bravery and values and the items on the right related to external processes like making things and connecting with people.

**I don't think I could give a template.** You need to think about how things are connected and flow through your life.

- Ideally lay it out somewhere and leave it for a while to percolate – so not the kitchen table.
- Take a photo of it each time you leave in case a partner, kid, pet or wind moves things around.
- Could put a circle of tape to start and glue it down later

Gratitude Box - <http://trashmagination.com/my-daily-gratitude-journal-in-a-box/>

You have probably heard that if you **cultivate a sense of gratitude, you will be happier**. Also, if you have a system for gratitude in your life, it helps with goal setting, because it reminds you of what works for you.

I have been keeping it since June 2013. It is a small sturdy purple box that holds 365 index cards. At the top of each card is a date. Then I write the year and a note. So on one card, there are notes from a single date year after year.

I started it at a time when I was starting to not enjoy my job. It took more than a year to finally leave that job.

During that first year, the gratitude journal helped me do 3 things:

- Find at least **one good thing** per day
- **Took the focus off my job** as the main way I measured my day
- Was a daily reminder that **I was the only one** who could add more good stuff in my day – I needed to **take this life by the steering wheel** and get it more jam packed with stuff I love

After that first year, I sat and read the cards. And most were not interesting. They just said what had happened and it reminded me how I felt, but it didn't feel like I was learning.

The second year, I tried to write why I was grateful and what I learned. I needed to **force myself every day to do that extra mental step of translating events into life lessons**. What did this actually teach me?

I shared this with my Weight Watchers group, and my leader asked, "**What if nothing good happened to you that day?**" I said – you had clean water. You had a warm place to sleep. You had choices.

I think the reason it helps with goal setting goes back to that book *The Creative Architect*. The study showed that **creativity was very much a memory game**. It was all about the ability of someone to remember ideas and then associate ideas together which were not connected.

When I keep a gratitude journal, and every day I read what I did for the previous three years on that day, it is **forcing a random collection of memories into one rectangular card** - memory reshuffle happens.

- Small benefits - I enjoyed trying a new recipe and one year later I make that same recipe.
- Huge benefits - I can actually sense the momentum of my life shifting year-over-year, and it gives me the courage - a **courage engine**. I think everyone needs a courage engine.

## Tips:

- I usually prep the next 3-4 days of cards by **writing the prompt “I am grateful”** – that way I **center my brain** on the task as soon as I start.
- I keep the box and a pen **right beside my bed**. It is the **last thing I do** before getting into bed.
- When I **travel, I bring the cards** for the days when I will be away. I put them next to my bed wherever I am.
- I print in my **best handwriting**. If I was messy, I might be sad when I look at a card, wishing I had taken the time to make it look nicer.

If you make these activities, I would love to see them. Tag them #trashmagination on Instagram for example.

One of my goals for this year is to be **more connected with my friends’ goals**. I have been emailing my friends one-by-one to learn about their goals. It’s going to take me a while to email everybody but the answers I have received so far have been incredible!!! My friends are such awesome human beings!! So if you want to share some of your goals, email [trashmagination@gmail.com](mailto:trashmagination@gmail.com) and if I see an article or hear a podcast or I know someone who can help you, I will!

Until next time – May you see your trash as just another source of art – and goal setting! - in your life.

## For Show Notes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzF6w1oUNE8> – Start and End Happy Sarah Trimmer

- Today I am grateful for...
- Today I helped someone by...
- Something that made me happy today...
- Today I learned...
- Tomorrow I will... (In the future, I will...)