

TL

*the welcome kit*



LAUREN LAYNE

# welcome



*Hi there! I'm Lauren Layne, the New York Times bestselling author of 30+ romantic comedies, [Pinterest](#) addict, and fancy-life enthusiast.*

If you've found your way to my welcome magazine, it means you've signed up for my newsletter, and I thank you, truly. As a rare "not-on-Facebook gal," email really is my best way to stay in touch with like-minded people.

Who are those like-minded people?

People like you! People that either love reading books with a happy ending, who aspire to tell stories of their own, or anyone who just plain appreciates that life is short, and that *today* is the day to bust out the good stuff, and to create the dream life of your Pinterest boards or Instagram #goals.

*follow me*



*Lauren Layne*

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# 01 Why you should *design* your life

Does this sound familiar?

*"Once upon a time, I was just a girl with a dream ..."*

It's a sentiment often uttered on a website or Instagram post with a smiling woman living in a charming farmhouse, or swanky apartment. Either of which looks like a staged romantic comedy set. It's the sort of life that looks like it comes from luck, not dreams.

And maybe, just maybe, you've rolled your eyes and thought, "Yeah, whatever. I've got a dream too. I've also got debt, make minimum wage, *and and and...*"

But, real talk: I *am* that happy woman, living my dream life that was once a pure hypothetical. And I am that woman uttering phrases like, *once upon a time, I was just a girl with a dream ...*

Years ago, living in a tired apartment building just off the freeway in the 'burbs, my husband and I would joke about a different life. One where we lived in a big city, in an apartment with hardwood floors, both of us glamorous, me in high heels, him in a custom suit.

What's funny to me in hindsight is we were *truly* joking. That fancy life—that was a life for *other* people, not *real* people like us. *Or was it?*

*"You can't create the life you want until you can envision the life you want."*

Around that same point in my life, I was starting to give my career some serious side eye.

In my 20s, I was an e-commerce and web marketing manager. And actually, I liked the work itself just fine. But the corporate lifestyle felt really toxic to me. I felt my productivity and passion stifled by office politics, minuscule raises, and the rigidity of the 9-5 life. I fell into a soul-crushing circle of Friday afternoon euphoria, Sunday night dread, and Monday morning despair. And some part of my soul began to wonder:

***Is this all there is? Is this life?***

My breakthrough moment was shockingly simple. I was at work on an average Tuesday, instant-messaging with my friend and colleague Melissa (who was questioning life in the same way I was), when she asked me:

**If money were no object, and you could spend your days doing anything you wanted, what would you *do*?**

I didn't even hesitate: *I'd be a writer.*



Just like that, I had the complete picture of my ideal life. I would be a full-time writer, living in a city, in an apartment with hardwood floors and high heels.

I started my book the next day.

Did that dream life seem a million miles away from my current life with its dreary apartment and cubicle career? *Yup.*

But I got there. I'm now a full-time author living in Manhattan, and yes, I have hardwood floors and rock stilettos.

How? Let's just say that getting crystal clear on what I wanted was *pivotal.*

Your dream life may look nothing like mine. Maybe you hate the city, don't care about hardwood floors, and high heels hurt your feet.

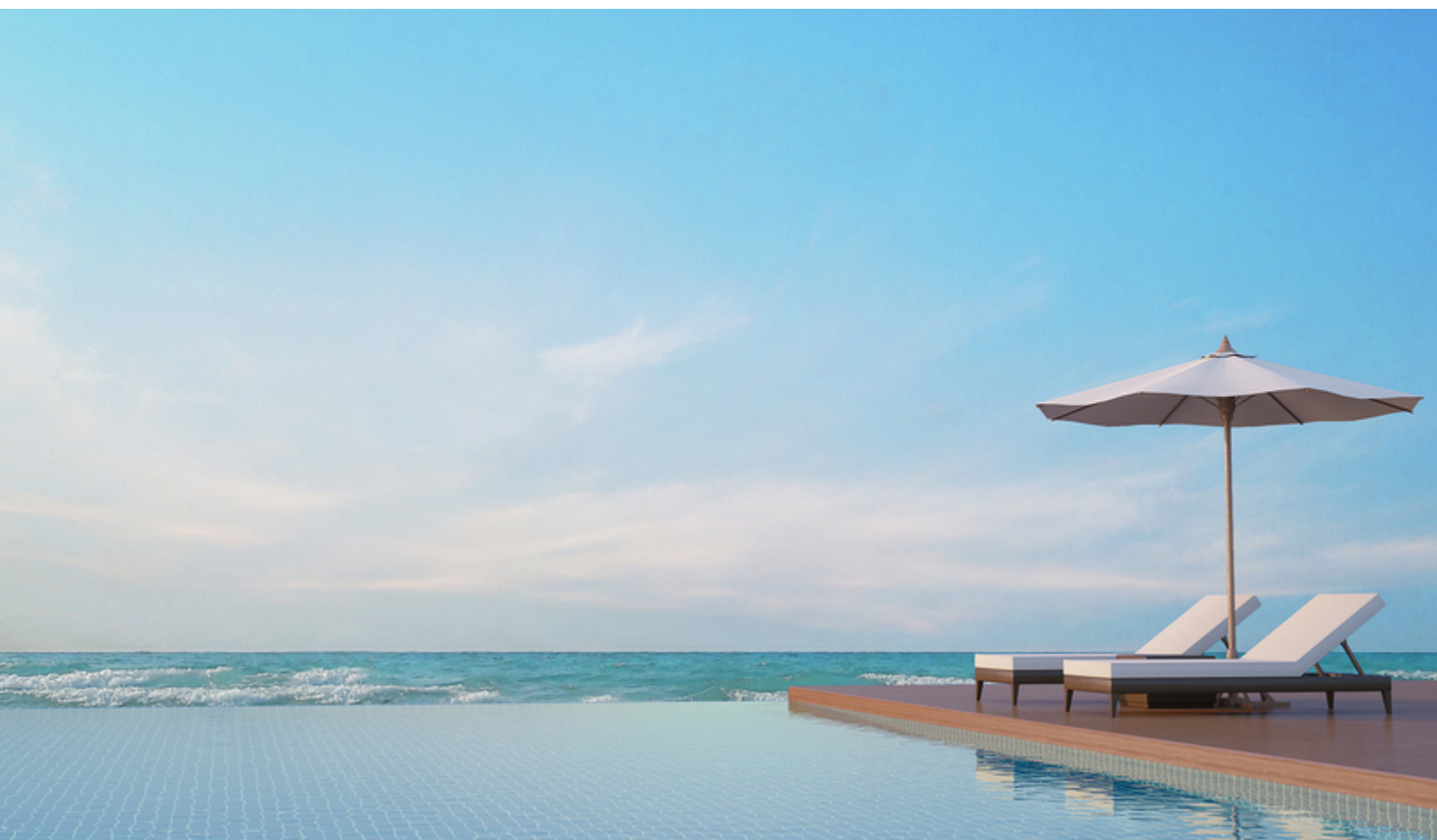
Totally fine. **The secret is be able to visualize and articulate what you *do* want out of your dream life.** So many people spend time focused about the things in our life that they don't like: the long commute, the small house, the outdated car, the constant stress of being *busy*.

But ask those people what they're doing to *change* it? You'll often get a litany of excuses for all the reasons they're stuck in their current situation. **Very few people are truly stuck.** They just don't believe an alternative is possible, or it feels *hard*.

It's time to start believing that a different life *is* possible, and that the hustle will be worth it. Just for a second, stop lamenting your current situation, and start dreaming big about your *future* situation. What does it look like?

Are you walking the red carpet as an award-winning screenwriter? Taking two weeks off every July to sip rosé by the lake? Do you have a more flexible work schedule? Own a Tesla?

Life is too short to settle for anything that doesn't light a fire inside you, that doesn't make you feel a little breathless with excitement, that doesn't make your very soul sit up a bit straighter and say, "Yes. *That.*"



# 02 How to Design Your Life in Five Minutes

Think that that goal-setting and making big plans has to be reserved for New Year's Resolutions, or the start of a new month/quarter? Think again!

You can take action *right now* towards a better life, and I'd bet you've got access to everything you need at this very moment:

- (1) 5 minutes
- (2) A pen/paper or note-app on your phone
- (3) Your daydreams & imagination
- (4) The belief that your dream life is possible



# Your Lifestyle Design Plan

## Pick a time-frame.

If you're new to goal-setting or big dreaming, I'd recommend a 5 year vision plan, and that's what I'll be using in my examples. But anywhere from 1-10 years works great!

## Dream it.

Close your eyes, and picture yourself **as though you've just lived your *ideal* five years**. Where you living? Who are you with? What are wearing, doing, eating, driving, working on? Why are you so excited to wake up every morning?



# Your Lifestyle Design Plan

—continued

Write it.

Grab your pen or favorite note-taking app, and imagining your hypothetical self at the end of those five years, answer the following prompts. Remember, to answer them as your best-case, best-life scenario in the future, not necessarily your current life! Think **big**!

*My average day looks like ...*

*I'm really proud that I ...*

*I'm the type of person who {owns, is, does, lives} ...*

# Your Lifestyle Design Plan

—almost done

## Plan it.

For each of the above visions, write down one thing you can do *today* to take a step in that direction. Think in terms of micro-actions; the more manageable and achievable the task seems right this very second, the more likely you are to actually do it.

For example, if in the above prompts, you wrote *I'm really proud that I'm a published author*, that means you'll need to write a book! Your action item for TODAY could be something like, "Type the words: *Chapter One*." That's it! Or, if you answered the prompt, "I'm the type of person who summers in the Hamptons," your *today* action-item could be researching the cost of Hamptons house rentals. And then, maybe tomorrow, you figure out how much money you'd have to make to pull that off. And the day after *that*, you brainstorm ways to supplement your income. The day after that, researching starting an Etsy store. And so on.

I know it seems like those little steps won't make a difference towards big goals, but remember that *all* amazing lives have to start somewhere. A year from now, you'll be so glad you took these first steps. **Repeat this 3-action to do list daily.** Baby steps add up!

1.

2.

3.

“

Nobody will hand  
you your dream  
life. Be *relentless*  
about building it  
by yourself, *for*  
yourself.

—LAUREN LAYNE

# 03

## Favorite Pinterest Boards

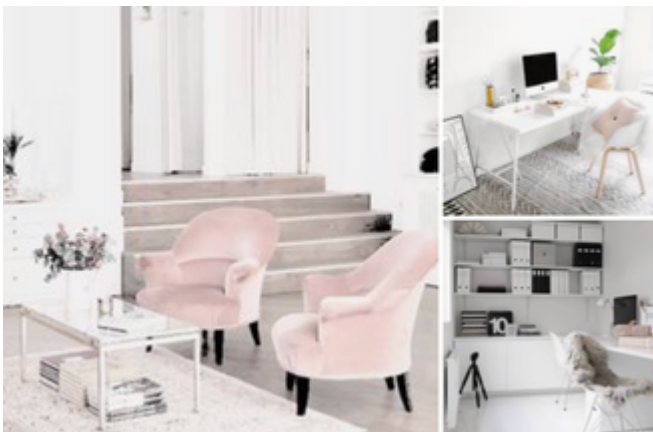
Whenever I'm feeling a little aimless or uninspired, Pinterest is my go-to for an instant dose of inspiration! Here are some of my favorite boards when I want to remember to sparkle. *(clicking each board will open in Pinterest)*



*Dream Life*



*Luxury Lifestyle*



*Writing Spaces*



*Motivational Quotes*

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*for writers*

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# 04 Tips for New Writers

## *One - Just Start*

I hear this a lot: *"I want to write a novel, but I don't know where to start."* My response isn't a popular one, but it's the honest-to-God brutal truth: you're thinking about it all wrong. There is no *where* to start, there's only *when*. As far as writing is concerned, **start** isn't a noun, it's a verb. The only way to write a novel is to just sit down and do it. Quit thinking there's some magic trick you're missing. It's just plain, old-fashioned *hard*, but you've got this!

## *Two - Pick one thing to say no to*

Another thing I hear a lot of: *"I want to write a book, but I don't have the time."*

Nobody has the time! Real writers *make* the time. And yes this sometimes means trade-offs. If you're feeling like there just aren't enough hours in the day/week to start your book, **create an hour!** Write down how you spend every hour of every day for a week, and then pick one thing that you can say *no* to in order to clear time to write. Maybe it's your nightly TV show. Skipping your team's game. Or happy hour with your coworkers. Or even your precious reading time in the evenings. Yes, it does suck a little! But you want to be a writer? *You've got to want to write more than anything else.*

# Tips for New Writers

... continued

## *Three - Start every chapter in the middle of the action*

This is one of my favorite tricks when I don't know what to write next, or when I worry my story feels dull: open the chapter in the midst of something happening. Don't start a chapter with your heroine making coffee before the doorbell rings with Big News, make the first sentence her opening the front door to that life-changing news. You can always go back during the editing process and add transitions if it feels too abrupt, but starting with the action ensures something is actually *happening* in your story.

## *Four - Don't analyze your writing as you're writing*

Worried the actual writing is clunky and awkward? It probably is. First drafts are usually a bit of a mess, even among the pros. But stressing about it won't get the book done. Instead of writing a sentence and then immediately going back to tweak it and make it better, force yourself to write the next sentence. In the words of Nora Roberts, "I can fix a bad page. I can't fix a blank page."

## *Five - You have only one goal: to type The End*

Nothing will teach you as much about writing a book as actually *finishing* a book. There is no greater lesson, no bigger moment in a writer's career than typing *The End* on your first novel. Don't go spending time reading another book on craft, or attending another conference, or building your social media platform until you have a *finished* manuscript!



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Every minute of every  
day, you have a choice:

Be average.

Or be extraordinary.

What you choose to do  
*right this very second*  
matters.

- LAUREN LAYNE





Thanks so much for making the time to read this welcome magazine. I hope it sparked something to make your day a little brighter.

*Lauren Layne*

Stay tuned for more great content!

You're now signed up for my newsletter, where I send new book releases, blog content, and bonus materials! In the mean time, be sure to check out my books & blog for more happily-ever-after goodness!

**BOOKS**

**BLOG**

