



Photo: Joanne Chase

# Live Out Loud

## Shoot for the Moon

BY MAE LEFRANÇOIS

To live out loud is to live life freely and boldly, with the goal of realizing dreams and bettering the world. It is to enjoy a full, rich life that fulfills us intellectually, spiritually, socially, physically and emotionally. It is to live life passionately and fearlessly.

**T**o live out loud, we need a plan, beginning with some idea of what it is we want to achieve, refining it as we go along, and consistently bringing focus to our goals and dreams. A plan will help us stay off the path of least resistance, a path that won't lead us within reach of our dreams. We may not get everything we include in our plan, but if we at least have a plan, we will get more of what we want out of life.

*Shoot for the Moon!* was a workshop developed for the Nova Scotia Girl Guides' Engineering Quest (EQ) 2007 Pathfinders/Senior Branches event. Depending on how Guiders want to tackle it and what aspects they wish to emphasize, the entire workshop can require from one to three meetings. At EQ, the workshop was completed in one three-and-a-half hour session.

As with all Pathfinder and Senior Branches activities, in *Shoot for the Moon!* Guiders are there to facilitate, and not to impose ideas or views unless asked to by the girls. This workshop's effectiveness is greatest when it is led by girls as much possible.

### Dream list

Have the girls in groups, or individually, lay out their priorities and dreams for their lives in the areas of:

- education (vocational school, college, undergraduate university, graduate university?)
- career (job, professional career?)
- family (partner, kids, where to live?)
- adventures (volunteer for community work overseas, travel to Machu Picchu, hike the Trans Canada Trail?)
- other interests (learn another language, learn to fly a plane, become a SCUBA instructor?)
- social life (lots of friends, few friends?)
- volunteerism (how to give back to the community?)

This is a "blue sky" activity. These are the girls' dreams, and should be voiced freely and without reservations or fear of criticism.

### Education and Careers

Have the girls discuss the careers they are interested in and why. They might mention careers that are fun and interesting; that provide a good income, which gives them independence and freedom; that help people; that are self-fulfilling; or that involve something they think they would be good at. There are no right or wrong answers here.

Help the girls define the education path to realize their career choices. For example, to launch a career as a medical doctor, they will need an undergraduate degree in the life sciences, three years of medical school, and several years of interning.

To facilitate this discussion, the Guider will need some broad background knowledge of most classes of careers. For example, an undergraduate university degree will take on average four years and graduate/professional education generally requires a minimum of four additional years. After that, it can take five or ten years to build a career. Alternatively, the girls can look up the requirements on the Internet and bring their answers to the next session.

## Family

Discuss life partners and children with the girls as considerations in their planning. If they think they will want a life partner, finding the right person can take time. Have the girls discuss the characteristics of a good life partner. How should partners treat each other? How should the work/finances/resources be shared? How should decisions be made? Undoubtedly, the girls will have a lot to say about this.

Do the girls want to raise children? What are the pros and cons? (Eighty per cent of our EQ girls said they want children.) How late in life do, or should, they want to have their child or children? Would they consider adoption? Why have children at all?

Have the girls discuss the pros and cons of having children earlier in life versus later in life. There is no preferred way. However, if they wait until their professional lives are established, they could be pushing the upper end of the fertility envelope. Should they take time out to have children immediately after graduating or between undergraduate and graduate school? Do they want to take time off when they have children, and if so, how much time? Discuss the pros and cons of the various options.

Also discuss childcare considerations. Most girls will probably have been, and may still be, babysitters. Have them calculate their "salary" as babysitters based on their hourly rate. This would only be a fraction of what they will have to pay out for childcare.

As Guiders facilitating these discussions, we should avoid imposing the model of "how we did it" on the girls' discussions. The world has changed. There are many options out there, and girls should feel free to consider all of them.

## Adventures and Other Interests

The girls should also discuss their adventure and outside interest dreams. If they want to travel or work overseas, hike the entire Trans Canada Trail, get their pilot's licence, become a SCUBA instructor or whatever, they'll need to factor the costs in time, money and energy into their overall plan.

## Social Life

Friends take a while to cultivate, and the girls may change friends as they go along in life. Point out how the friends they had in Sparks, Brownies and Guides are not all necessarily the ones they now have in Pathfinders.

## Volunteerism

Active volunteerism is an acknowledgement that we all have a duty to put back into our community to help sustain it. What are the girls interested in? How would they fit this in their life plans?

## Plan Map

Have the girls map out their plan to live out loud by milestone ages. The two examples below have been adapted from some of the plans the girls at EQ developed.

### One girl's milestones as she becomes a medical doctor:

Age	Milestones
23 yrs old	complete undergraduate degree in biochemistry; write the MCAT and get accepted into med school
26 yrs old	complete med school
30 yrs old	intern for a while, find life partner
32 yrs old	volunteer with Médecin Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) for two years
34 yrs old	give birth to first child
35 yrs old	join a hospital
37 yrs old	give birth to second child
40 yrs old	strike out for private practice; volunteer for Heart and Stroke Foundation and Girl Guides of Canada

### One girl's milestones as she works towards a career in politics:

Age	Milestones
22 yrs old	graduate with a B.A. in international studies; learn how to hang glide
25 yrs old	volunteer with an international NGO for five years, drilling wells and improving water quality and access in third-world countries; find the love of her life
30 yrs old	earn an M.A. in international studies in England; work for the United Nations to better the life of children in developing countries
35 yrs old	move with her partner to Indonesia so both can help the people there lead better lives
37 yrs old	start up the first Girl Scout unit in a remote part of Indonesia
40 yrs old	take time off with earnings-to-date to visit various parts of Southern Asia as tourists; become a drumming expert
43 yrs old	back in Canada, run for office for a national political party
45 yrs old	become federal minister of international affairs

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After the girls lay out a plan, have them symbolically (or otherwise) "shoot for the moon." At the EQ workshop, we painted a crescent moon and stars on a bed sheet. Our girls each wrapped their plan around a foam rocket and, with the aid of air bladders, literally aimed for the moon with their life plans. Many rockets managed to hit the moon; those that didn't landed among the stars! Your girls might do the same thing, or they could place their plans in a unit time capsule; wrap them around darts and throw them at a moon target; or tie them to helium rockets and release them somewhere safe. Whatever way they choose to "shoot for the moon," they'll be celebrating their commitment to live their lives out loud! 🌕

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