

Reality is the Sum of Dreams

I found this written in a notebook of mine from fourteen years ago,

Reality is the sum of people's dreams. By putting your dreams into the equation, you will increase the value and magnitude of reality.

It sounds fluffy at first, like it needs to be superimposed on a picture of a rainbow. But there's nothing far-fetched or silly about it when you think on it.

Every creation in your world, from your iPhone to your T-shirt, to your coffee grounds, to that song on Spotify, is the result of someone's idea or dream. There's a Latin phrase I love,

Agere sequiter credere

It means, roughly, "Action follows belief." This isn't aspirational, it's a logical necessity, baked into the structure of reality. My favorite economist, Ludwig von Mises, defines the preconditions for all purposeful action:

- Discontentment with one's present state
- A vision of something better
- Belief in the ability to get there

Every element of our experience – from norms and traditions, to languages and laws, to eggs and bacon – came about as a result of discontentment, vision (or dream), and belief. Someone had to dream of crossing an ocean as a precondition to building a ship. The city you were born in is likely one outgrowth of that dream.

In a very real sense, reality is the sum of people's dreams. In a very real sense, when you expand yours, and have the boldness to pursue them, you add them to the sum and expand reality.

My good friend TK Coleman likes to say that reality will expand to accommodate your dreams. We might also say that reality will expand as a result of them.