

MODULE #9: Personal Mission, Vision and Goals

Objectives

- Participants will understand the importance of vision, mission, and goals.
- Participants will formulate personal vision, mission, and goals.
- Participants will build a better understanding of where they want to go and what things they would like to accomplish.

Context



Leaders must have a solid vision in order to be effective. A leader must know what makes their followers stick and then use that knowledge to create a vision that will inspire. Furthermore, a leader has an obligation to not only formulate a specific vision but also to make sure that the followers have a clear understanding of that vision. Their vision should transform their followers. Visions empower followers. If followers feel that there is true potential in the vision, they will be eager to become part of it. If the vision seems unrealistic, followers are bound to feel alienated and lose all motivation to contribute to the vision.

Handouts & Resources Needed:

Handout 9.1: Developing a Personal Vision Statement

Handout 9.2: Mission

Handout 9.3: Goals

Handout 9.3A: Understanding Where You Are Right Now

Handout 9.3B: The Areas that let you Operate by “Accident”

Pens/pencils

Sheet of paper – one for each participant

Journals – one per students

Activity #1: Writing a Personal Vision Statement (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Refer to “Developing a Personal Vision Statement: Handout 9.1 and tell participants about what a vision is and how leaders can use it.
- Ask participants to think about their past to identify important events in their lives in preparation for writing a vision statement (refer to Step 1. Handout 9.1).
- Ask participants to determine what they want for their future (refer to Step 2. Handout 9.1).
- Ask participants to write an article on how they have made a difference (refer to Step 3. Handout 9.1).

- Once steps one through three are completed, ask participants to begin writing a short vision statement in their journal (Step 4. Handout 9.1).
- Debriefing

Activity #2: Writing a Mission Statement (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Explain to participants that every organization has a mission statement. Ask them why organizations produce mission statements? What is the value in having a personal mission statement? Does a person's mission statement change throughout his or her life?
- Review ASPIRA's mission as an example (Handout 9.2).
- Ask participants to construct a mission statement for the club.
- Debriefing

Activity #3: Setting Goals (55 min)

Procedure:

- Icebreaker
- Explain to participants that "Goals are the plan of action needed to reach a vision. Goals establish the framework of your vision. When developing your goals, you should remember to keep them realistic and attainable. Furthermore, goals should fulfill the mission statement". Refer to Handout 9.3.
- Ask participants to complete the handout entitled "Understanding Where You Are Right Now." (Handout 9.3A)
- Ask the students to share and explain their answers by calling on different students for each question.
- Ask a couple students the same question.
- After this exercise is finished, distribute the handout entitled "The areas that let you operate by accident" (Handout 9.3B) and have the group complete the worksheet by focusing only in one area that was mentioned in the previous exercise.
- Have a couple of students share their answers.
- Point out the elements that lead toward the achievement of a goal and the consequences that can be expected if such a goal is achieved.
- The following questions can be used to generate discussion:
 - Why are goals important?

- Does writing down a goal make it more likely that you will accomplish it?
 - How do goals differ from wishes and dreams?
 - What can a person do if he or she is uncertain about goals?
 - What are some pitfalls of goal accomplishment?
- Tell participants that according to research in the area, youth who do not set goals or make plans for their future are at higher risk for dropping out of school.¹
- Debriefing

¹ Brown, Duane (2007). *Career Information, Counseling, and Career Development (Ninth Ed)*, pp. 113-114. San Francisco: Pearson Education, Inc.

VISION

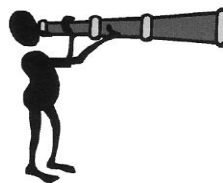
Leaders must have a solid vision in order to be effective. A leader must know what makes his/her followers tick and then use that knowledge to create a vision that will inspire. Furthermore, a leader has an obligation to not only formulate a specific vision but also to make sure that the followers have a clear understanding of that vision. Their vision should *transform* their followers. Visions empower followers. If followers feel that there is true potential in the vision, they will be eager to become part of it. If the vision seems unrealistic, followers are bound to feel alienated and lose all motivation to contribute to the vision.

As a leader, you yourself have to "walk the talk". If you set forth a vision, then you have to be its chief supporter. You have to be the one who "lives the vision" from the word "go." In this way, the followers see that you have faith in the vision and that you are willing to work towards it. Most likely, your attitude will rub off on your followers.

Kouzes and Posner claim that a vision is an *ideal and unique image of the future*. Moreover, a vision is the image of the possibilities of the future. Within organizations, the vision jump-starts everyone's energy. However, these groups need to have a shared vision by which they are bound together by a common aspiration. Organizations simply cannot function with multiple visions. A *shared vision* is created through the compilation of many separate personal visions from the different views of the followers.

Guidelines for Constructing a Vision

1. Make it EXCITING!
2. Challenge yourself and others to reach new heights.
3. Put a deeply held value or feeling into words.
4. Portray a realistic future.



Developing A Personal Vision Statement

Organizational visions are influenced greatly by our assumptions about people and the world in which we live. No matter how grand the opportunity, if a leader is not open to it, the vision for developing that opportunity will be constrained. Ultimately, the benefits from that particular experience will prove to be relatively few in number and will not leave a very lasting impression. With this in mind, consider developing your own personal vision. We have already defined vision as "an ideal and unique image of the future". In creating your own vision, you are encouraged to think freely and idealistically. The following steps have been created to act as a guide in developing your vision. They can be adhered to as much or as little as one would like, but in no way should they inhibit your creative process or final product.

Step 1. Think about your past.

- Before you attempt to write your vision statement, we recommend you write down significant past events. Consider Shepard and Hawley's "lifeline" approach:
- Draw your lifeline as a graph, with the peaks representing the highs in your life and the valleys representing the lows. Start as far back as you can remember and stop at the present time.
- Next to each peak, write a word or two identifying the peak experience. Do the same for the valleys.
- Now go back and think about each peak, making a few notes on why each was a high point for you.
- Analyze your notes. What themes and patterns are revealed by the peaks in our life? What important personal strengths are revealed? What do these themes and patterns tell you about what you're likely to find personally compelling in the future?

Step 2. Determine what you want

Are you in school *to do something* or are you in school *for something to do*? If your answer is "to do something," take out a sheet of paper and at the top write, "What I want to accomplish." Now make a list of all the things that you want to achieve in school. For each item, ask yourself, "Why do I want this?" Keep on asking why until you run out of reasons. By doing this exercise, you're likely to discover those few times that are the idealized ends for which you strive to reach. Here are some additional questions you can use to help clarify your vision:

- How would I like to change the world for my peers and myself?
- If I could invent the future, what future would I invent for my peers and myself?

- What mission in life absolutely obsesses me?
- What is my dream about my school and my education?
- What do I do that I find absorbing, involving, enthralling, exciting, etc.? What will happen in ten years if I remain absorbed, involved, enthralled, excited, etc.?
- What does my ideal life look like?
- What is my personal agenda? What do I want to prove?

Step 3. Write an article about how you've made a difference

Your responses to the questions just posed should give you some clues to what you would like to accomplish in your life (and why). Now take it a step further. Imagine that it's the year 2005 and you've been selected to receive an award as one of the fifty people who have made a difference in this century. Imagine that a national magazine has put together an article about the difference you've made to your school, family, or community. Write that article. Don't censor yourself. Allow this opportunity to record your hopes and dreams even if you find the process somewhat embarrassing. The more comfortable you are in discussing your innermost wishes, the easier it will become to communicate a vision to others. In writing your article, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are you most proud of?
- What's your greatest contribution to your community's growth?

Then, once you've answered these and similar questions, project your answers into the future. Writing an article like this- and then reading it to your peers - is a very powerful way to clarify what is important to you. By looking back at your life and its potential, you can decide your own "legacy" - what you want the world to remember about you when you leave it. Your article should try and bring this legacy into clearer focus.

Step 4. Write a short vision statement

Taking all of the information and ideas you have just gathered, write your own ideal and unique image of the future for yourself and for your peers/ community. We recommend that this statement be short, because you ought to be able to tell it to others in about 5 to 7 minutes.

Once you have written it, try drawing it, finding a picture that resembles it, or creating a symbol that represents it! Finally, create a short slogan of five to nine words that captures the essence of your vision. A brief slogan is very useful in communication. It's not a substitute for a complete statement, but it should help others to remember the main theme of your vision.

Handout 9.1

WARNING: In order to create the perfect vision statement, you must be willing to spend a lot of time thinking about your lifelong goals. Remember to consider your personal goals and not just your professional goals. Be creative and most importantly, HAVE FUN!!!!

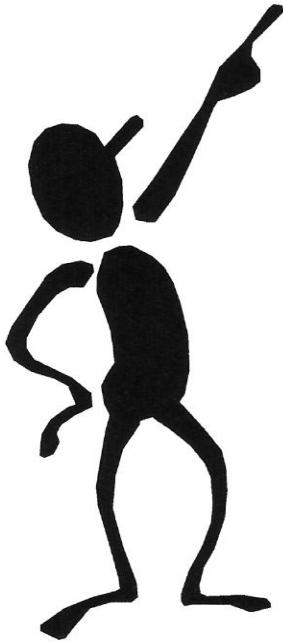
DO ALL THIS IN YOUR JOURNAL!!!!!!

MISSION

Members of every organization in existence are bound together by a shared vision. They work as a group to carry out a mission. Organizations have goals that focus on improving themselves as well as the lives of others. Therefore, they create a philosophical statement of the human and societal needs and problems the organization exists to serve. This is referred to as a **mission statement**.

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT: The ASPIRA Association, Inc.

To empower the Puerto Rican and Latino Community through advocacy and the education and leadership development of its youth.



Handout 9.3

First of all, unless someone is critical to helping you achieve your goal(s), keep your goals to yourself. The negative attitude from friends, family and neighbors can drag you down quickly. It's very important that your self-talk (the thoughts in your head) are positive.

Reviewing your goals daily is a crucial part of your success and must become part of your routine. Each morning when you wake up read your list of goals that are written in the positive, already accomplished form, out loud. Visualize the completed goal. Then each night, before you go to bed, repeat the process. This process will start both your subconscious and conscious mind on working towards the goal. This will also begin to replace any of the negative self-talk you may have and replace it with positive self-talk.

Every time you make a decision during the day, ask yourself this question, "Does it take me closer to, or further from my goal?" If the answer is "closer to", then you've made the right decision. If the answer is "further from," you know what to do.

If you follow this process every day you will be on your way to achieving unlimited success in every aspect of your life.

Taken from Gene Donohue, Gap Mtn. Technologies

UNDERSTANDING WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW

1. List two areas of your life in which you feel you have control and confidence.

2. What are two areas of your life that you let operate “by accident”? For example, you want to get good grades, but fail to do your homework. What are the chances of consistently getting good grades?

THE AREAS THAT YOU LET OPERATE BY “ACCIDENT”

1. Why are they hard to control?

2. What are the positive consequences of not having control over them?

3. What are the negative consequences of not having control over them?

4. What could be a positive outcome if you have control over them?

5. What can you do to have control over them?