

Creating a Personal Vision and Mission Statement

Creating a Vision

It is not always easy to set goals. Most of us know we want to be successful, but we often fail to determine what is needed to become successful. The first step in setting goals is to find a quiet place where you can sit and consider the future. Think about where you can realistically expect to be in three to five years. Place these expectations in one column and then list what you must do to meet the expectation beside it. Here are some questions that may help to get you started:

- What are my strengths?
- What are my major needs?
- What are my short-term career objectives?
- What are my long-term career goals?
- What do I bring to the table?
- What are the most important things I should be accomplishing in my job?
- Do I feel successful at my job at this time? If not, what is preventing me from succeeding? (if working)
- What do I like best about my job? (if working)
- If I could add variety, autonomy, and importance to my job, how would I use them?
- What have been the most significant learning experiences in my career?
- Would I benefit from any particular type of training?
- How do I learn best? (from doing, watching, listening, experimenting?)
- What do I think most hinders my success?
- What scares me?
- What makes me want to learn more?
- Which talents do I lack?
- What is the toughest stretch for me?
- What is my most satisfying success?
- What is my most disappointing failure?
- If I had a Mentor, what are the most important things that person could help me with?

Creating a Mission Statement

Now that you have taken the time to answer some fundamental questions about yourself, see if you can create a mission statement for yourself. Remember that major corporations spend thousands of dollars to have consultants help them develop the “perfect” mission statement. What you create may not be perfect, but it will reflect how you are thinking today. You can always update your mission statement in the future.

A personal mission statement explains who you are and who you want to be, and what you represent. You can use it to guide you when making choices and decisions, large and small, by asking yourself if that choice or decision helps you become who you want to be. A personal mission statement also helps you explain who you are to others.

A Two-Step Approach

A personal mission statement should answer three questions:

- 1) What is my life about: what is my life’s purpose?
- 2) What do I stand for: what are my values?
- 3) What accomplishments am I working toward that will help me fulfill my life’s purpose in a manner consistent with my values?

Step 1: Clarifying Purpose and Values

A. Write a list of at least 20 talents you have.

B. What excites you about your life? About the world? What angers you about your life?

C. About the world?

D. What would a really good day be like for you? Where would you be? What would you do? Imagine anything—it doesn't have to be true.

E. Imagine that today is your 60th birthday, and a reporter is writing a story about what you have done. What would you hope people (your friends, the people you work with, family members) would say about you to the reporter? What difference would you hope you had made in their lives? How do you want to be remembered?

F. Imagine yourself at 100 years old, surrounded by your loved ones—talking with them in a comfortable, relaxed setting. These people have gathered to learn from you and your wisdom. What would you tell them is important in life? Looking back on your life, what really matters to you?
