

The Passion of Vision – Notes from Stephen Covey

From studies of survivors of POW camps to studies on scholastically superior children to high-performance companies, the power of vision was found to be the primary difference between survival or success and death or defeat. Vision is the ability to see beyond our present reality, to create or invent what is not yet, to live out of our imagination instead of our memory.

If our vision is limited to the choices right in front of us, our lives will be dictated by the tyranny of the urgent. If we do not integrate our social, mental, spiritual, and physical needs we will live a frustrating, out-of-balance life. We must do more than mirror the script of our family, friends, associates, or society. We must look toward our own unique attributes and capacities. A vision that empowers us with deep, sustained energy comes from a comprehensive, principle-centered, need-based, endowment-based "seeing." It taps into the deep core of who we are and what we are about. It's fueled by the realization of the unique contribution we have the capacity to make. The power of transcendent vision is greater than the power of scripting deep inside the human personality and it subordinates it, submerges it, until the whole personality is reorganized in the accomplishment of that vision. In other words, it conquers fear, doubt, discouragement, and many other things that keep us from accomplishment and contribution.

Use the 4 unique human endowments of self-awareness, conscience, independent will, and creative imagination to create your own personal mission statement. Go deep into your inner life through **self-awareness** to explore your needs & capacities and look for ways to integrate them. We can look at the mindsets or maps that have controlled our thinking and behavior. We can use our **conscience** to base our vision around "true north" principles that transcend time or culture. We can use our **creative imagination** to envision and give meaningful expression to our mission statement - the blueprint of the final construction. Finally we can use our **independent will** to "swim upstream" to follow our principle-centered values. The key to motivation is motive. More important than the *what* or *how*, is the **why**. Once you get the deep, inner "yes" burning inside, it's a lot easier to say "no" to those things that conflict with your conscience, values, and vision.

Identify your 4 basic human needs: social, spiritual, physical, and mental, drawing a circle for each. Instead of running from circle to circle, trying to keep all the plates spinning, running the bases frantically, overlap the 4 circles and see how to live in the area that all 4 areas share. This is the "fire within."

Here's some deeply probing questions to ask yourself in helping to define your vision:

- What do I feel are my greatest strengths?
- What strengths have others who know me well noticed in me?
- What do I deeply enjoy doing?
- What qualities of character do I most admire in others?
- Who is the person that has made the greatest positive impact on my life? Why?
- What have been my happiest moments in life? Why?
- If I had unlimited time and resources, what would I choose to do?
- When I daydream, what do I see myself doing?
- What are the 3 or 4 most important things to me?
- When I look at my work life, what activities do I consider of greatest worth?
- When I look at my personal life, what activities do I consider of greatest worth?
- What can I do best that would be of worth to others?
- What talents do I have that no one else really knows about?
- If you knew you only had 6 months to live, how would you live your life?
- How you would define your ideal situation? How would you spend your time? What would be the results?
- What is your current situation? How do you spend your time now?
- What specific factors are keeping you from the ideal? What can you do to weaken or remove them?

- What specific factors can help move you toward the ideal? What can you do to strengthen them?
- If there were absolutely nothing hindering you, what would you do right now? What would you do every day.
- What are the important principles upon which my being are based? How do these provide the basis for my doing?
- What are the most important roles in your life?
- What are the most important lifetime goals you would like to fulfill in each role?

You can create your mission statement for your vision in prose, poetry, short phrases, full sentences, whatever is most meaningful. The key is to memorize your mission statement and review it every week before planning the week. This will give you direction for the week and save you from the tyranny of the urgent.