

Creating an *Effective* Personal Mission Statement

The only rule in creating a personal mission statement is that if you are inspired by it, and if it captures the essence of how you want to live your life and project yourself (how do you support your “why” or purpose in life?), then it is a good mission statement.

Personal Mission Statement Development

Step 1: Identify Past Successes. Spend some time identifying four or five examples where you have had personal success in recent years. These successes could be at work, in your community, at home, etc. List two or more of them.

Try to identify whether there is a common theme -- or themes -- to these examples. Write them down.

Step 2: Identify Core Values. Develop a list of attributes that you believe identify who you are and what your priorities are. The list can be as long as you need.

Once your list is complete, see if you can narrow your values to five or six most important values.

Finally, see if you can choose the one value that is THE most important to you.

Step 3: Identify Contributions. Make a list of the ways you could make a difference. In an ideal situation, how could you contribute best to:

- the world in general
- your family
- your employer or future employers
- your friends
- your community

Step 4: Identify Goals. Spend some time thinking about your priorities in life and the goals you have for yourself.

Make a list of your personal goals, perhaps in the short-term (up to three years) and the long-term (beyond three years). Your goals should be specific and time-bound. "I want to run more" is not a goal! "I will be able to do run three miles in less than 25 minutes by August 1st" is a goal.

Step 5: Write Mission Statement. Based on the first four steps and a better understanding of yourself, begin writing your personal mission statement.

Sample Personal Mission Statement Development

1. Past success:

- a. helped implement software to better manage student information - meeting all deadlines
- b. received an award as coach of the year for my child's football team
- c. helped child's school with fundraiser that was wildly successful

- d. increased turnout for the opening of a new church

Themes: Successes all relate to creative problem solving and execution of a solution.

2. Core values:

- Hard-working
- Lives in the moment
- Creative
- Problem-Solving
- Decision-maker
- Friendly
- Outgoing
- Positive
- Family-oriented
- Honest
- Intelligent
- Compassionate
- Spiritual
- Analytical
- Passionate
- Contemplative

Most important values:

- Problem-Solving
- Creative
- Lives in the moment
- Compassionate
- Decision-maker
- Positive

Most important value:

- Lives in the moment

3. Identify Contributions:

- The world in general: develop products and services that help build a more sustainable world. To have a lasting impact on the way people live their lives.
- My family: to be a leader in terms of personal outlook, compassion for others, and maintaining an ethical code; to be a good father and a loving husband; to leave the world a better place for my children and their children to follow.
- My employer or future employers: to lead by example and demonstrate how my work ethic is contagious with fellow employees.
- My friends: to always be there for my friends; and for them to know they can always come to me with any problem.

- My community: to use my talents in such a way as to give back to my community.

4. Identify Goals:

Short-term: To continue my career with an employer with integrity that allows me to use my skills, talents, and values to achieve success for the organization.

Long-term: To develop other outlets for my talents and develop a longer-term plan for diversifying my life and achieving both professional and personal success.

5. Mission Statement:

To live life completely, honestly, and compassionately, with a healthy dose of realism mixed in, while staying true to my imagination and belief that all things are possible if one sets their mind to finding an answer.

Final Thoughts on Developing a Personal Mission Statement

A personal mission statement, is of course personal... but if you want to truly see whether you have been honest in developing your personal mission statement, I suggest sharing the results of this process with one or more people who are close to you. Ask for their feedback.

Your personal mission statement should be written to express how you intend to seek and claim your purpose in life. It should act as a guide to inspire you in making sound decisions that align with your life goals. Your mission statement should always be dynamic, changing as often as your circumstance requires. Just make sure you keep moving in a direction that is true to you.