

Developing a Mission Statement & Vision Statement

All successful men and women are big dreamers. They imagine what their future could be, ideal in every respect, and then they work every day toward their distant vision, that goal or purpose.

– Brian Tracy

Your Personal Mission Statement

Creating a Personal Mission Statement will be, without question, one of the most powerful and significant things you will ever do to take leadership of your life. In it you will identify who you want to be, what you want to do, for whom, and the legacy you want to leave. All the goals and decisions you will make in the future will be based upon it.

A personal mission statement provides clarity and gives you a sense of purpose. A personal mission statement is the guiding principle for your life; it may be only one line e.g. Walt Disney's mission is "To make people happy." Here is a slightly longer mission statement from attorney Robert W. Harris: "My mission is to learn and understand my clients' needs and the external factors affecting them so that I can aggressively and professionally represent them throughout the legal process." Here is another example (source unknown): "My mission is to create a profitable restaurant with a delightful ambiance, delicious food, and excellent service where people can genuinely relish their dining experience."

Your personal mission statement defines who you are and how you will live. It should be able to guide your actions, spell out your overall goals, provide a sense of direction and guide your decision making. Your personal mission statement should contain two basic elements:

- What you want to do – What you want to accomplish and what contributions you want to make
- What you want to be – Character strengths you want to have and qualities you want to develop

Your mission statement is not static. Over a period of several years, your priorities and values are likely to change. That is good because change means growth. Your dreams change and, therefore, so do your goals. As this occurs, it is appropriate for to update or expand your mission statement.

In your heart, you know what's most important to you. Your every day activities – how you live – demonstrates your de facto mission and values. Detailed information on how to develop a mission statement is available from many libraries and bookstores. Also, there are several Web sites with on-line tools to help you define your passion and develop your personal mission statement. You may want to check out these Web sites:

http://www.nightingale.com/tmission_examplestatement.aspx

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Personal-Mission-Statement>

<http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/Leadership/mission.htm>

http://www.quintcareers.com/creating_personal_mission_statements.html

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/materials/spch/Nudelman/200missstateWRKSHTspr03.asp>

The **Worksheet to Develop a Personal Mission Statement** below is a useful tool to help you develop your personal mission statement.

Worksheet to Develop a Personal Mission Statement

Step One – Define what you want to be and do.

What I'd like to do: _____

What I'd like to be: _____

Step Two: Identify an Influential Person.

Think about how this individual has contributed to your life. This person may be a parent, work associate, friend, family member, or neighbor. Answer the following questions, keeping in mind your personal goals on what you want to be and do.

Who has been one of the most influential people in my life? _____

Which qualities do I most admire in that person? _____

What qualities have I gained (or desire to gain) from that person? _____

Step Three – Define your Life Roles.

You live your life in terms of roles – not in the sense of role-playing, but in the sense of authentic parts you have chosen to fill. You may have roles at work, in the family, in the community, and in other areas of your life. These roles become a natural framework to give order to what you want to do and to be. You may define your family role as simply “family member.” Or you may choose to divide it into multiple roles, such as “mother” or “husband.” Some areas of your life, such as your profession, may involve several roles. You may have one role in administration, one in marketing, one in personnel, and one in long-range planning. Two examples:

- Wife/Mother, Manager-New Products, Manager-Research, Manager-Staff Development, Red Cross Chairperson, Friend
- Husband/Father, Salesman-Prospects, Salesman-Financing/Administration, American Cancer Society Regional Director, Friend

Define up to seven life roles and then write these roles in the places provided. Write a brief statement of how you would most like to be described in that particular role. You will gain perspective and balance by identifying your life roles. By writing these descriptive statements you will begin to visualize your highest self. You will also identify the core principles and values that you desire to live by.

Roles & Statements

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Step Four – Write a Draft of your Personal Mission Statement.

Now that you have identified your life roles, and have defined what you want to be and do, you are prepared to begin working on your personal mission statement. In the space provided below, create a rough draft of your mission statement based on your notes from the three steps above. Carry this draft with you and make notes, additions, and deletions before you attempt another draft.

The final test of the value and effectiveness of your personal mission statement is: Does this statement inspire me?

Step Five – Evaluate.

Write a permanent copy to include any revisions to the draft. If possible, commit your mission statement to memory so that you keep your mission and your values clearly in mind. It is important that you do not let your mission statement become outdated. Periodic review and evaluation can help you keep in touch with your own development and keep your statement in harmony with you deepest self. Continually ask yourself these questions:

Is my mission based on timeless, proven principles? Which ones? _____

Do I feel this represents the best that is within me? _____

During my best moments, do I feel good about what this represents? _____

Do I feel direction, purpose, challenge, and motivation when I review this statement? _____

Am I aware of the strategies and skills that will help me accomplish what I have written? _____

What do I need to start doing now to be where I want to be tomorrow? _____

My permanent Personal Mission Statement:_____

Your Personal Vision Statement

A personal vision statement is who you want to be, what you want to do, how you want to feel, what you want to own, and who you want to associate with. It "paints a picture" of the ideal future you will create. It is more graphic and abstract than a personal mission statement. A personal vision statement is typically a sentence or short paragraph. In the 1980s, Bill Gates had a simple vision: "A personal computer in every home, running Microsoft software." Here are two examples of personal vision statements:

- "I am physically empowered; have graduated from college; have four satisfying interpersonal relationships that bring me joy, a soulful connection with God, lots of friends, am having fun everyday, and making at least \$75,000 a year doing work that helps other people."
- "To become the best pediatrician, conducting cutting-edge research, and helping improve the lives of children around the country – and around the world. I will achieve this goal by completing multiple residencies and learning from the world's leading experts on children's health issues, pushing my limits as far as they will go and extending current thinking into new paradigms in partnership with national and international health organizations."

Your personal vision statement is not static. As your vision of your future evolves over time, it is appropriate to update or expand your vision statement. Your personal vision statement will describe how you will fulfill your mission, boost your energy level, and help you maintain your focus and direction.

You may find the **Worksheet to Develop a Personal Vision Statement** below a useful tool as you develop your personal vision statement.

Worksheet to Develop a Personal Vision Statement

Use these questions to guide your thoughts.

- What are the ten things you most enjoy doing? Be honest. These are the ten things without which your weeks, months, and years would feel incomplete.

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

- What three things must you do every single day to feel fulfilled in your work?

| |
|-------|
| _____ |
| _____ |
| _____ |

- What are your five or six most important values...e.g. ambition, competency, individuality, equality, integrity, service, responsibility, accuracy, respect, dedication, diversity, improvement, enjoyment/fun, loyalty, credibility, honesty, innovativeness, teamwork, empathy, excellence, accountability, empowerment, quality, efficiency, dignity, collaboration, stewardship, courage, accomplishment, wisdom, independence, security, challenge, influence, learning, compassion, friendliness, discipline/order, generosity, persistency, optimism, dependability, flexibility?

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

- Your life has six important dimensions, all of which deserve some attention in your personal vision statement. Write one important goal for each of them:

Educational/Intellectual: _____

Family/Home: _____

Financial/Career: _____

Health/Physical: _____

Social/Cultural: _____

Spiritual/Religious: _____

- If you never had to work another day in your life, how would you spend your time instead of working?

- When your life is ending, what will you regret not doing, seeing, or achieving?

- What strengths have other people commented on about you and your accomplishments? What strengths do you see in yourself?

- What weaknesses have other people commented on about you and what do you believe are your weaknesses?

Craft Your Personal Vision Statement

Once you have thoughtfully prepared answers to these questions and others that you identify, you are ready to craft your personal vision statement. Write in the first person and make statements about the future you hope to achieve. Write the statements as if you are already making them happen in your life. Some experts recommend 50 words or less, but it is more useful if you fully articulate the vision you want for your life and your future, rather than be limited by word count.

My permanent Personal Vision Statement: _____
