

FABRICATING A PERSONAL VISION

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One of the most important characteristics that separates us from other creatures on the planet is our ability to dream. This is called telemorphism; projecting ourselves into the future. The noted psychologist and philosopher Martin Buber said that, "...people are defined telemorphically not historically; they are more affected, for better or worse, by visions of their personal future than they are by the realities of their personal pasts." Everyone has dreams and aspirations but often, they lack density and clarity.

A vision is "an image of a system's ideal, distinctive and achievable future state." A vision is important because it:

- provides purpose and meaning
- serves as a magnetic North
- generates energy and enthusiasm
- releases and channels creativity
- engages the spirit
- increases the coherence of activity

Visions can be fabricated for any system...a family, a work group, a temporary team, a department/division with an organization, an organization as a whole, a community, a nation. The system focused on here is YOU. As we cannot achieve that which we are unable to envision, the objective of this exercise is to help you more deeply, and thoroughly appreciate the notion of "vision" by creating one for yourself.

This exercise will take anywhere from one to three hours to complete. You can work on it in one sitting or several. However, make sure that you have uninterrupted time when you are not being pressed by other demands. The exercise will require some soul searching, reflection, in-depth self-examination and hard work. Most of all, you will have to be honest with yourself.

VISION BRAINSTORMING

Complete any or all of the following 19 activities that seem to be most personally relevant and potent for you.

1. Suppose you could be exactly the type of person that you'd most like to be. What would be your most distinguishing and important qualities/characteristics/attributes?
 - a.)
 - b.)
 - c.)
 - d.)
 - e.)

2. What are the most important characteristics of your ideal job/work situation?
 - a.)
 - b.)
 - c.)
 - d.)
 - e.)

3. What are the most important characteristics of the type of relationships you would like to have with your friends?
 - a.)
 - b.)
 - c.)

d.)

e.)

4. What are the most important characteristics of the relationship that you would like to have with your spouse?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

5. What are the most important characteristics of the type of relationships you would like to have with your children?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

6. If you had a year to pursue leisure activities/hobbies/an avocation, what types of things would you do?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

7. What type of things would you like to learn about?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

8. Say you could live anywhere you wanted...what are the most important features of the place you would select?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

9. You have just been given one million dollars that you must award in a lump sum to an outstanding individual. What are the characteristics of the individual that would get the money?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

10. What things would you like to accomplish, but have not yet had the opportunity to do?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

11. Think of several individuals that you most admire. What about them causes this admiration?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

12. Given the chance, what would you like to change about yourself?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

13. What things about yourself do you like most?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

14. Twenty years from now you die. What are the items that you would most like to have mentioned in your obituary?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

15. Say that you just won the lottery (\$250,000 per year paid out for the next 20 years.) What changes would you make in your life?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

16. What are the most important disabling assumptions you have made about yourself?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

In what ways would you be different if these assumptions were false?

17. What are the biggest constraints imposed upon you (by someone else, by your job, by the situation in which you find yourself, etc.)?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

In what ways would you be different if these constraints were erased?

18. What are the biggest constraints that you impose on yourself?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

In what ways would you be different if these constraints were erased?

19. Compose a list of adjectives and adverbs that describe you at your most self actualized and absolute best?

a.)

b.)

c.)

d.)

e.)

f.)

d.)

e.)

PERSONAL VISION THREADS

What are key elements of the image that you have of yourself at your very best? Think about yourself in the "future perfect" tense, but write in the present tense:

- a.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- b.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- c.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- d.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- e.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- f.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- g.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- h.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

- i.) At my very best, self actualized and most fulfilled self, I am ...

PERSONAL VISION STATEMENT

Using as resources your "brainstorming" and "threads," draft a statement of your personal vision.

Your personal vision statement should be:

- *future oriented* ... rather than a projection of the status quo
- *empowering* ... providing an image of what you should/could become at your very best
- *inspirational* ... stimulating/channeling your energy and commitment
- *distinctive* ... reflecting your special capacities and competencies
- *potentially achievable* ... but necessitating a considerable stretch