

CANDIDATE STUDENT-ATHLETE ULTIMATE STRATEGY

An Athletic and Academic Strategic Recruiting Action Plan

CREATED ON BEHALF OF THE ATHLETE AND THEIR PARENTS



ATTAIN YOUR VISION

Lorraine DAversa, BS, MFT, CYT, CWFBN, CH

Online, In-Person Lifestyle Strategist, Empowerment and Wellness Coach and Speaker

DSW Enterprises, LLC; 609-502-0880; Lorraine@LorraineDAversa.com

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Strategic Plan and Considerations
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"Recognize and take all the necessary steps for you to live your dream! Get out of your comfort zone and do something great every day! Become a better athlete, professional and person in each and every way."

Brandon Wynn, World Medalist

As each of us attempt to lead a happy and fulfilling life, we realize there is a process that must take place. This process involves identifying our goals, recognizing what it would mean to reach these goals, developing a strategy to reach these goals and happily attaining and appreciating the accomplishment of these goals. Within each stage of our life this process unfolds and hopefully each of us fully takes part in this process and attains what we have identified and sought. The Candidate Student-Athlete and their parent has the opportunity to identify, strategize, work toward and hopefully, attaining the goal of attending college and participating in collegiate gymnastics. This process has many facets and will involve a multi-disciplinary and multi-professional team effort and the support of the Candidate Student-Athlete's (CS-A) parents. In essence, this process is a strategic plan that will lead you to the attainment of each of your dreams.

Key in placing the Candidate Student-Athlete within the view of the collegiate coaches as a top gymnastics recruit, you will need to create a supportive and nurturing home, coaching and academic experience. On the following pages, I have delineated the components of a strategic plan that is designed to guide you in identifying, organizing and executing your plan and reach the goals that are necessary for confident and successful navigation of the college recruiting process. Determining, scheduling and preparing for official and non-official campus visits.

The creation and implementation of this strategic plan heightens awareness, boosts the candidate student-athlete's confidence and proactively and effectively gets the candidate student-athlete on the radar screen of the NCAA college coaches, rising above the rest of the *pack*.

My assistance of student-athletes and their parents began with my youngest son, Brandon Wynn, who identified and made a commitment to level up and ATTAIN HIS VISION. At JO Nationals, Brandon's junior year, he finished 16th in the All-Around which would not typically place him in a top recruiting position. However, through our efforts, he was one of the top recruits in our Country. According to Brandon, he reached his goals because of three tools (1) his supportive and healthy home life (2) the coaching he



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received from Tyrone Elam, his JO Coach and (3) the process we identified and employed in presenting him to collegiate coaches and their assistants.

In closing, we are very grateful for these opportunities, gifts and successes. Brandon and I have determined that as an expression of our gratitude and passion for living our best lives, we will assist others in living a healthy and empowered life.

Brandon is now a retired USA Senior World Team Member and Captain, a 6-Time All-American, 2018 Inductee to The Ohio State Hall of Fame. Brandon is further expressing his family's four generation real estate development vision with his creation of Wynn Developers, LLC., a Columbus based real estate development company where he utilizes his passion, experience, his BA/MBA, and skills he attained as a Gymnast.

I, too, am utilizing my experience, post-graduate degrees in nutrition, human development and psychology and paying forward as I assist moms of athletes in providing them the tools they need for themselves and their athletic kiddo's. Through my Lifestyle Academy for Moms of Athletes, our moms gain the tools they need to assist both their athlete and themselves and create a healthy, empowered life.

LET'S GET STARTED !



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CANDIDATE STUDENT-ATHLETE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

ASSESSMENT

In order to attain any goal, we have to become fully invested in the process of attainment. To be fully invested, our mind, body and spirit must be in tune and an integral part of the process. In terms of The Candidate Student-Athlete's potential attainment of college acceptance and placement on a gymnastics team, it must be determined if this alignment exists. As such, a successful student-athlete must be invested and capable physically, emotionally and spiritually; he needs strength of mind, body and spirit. Furthermore, in order for this student-athlete to attain his goals, he must be supported by parents that have a similar investment and capability. Parents and athlete make sure you work through and enjoy the Craft Your Vision Statement and Vision Board exercises at the end of this workbook!

THE SPORT OF GYMNASTICS IS YOUR CHILD'S SPORT: Yes, we may enjoy the periphery, as our other children and family may but gymnastics belongs to the gymnast and the gymnast's coach. It is an intimate connection that exists between your son, his coach and the art and their love of gymnastics.

You may say, "What does that mean?"

- BY It means that after determining where our gymnast will train and under whose coaching, we learn to live within the confidence of our decision and do not step within that sacred relationship. When we begin to waiver, we go back to the point of decision and have continued confidence in our choice.
- BY To me, it means that we need to give our gymnast the opportunity to fully embody what it is that he does, including the relationship he has with his coach.
- BY It means, not overanalyzing, don't think that you really know anything about the sport. Play dumb, if you think you know, but I bet, you really don't know! Knowing is not your job, it is your gymnast and his coach's job.
- BY Remember, **our gymnast's success is OUR GYMASNT'S SUCCESS not OURS.** Do not get tied up in overly identifying with your gymnast's success. Whether or not he comes in first or 44th at a meet has nothing to do with YOUR value. Yes, you and your gymnast and his siblings are a team. Each of you have your role; BUT your role is not to jump up on the rings and do an Iron Cross or Maltese but to be supportive, sounding board.



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LIFESTYLE CONSIDERATIONS: ASPIRE TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE

As parents, we need to aspire to lead by example. We have all heard the adage, do as I say and not as I do. Recognizing the import of this adage is important for our gymnasts. The gymnast's life is atypical within our society. It is a life of continually aspiring for success, success in living a healthy lifestyle, success in continually training, success in attaining good grades which is paramount for a gymnast's entry into NCAA gymnastics. Success is not feeling that they are missing out because they can't play as often as their non-gymnast friends do. Success is loving and doing what the gymnast loves. You may say, "How can I help?"

- You can help by leading by example, living that healthy lifestyle, which involves balance, eating healthy foods, being physical fit, becoming your best self. Not getting caught up in what doesn't really matter. Keeping your focus on success, doing what it takes to get there and being fully appreciative of the results.
- Communicate positive energy and support to your gymnast whether you are driving back and forth to the gym, are at home or are sitting at a meet.

HEALTHY, NUTRITIVE AND JOYFUL EATING

Now let's move forward to each of our favorite and sometimes, least favorite subject **Eating.**

I was fortunate to come into motherhood with an undergrad background and degree in nutrition and childhood development. My grad degree is in psychology. I have always been interested in learning about nutrition, what is healthy for us to eat, what fuels our growth and recovery.

To me, education is key, something that our society is lacking. Determine what high-quality nutrition is; Our gymnast, our other children and each of us will benefit. FOCUS on:

- Eating Organic, Plant-Strong, Whole Foods
- Eating lean meats and fish that are grilled or boiled never breaded or fried
- Eating complex carbohydrates such as oatmeal, brown rice, legumes, whole grain breads and quinoa
- Limiting processed sugars as much as possible.
- Deriving fat intake from healthy fats found in avocados, nuts and soybeans.



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- Carbohydrate Placement and Recovery Nutrition is key. Utilize protein shakes that are high in nutrients, whey or vegetable protein. Have one of these shakes available to your gymnast when you pick him up after practice.

Making one step in the right direction is better than taking no action at all.

- What's the healthiest food that you love? Identify it, let your mouth water over it and eat bunches of it.
- What's one bad thing that you can eliminate from your diet today? Identify it, consider the unhealthy aspects of it and eliminate it.
- As eat more of what you love and eliminate one unhealthy food from your diet, your job is done for that month. CONGRATULATIONS AND ENJOY !

Within your new healthy, dietary lifestyle, start slowly, give your body time to adapt. Soon your body will tell you it is feeling healthier, more energetic and wants to make more changes! Utilize this process for your gymnast, for your family and each of you will experience a healthier, happier, proactive and satisfied life experience.

You may be asking how you can employ the above principles, especially considering all the fast foods and processed food choices there are out there combined with the hectic-ness of our days and how little time we seem to have.

CONSIDER THIS HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS AND YUMMY FOOD PLAN:

- Identify and jot down on paper as many foods as possible within the above parameters that you like to eat.
- Add to this list food that is needed to add to the nutritive value of your meals and snacks; then go shopping.
- Shop at a grocery store that has healthy choices. For example, a store that sells locally-grown, organic fruits, vegetables and grains.
- On your least hectic day, take the time to plan your meals for the coming week.
- Each morning (and in part the night before), get up a bit earlier (or stay up a bit later) and lovingly make the food for the day that will support your gymnast and family's health.



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- If necessary, refrigerate what needs to be refrigerated and leave everything else on your counter in serving dishes.

You now have nutritious food available to your gymnast and your family for an entire day. Whenever they are hungry, all they have to do is dish out some of this lovingly prepared, nutritious food. Some of it can be packed up to take to school for lunch. Some of it your gymnast can pack up to take to the gym to provide what is necessary to keep him fueled throughout practice.

For Brandon and me, raw, steamed or roasted veggies are our mainstay. We eat it every day and bring in other foods with the thought in mind that we need and want to and as we do we are further support our health.



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STRATEGIC PLAN IDENTIFICATION, PROCESS and IMPLEMENTATION

Rationale: A major key to our success will be the creation and adherence to Candidate Student-Athlete's Strategic Plan. Said plan will include timelines and identified responsibilities and accountability. Simply put, remember, your goal is:

- To be selected for review by the coaches of your choice by June 30th of your Junior Year.
- To be contacted on July 1st of your Junior Year by the head/assistant coaches you desire for placement on their team.
- To be chosen by the coaches of your choice for an official visit in the fall of your Senior Year.
- To be accepted by the colleges of your choice during the early admission and receive a letter of admission by the end of October of your Senior Year.
- To be in receipt and execute a Letter of Intent offered by the Coach of your choice on November 1st of your Senior Year.

3.A. Creation of Back-Office to include filing and log systems.

Rationale: A major key to your success will be the creation of structure and organization. This structure will involve the creation of a paper file system and computer file system. The computer file can be further enhanced with the development of a personal webpage that houses computer files accessed securely. Listed below is the process I recommend you utilize in the creation of your Back Office:

1. Purchase a plastic file box, legal size hanging files and letter-sized file folders in your favorite color from a store such as Staples.
2. Create a file for each of the 15 NCAA collegiate programs plus a folder for the NCAA, utilizing the plastic tabs to entitle each hanging folder file.
3. The hanging folders will hold any brochure correspondence from the colleges.
4. The inner letter file folder will contain a collegiate/gymnastics' team summary sheet stapled to the inside left. This summary sheet should have contact information for:
 - i. The college (including your academic major department),
 - ii. The coach and all assistant coaches.
 - iii. A picture of the coach (and assistants, if possible) so he will be more easily identified at the meets for introduction purposes.
5. The inner letter file folder will contain a contact log stapled to the inside right. This log should include the following:
 - i. Date of contact
 - ii. Who made the contact
 - iii. Who was contact
 - iv. The nature of the contact



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- v. Required follow-up
- 6. The letter file folder itself will contain:
 - i. Any and all correspondence submitted to the coach and assistants
 - ii. Any and all correspondence submitted to the college
 - iii. Any and all correspondence received from the coach and assistants
 - iv. Any and all correspondence received from the college
- 7. Computer File System: Utilization of Candidate Student-Athlete's computer (word processing, email and Outlook programs) and potential personal webpage for the creation and storage of the above identified information and logs.

3.B. Identification of colleges and collegiate gymnastics team.

Rationale: It is important to fully research the colleges/academies that offer collegiate gymnastics programs in order to determine which college best suits the student-athlete academically, athletically and culturally. Once you have completed this review, rank colleges from 1 through 15. Next create your first, second and third tier. Your first tier includes the colleges you truly want to attend. Your second tier is basically your back-up tier. Your third tier is comprised of those colleges that you don't want to attend. It is important to keep this tiering in mind when communicating with your coaches. Honesty is always the best policy; it is fairer to you, the coaches, and the team and simplifies your life and this process. Research:

1. The coaches, gym facility, student athletes, meet schedule
2. Academic programs and majors
3. Potential academic and athletic scholarships, financial aid, athletic grant-in-aid and loans
4. Academic and testing requirements
5. Application and essays requirements

Link to:

- 1) General information regarding NCAA requirements and eligibility: www.NCAA.org
- 2) in regard to the colleges/academies that offer collegiate gymnastics, please link to <http://web1.ncaa.org/onlineDir/exec2/sponsorship?sortOrder=0&division=1&sport=MGY>

3.C. Creation of Bio/Profile: Dissemination timeline and actualization.

Rationale: A Bio / Profile gives you an opportunity to sell yourself and let your coaches get to know you, your family, your goals, your accomplishments, your thoughts and wishes. Create a bio that is personable, modest and expresses your ethics. Utilize those portions of your Vision Statement that



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will assist you in this expression. To further personalize your bio, include a happy picture of you within the text of your bio.

3.D. Creation of Webpage and YouTube Channel: Dissemination timeline and actualization.

Rationale: an integral aspect of our strategic plan is to reach each college coach and provide him with a clear picture of the Candidate Student-Athlete's desire to compete in collegiate gymnastics and the attributes, skills, characteristics and strengths the Candidate Student-Athlete will bring to the coach and collegiate team. The most effective way to do this is to provide the coach continual access to effectively depicted specifics online, through the use of a website and a YouTube Channel. In addition to the uploaded of the webpage, create a business card that will offer a small picture, contact information to include the website address. This business card should be offered to collegiate coaches, gymnasts and judges, as appropriate.

www. Candidate Student-Athlete Name.com: This website will be comprised of nine main pages and will be hosted through senior year. For additionally credibility to in order to further *market* The Candidate Student-Athlete and his abilities, I recommend that this website stay current through the completion of The Candidate Student-Athlete's collegiate career. Consider the following inclusions:

Page 1. Home Page, to include:

- a. Header graphic
- b. Menu Bar that provides access to subsequent pages
- c. Photograph of The Candidate Student-Athlete

Page 2. Biography Page, to include:

- a. Photograph of The Candidate Student-Athlete
- b. Biographical date: "Biography" (create PDF and link)

Page 3. Training and Statistics Page

- a. Club and coach contact information
- b. Athletic ranking and awards
- c. Current Competition Year Statistics (create PDF and link)
- d. Past statistics
- e. Current Statistics
- f. Identification of future meets to participate in
- g. Combines/ Camps attended

Page 4. Academics Page, to include

- a. High School contact information including principal and guidance counselor
- b. GPA
- c. Current and future course schedule
- d. Desired collegiate major

Page 5. Training and Competition videos of all six events uploaded to YouTube Channel



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- Page 6. Testimonials: Refer to Item F below (create PDF and links)
- Page 7. Community Service
- Page 8. Gallery, to include 5-6 photographs
- Page 9. Contact Information

3.E. Student-athlete communication plans, timeline and execution.

Rationale: Your goal is to keep yourself front and center within the coach’s vision and to make his recruiting task as seamless as possible. Therefore, let him know who you are, let him know your intentions, provide him all the information he needs in order to determine that it is you that he wants on your team!

1. Ten days prior to your next national meet, student-athlete must contact coach via email. This email should have a particular format depending upon whether it is the first or subsequent contact. Initial emails create first impressions so be show that you are polite, modest, helpful, enthusiastic and respectful. Each email should be unique in some fashion.
2. Initial email should include:
 - i. A brief introduction, stating your honest desire to be accepted to the collegiate team and college.
 - ii. Indicate who your coach is and where you train.
 - iii. Indicate which meets you would be competing during the competitive year
 - iv. Attach your bio which includes your photograph
3. Subsequent emails: Remember, your goal is to keep yourself front and center within the coach’s vision and to make his recruiting job easier. I recommend sending an email 2 times a month on a particular day of the week. Your coach will come to expect your email. This email should offer your coach new information about you. It can be as simple as letting him know that you have updated your website. Your email can tell him of an accomplishment whether it involves a meet or working a new skill.
4. Signature: Utilize the same signature in each email. Include:
 - i. Full name
 - ii. Followed by Training Facility and Competition Level
 - iii. Cell Phone Number
 - iv. Website URL



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3.F. Identification and receipt of recommendations from coach, teachers, counselors and successful collegiate gymnasts.

Rationale: Recommendations are important because they verify your claims and provide the admissions committee an opportunity to learn more about you from people you have worked closely with. Hence, good recommendations can serve as a powerful tool to 'sell' you to your coaches and collegiate acceptance committees.

- Choose individuals that know you well. Rather than choosing a famous person who has no intimate knowledge of your skills and abilities, it is much more powerful to use a person who can illustrate your strengths and show you at your best.
- Choose people who really like you. It is important that a recommender invests time in writing your recommendation. A person who likes you will take out the time as well as put a positive spin on your qualities.
- Choose people who can address more than one key criterion: your gymnastics ability, intellectual ability, leadership potential, maturity, work ethics etc.

3.G. Determination of NCAA Rules/ Clearinghouse and registration

Rationale: In order to compete on a collegiate gymnastics' team, The Candidate Student-Athlete needs to register immediately with the NCAA Eligibility Center and follow the required process in order to be in receipt the NCAA's Final Certification allowing The Candidate Student-Athlete's acceptance to and allowance to compete gymnastics on a collegiate level.

- Link to the center's website for further information <http://eligibilitycenter.org/>
- Review *The NCAA Initial Eligibility* brochure which details the NCAA Divisions I and II initial-eligibility requirements. It lists step-by-step instructions for college-bound student-athletes to successfully complete the NCAA Eligibility Center's registration and certification processes.
- Review *NCAA Eligibility College-Bound Student-Athlete Guide* which offers a summary of the rules and regulations in easy-to-read form. Guidelines relate to recruiting, eligibility, financial aid and college freshman eligibility requirements for Divisions I & II.
 - Of noted importance is the *Summary of Rules* of the guide. These rules delineated allowed contact and non-official and official visit regulations. It speaks of the allowance and non-allowance of recruiting material dissemination, telephone calls, off-campus contact, official visits and non-official visits. For example, on July 1 after your Junior year, your coach may contact you to speak with you, let you know of his interest and arrange an official visit. Please plan to be home that day to receive their calls. Remember to have your Back-Office file available for reference and note taking.



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3.H. College (Admissions Office) Applications, timeline and execution.

Rationale: An integral part of this process is your application to college for admission. In order for a coach to have you on his team, you must be accepted to the college. Familiarize yourself with college admission requirements and accomplish all requirements. Your collegiate coach can assist you with this process, so keep all lines of communication open with your coach in this regard. Applications must be completed and submitted at the start of your Senior year.

3.I. Collegiate visits (Official and Unofficial): Strategy, timeline and follow-up.

Rationale: In order for you, the coach and the team to get to know each other and decide if a team and college are mutually desirable, you will have the opportunity to make official and unofficial visits. Your goal is to be asked to make an official visit to each of your top five schools. You may make one official visit to each of your five schools after your first day of your senior year. Yours and your parent's expenses will be paid, and the visit can be no longer than a 48-hour period. I advise you to make an unofficial visit, as well, during the summer after your junior year, to any other school in your tier two that you are not making an official visit to. Unofficial visits are allowed at any time. Yours and your parent's expenses cannot be paid for, but this experience can prove invaluable.

3.J. Meet and camp attendance: Strategy, timeline and follow-up.

Rationale: Another way to get yourself front and center is to attend a collegiate summer camp at the college of your first choice. This will give the coach an opportunity to see how you transact in the gym. It will give you an opportunity to get to know the team, the coaches and facilities. Meet and camp attendance is recommended throughout your high school athletic experience.

PHASE FOUR: CELEBRATION!

Rationale: Upon attainment of collegiate and gymnastic team placement, a celebration is in order. This is a long and arduous process which will hopefully result in what you and your Candidate Student-Athlete are dreaming for. Recognition and an appreciation of the attainment of these dreams are appropriate and may go a long way once The Candidate Student-Athlete is in college and participating in his dreams. While his collegiate and athletic actualization will be enjoyable and thrilling, there will be much to accomplish during his collegiate four to five years. This appreciation will hopefully aid you and your Candidate Student-Athlete in maintaining perspective during these trying and work full days, months and years.

REMEMBER ... YOU AND YOUR ATHLETE NEED TO CONTINUE TO STAY PRESENT AND LIVE A HEALTHY, GRATEFUL AND EMPOWERED LIFE, DAY IN and DAY OUT !



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6. NCAA Registration Checklist:
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Craft Your Vision Statement and Vision Board

For

Athlete and Parents

Your vision statement provides a guide to your life. Your vision statement provides the direction necessary to guide the course of your days and the choices you make about your personal, emotional, family/relational, spiritual, professional/business and financial aspects of your life. Your vision statement is the light shining in the darkness toward which you turn to find your way. Your vision statement illuminates your way.

Write your vision statement as the first step in focusing your life - for your joy, your accomplishments, your contribution, your glory, and for your legacy. Subsequently, you will utilize what you have identified in your vision statement to create your Vision Board, the second step in the process of identifying, visualizing, attracting and attaining what you seek.

To assist you in developing your vision statement, determine:

What are your Core Values?

In order to attain balance, we need to identify what our core values are; aspects of our life that we must experience on almost an everyday basis in order to lead a fulfilling life. Below you will find a list of personal descriptors that will assist you in choosing your 8-10 Core Values. First select 20 words that you feel most represent your deepest motivators, your personal passion, and the major concepts that guide you in life; descriptors that seem most important and define who you are. After deciding upon your top 20, eliminate 10 words that seem repetitious or do not define you as well as the other words you have selected do. Next, rewrite each of the 10 words that you feel are truly your core values on the lines below.

Accessibility	Faith	Money	Self-reliance	Democracy	Rehabilitation
Accomplishment	Fame	Non-violence	Seriousness	Determination	Reliability
Accountability	Family	Nurturing	Service	Discipline	Resourcefulness
Accuracy	Fate	Openness	Sexuality	Discovery	Respect
Achievement	Fitness	Opportunity	Simplicity	Diversity	Responsibility
Adventure	Flair	Optimism	Sincerity	Duty	Responsiveness



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Aspiration	Force	Patriotism	Skill	Education	Results-oriented
Attitude	Freedom	Peace	Solidarity	Efficiency	Risk-taking
Authenticity	Free will	Perfection	Speed	Empowerment	Rootedness
Authority	Fun	Performance	Spirit-in-life	Equality	Rule of law
Autonomy	Generosity	Persistence	Stability	Excellence	Safety
Beauty	Giving/charity	Personal growth	Standardization	Experience	Satisfying others
Challenge	Global view	Philosophy	Status	Expression	Security
Change	Goodness	Pioneer spirit	Strength	Fairness	Selfishness
Chastity/Purity	Gratitude	Pleasure	Style	Involvement	Wisdom
Cleanliness	Hard work	Popularity	Success	Joy	Recognition
Collaboration	Harmony	Positive attitude	Support	Justice	Regularity
Commitment	Heroism	Power	Systemization	Knowledge	Integrity

Communication	Heritage	Practicality	Teamwork	Leadership	Intuition
Community	Honesty	Preservation	Tolerance	Learning	Customer
Competence	Honor	Prestige	Tradition	Leisure	Decisiveness
Competition	Hope	Pride	Tranquility	Love-romance	Creativity
Concern	Humor	Privacy	Trust	Love-care	Improvement
Conformity	Inclusiveness	Prosperity/wealth	Truth	Love-concern	Rationality
Courage	Influence	Punctuality	Utility	Loyalty	Wellness
Conviction	Inner peace	Purity	Variety	Meaning	Mobility
Cooperation	Innovation	Quality	Well-being	Merit	

My Core Values: 1: _____

2: _____ 3: _____ 4: _____

5: _____ 6: _____ 7: _____

8: _____ 9: _____ 10: _____

To further assist you in developing your vision statement, answer the following questions.

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.

1.



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Lorraine DAversa, BS, MFT, CYT, CWFPBN, CH

Online, In-Person Lifestyle Strategist, Empowerment and Wellness Coach and Speaker

DSW Enterprises, LLC; 609-502-0880; Lorraine@LorraineDAversa.com

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

What three things must you do every single day to feel fulfilled?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Your life has a number of important facets or dimensions, all of which deserve some attention in your vision statement. Write one important goal for each of them: personal, emotional, family/relational, spiritual, professional/business and financial:

Personal:

Scholastic:

Athletic:

Professional:

Relational:

Spiritual:

If you never had to work (or consider working) 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?



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

Craft Your Vision Statement

Once you have thoughtfully prepared answers to these questions and others that you identify, you are ready to craft a vision statement. Write in 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 I would rather see you fully articulate the vision you want for your life and your future, than be limited by word count. You generally accomplish your written goals, dreams, plans, and vision. Writing them down lends power and commitment to their accomplishment.

Keep in mind that your vision statement can also change over time, depending upon what is happening in your life. You will be amazed, however, at how many components remain consistent over time. I first articulated this vision for my life in 1984 and has transformed many times in the years past. When I live and experience the components of my vision statement frequently, I feel inner peace and joy that knows no bounds. Your personal vision statement will have the same impact for you. Take the time to formulate answers to the above questions and write your personal vision statement. Then, listen to your heart sing with the fullness of your articulated dreams.

Craft Your Vision Board

A vision board is a simple yet powerful visualization tool that activates the universal law of attraction to begin manifesting your dreams and vision into reality. The concept of the vision board (also known as a goal board, goal map, or treasure map) has been around for generations, but it's gained a renewed interest and popularity after success expert John Assaraf related his story of using vision boards to achieve his dreams in the best-selling DVD documentary *The Secret*.

WHAT'S A VISION BOARD? A vision board is simply a visual representation or collage of the things that you want to have, be, or do in your life. It consists of a poster or foam board with cut-out pictures, drawings and/or writing on it of the things that you want in your life or the things that you want to become. The purpose of a vision board is to embody the potential of your vision and activate the law of attraction. By selecting pictures and writing that charges your emotions with feelings of passion, you will begin to manifest your vision.

What exactly is the law of attraction? The law of attraction states that we attract into our lives anything that we give attention to, regardless whether it is positive or negative. From a psychological view, the law of attraction can be best explained by the information filtering system of the brain known as the reticular activating system (RAS). Vision boards serve the role of programming the RAS to tune into external stimuli that can help us move closer towards our intentions.

At the base of the human brain stem, in between the medulla oblongata and the mesencephalon, there is a small finger-sized control center called the reticular activating system (RAS) that sorts and evaluates incoming data. Your RAS is responsible for filtering all the incoming information that your brain receives and it also acts as receiver for information that is tagged as important.



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A simple way to conceptualize the RAS is to think of it like a radio. You are surrounded by radio waves from various stations and your portable radio can pick up those channels, but only one at a time. You have to tune your radio to a specific frequency of your favorite radio station in order to receive it properly. Your RAS is not much different in this regard. Imagine you are in a meeting room talking to several people and out in the distant corner of the room you hear your name. All your focus gets diverted in the direction that you heard your name because that bit of information is tagged by the RAS as important to you. Your RAS is responsible for having the ability to sleep through the noise of traffic outside your room but waking up suddenly at the smallest cry from your infant child. Another example of the RAS at work is when you go and buy a brand-new car and then suddenly you notice many more people around your city have that exact same car.

According to Hans Morvec, the principal research scientist at the Robotics Institute of Carnegie Mellon University, the human brain can handle up to 100 trillion bits of information at any given time. With all that information coming in, how does your RAS know what to filter? Your RAS is naturally programmed to prioritize information that is necessary for survival, like listening for a particular sound of an oncoming vehicle when walking close to a street. The RAS can't distinguish between a real event and a contrived reality, however, and we can exploit this weakness to program it to seek out stimuli in our environment that resonate with our goals.

The process of creating a vision board is one of the best ways to program the RAS. It programs the RAS to pay attention to certain things in your environment that are in frequency with your goal or vision, in much the same way as you are able to pick up your name being mentioned in a conversation on the other side of a room while talking to others. This selective attention filter makes you aware of daily things that can help you achieve your goal and it's your job to act on those opportunities when they present themselves.

HOW TO MAKE AND USE YOUR VISION BOARD: Your vision board is only limited by the extent of your own creativity. Some of my clients have produced simple vision boards and others have made vision boards that could probably sell at an art show for hundreds. Having artistic ability is not a prerequisite for creating a functional vision board however and the procedures I've outlined below can be used by anyone.

The general elements that a well-designed vision board should include are:

Visual: Your subconscious mind works in pictures and images, so make your vision board as visual as possible with as many pictures as you can. You can supplement your pictures with words and phrases to increase the emotional response you get from it.

Emotional: Each picture on your vision board should evoke a positive emotional response from you. The mere sight of your vision board should make you happy and fuel your passion to achieve it every time you look at it.

Strategically-placed: Your vision board should be strategically placed in a location that gives you maximum exposure to it. You need to constantly bath your subconscious mind with its energy in order to manifest your desires quicker than you hope.



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Personal: Negative feelings, self-doubt, and criticism can damage the delicate energy that your vision board emits. If you fear criticism or justification of your vision board from others, then place it in a private location so it can only be seen by yourself.

Supplies Needed:

- Foam core board (recommended) or poster board,
- A large assortment of magazines and/or online, printable pictures. You want to make sure that these are in color.
- Glue. I prefer the dispenser type tape rollers, commonly used to mount photos because they are clean and won't damage your pictures.
- Scissors

Step 1—Compile your pictures. Start by going through your magazines and compiling all the pictures that you can find that are relevant to your goals and your identified vision statement. Don't evaluate the pictures or start pasting them onto your board. Just stack them into a pile. If you are internet savvy, then a much quicker method that I do myself is to use an internet search engine to find good pictures that I can use for my board. You can either print the pictures out on paper and then glue it to the board or print the pictures out onto a self-adhesive label so that it becomes a sticker. This is the preferred method because it is taking much less time to do, and you can pinpoint your pictures using very good technology at your hands. Make sure that each image that you put on your board resonates with your vision statement and makes you excited at the mere look of it. It's also important when selecting pictures to include anything that is congruent with your vision statement, such as any changes in your life that might result from obtaining your goals.

Step 2—Sort and Cut. Go through your pile of pictures and select the ones that impact you the most emotionally. Cut the extraneous material away from the image.

Step 3—Arrange and glue. Start arranging your pictures creatively on your board. Don't worry about being artistic—that's not the point. The point is that your board should resonate with your emotions. Arrange your pictures in a way that gives you an emotional connection to your vision board. After you are satisfied with the arrangement, glue all your pictures in place. Additionally, you might want to add writing or drawing on your vision board if you feel that it would better resonate with your emotions. A feature unique to my vision boards is that I also put two labels on the bottom of board that read: "Date created: [today's date]" and "Date Manifested: [blank]" This lets me know how long my vision has been gestating since its creation and also every time I look at my vision board, not only am I emotionally charged with the pictures, but I also feel an overwhelming sense to see it manifested to completion.

Step 4—Strategic positioning. One of the most important aspects of having a vision board is having it in a strategic location that gives you as much visual exposure to it throughout the day as possible and can be relocated to a comfortable location for your morning and evening experience of your vision board. For most of us, this is in the office, but if that is not possible or appropriate, then try your living room or your bedroom. Some people I know mount their vision boards on the ceiling above their bed so that it is the first thing they see when they wake up and the last thing they see when they go to sleep. If you are



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sensitive to what others might say of your vision board, then be sure to keep it in a safe area where only you will see it.

Step 5— Strategic use. In addition to viewing your vision board throughout the day, spend 5-15 minutes in the morning upon rising and in the evening before going to bed focusing on your vision board. For example, I set up my vision board at the end of my coach and in the morning and evening I focus on my vision board, particularly focusing on each picture, drawing and text entry. I focus with half-closed eyes, breathing calmly and slowly and attending to and experiencing the resulting positive emotion that each picture, drawing and word evokes.

Step 6— Update your vision board. Your vision board has to inspire you. It has to charge you with renewed passion every time you look at it and over time and as you progress closer towards your vision, you might find that some of the images or pictures on your vision board don't really carry as much emotional impact on you as they did before. When this happens, you'll want to update your vision board with new fresh images that do inspire you. Your vision board is not a finished piece of art after its initial creation. It's a dynamic piece of art that shifts and changes as your vision shifts and changes. Therefore, if you find your level of passion that your vision board gives you is growing weaker, then update it to bring fresh new emotions to it.

FAMOUS EXAMPLES OF THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

Here are three examples of famous people who have used the techniques of visualization to activate the law of attraction in their lives. Although not all of them specifically used vision boards to get what they wanted, the applications that they used were similar in function.

John Assaraf's Vision Board. Successful entrepreneur and author, John Assaraf, brought the age-old concept of a vision board to the mainstream public by relating his story of it in the motivational documentary, *The Secret*. In May of 2000, John was working in his home office inside his beautiful new home in Southern California when his five-year old son came in and asked him what were in the dusty boxes in the corner of his home office. John told him that it contained his vision boards. His son didn't understand what they were, so John opened one of the boxes to show him. When John pulled out the second board from the box, he began to cry. On it was a picture of a 7000 square foot house on top of six acres of spectacular land that he had seen and cut out from *Dream Homes* magazine in 1995. It was the exact house that he had just purchased several weeks prior—A sure testament to the law of attraction at work.

Bruce Lee's Letter. The late martial arts legend and my own personal role-model, Bruce Lee, understood the power of the law of attraction. As a struggling entrepreneur and actor, Bruce sat down one day and wrote the following letter to himself: "By 1980, I will be the best-known oriental movie star in the United States and will have secured \$10 million dollars... And in return, I will give the very best acting I could possibly give every single time I am in front of the camera and I will live in peace and harmony." In 1973, months after Bruce's untimely death, the blockbuster movie *Enter the Dragon* was released in both the United States and China, elevating Bruce to the level of an international star. According to Jack Canfield, that very letter that Bruce wrote to himself is hanging up on one of the walls at Planet Hollywood in New York City.



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Jim Carrey's Check. As a struggling young comedian trying to make it in the make or break city of Hollywood, Jim Carrey was just about ready to give up his dream of becoming a professional actor and comedian. He had just performed at an open mic session at one of the nightclubs in Los Angeles and had been booed off the stage by his audience. He sat by himself at the top of Mulholland Drive and looked out at the city below him—the city that held his future success or failure. He then pulled out his check book and wrote himself a check for \$10 million dollars and made a note on it: "for acting services rendered." He then carried that check with him in his wallet everywhere he went from that day forward. By 1995, after the success of his blockbuster movies: Ace Ventura: Pet Detective, Dumb and Dumber, and The Mask, his contract price had risen to the price of \$20 million dollars.

Conclusion:

Vision boards are an important tool in your success tool box. They are cheap to make and their potential value to you is immeasurable. Figure out what you want in your life and then commit yourself 100% towards making that first step of creating your vision board and activating the law of attraction to pull your vision into reality.



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