

How to Create an Inspiring Personal Vision Statement

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Do most people you know have a clear vision for their future?

Why not?

We'll get to that question in a second, but first ...

Why Create a Personal Vision Statement?

Because it's easy to get distracted, to lose sight on what's important to us. When we get disconnected for our life's direction, other people's agendas come before our own.

Have you noticed how, at times, every phone call, email, and notification on your screen draws your full attention? While at other times, you're absorbed in your work regardless of the distraction?

Vision doesn't eliminate distraction. It inspires us to focus on what matters.

Vision provides clarity for the future while directing us to place our attention in the present.

As Timothy Gallwey writes in [The Inner Game of Work](#): "If you have a clear vision of where you want to go, you are not as easily distracted by the many possibilities and agendas that otherwise divert you."

A compelling personal vision statement can illuminate our way in periods of darkness. It can inspire us to shed all the stuff that holds us back.

Four Reasons Why We Struggle with Vision

There are at least four underlying reasons. Understanding these blocks can free us from the resistance that keeps us from crafting a personal vision statement.

First, there's cultural conditioning. From early education onward, we have been conditioned to make life decisions based on a limited range of options. We make choices based on what's in front of us; what we believe to be available to us. Creating a vision demands that we draw from an infinite range of choice, which makes us uncomfortable.

Second, visualization is a skill. Visualization is also like a muscle. Many of us stopped exercising this muscle in childhood. Now, it feels uncomfortable to try to visualize our future. We fear we're not doing it right. Many people tell themselves they can't visualize or that it doesn't work for them. That's simply a belief, one ungrounded and untrue. The more we visualize, the better we get at creating from our imagination.

Third, we're afraid. We're afraid we may not succeed. We question our competence, our ability to persevere. We are uncertain of our value: are we worthy of dreaming big? A part of us is used to playing small. To this part, [safety is more important than growth](#). And a vision is a roadmap to growth. The unlimited range of options we must draw upon scares us too.

Fourth, we think the vision has to be perfect. We believe we need the "right" vision, the perfect vision. The perfectionist in us needs to craft an ideal vision statement that's timeless, true for all eternity. Naturally, this doesn't reflect reality. In becoming aware of this false belief, it will no longer limit us.

Before You Start Dreaming Up Your Vision

You create a personal vision by going through a discovery process to clarify what's most important to you. In order to do this, you must be in a frame of mind that's open, alert, centered, and ready.

Below are two methods to help you access this state relatively quickly and easily. If you already have your own [methods for finding your center](#), terrific. Use them. If not, try using these exercises to prime yourself before you go through any of the discovery questions listed below.

For a complete guide on how to find your center, [click here](#).

Exercise #1: Quiet Your Mind

To get in the right frame of mind, the key is to find your center. When you're in your center, you are fully present. Your mind isn't racing to the future or ruminating in the past. Instead, it's calm, empty, and alert. In your center, you aren't inflated or deflate. You avoid extremes in either direction.

To establish your center, place both your feet [firmly on the ground](#). Then, place your full attention on the bottom of your feet for about 20 seconds. Notice any sensations. Breathe slowly, steadily, and quietly. Focusing on your feet draws excessive energy from your head, down into your body. It's the fastest way I know to quiet the mind.

Exercise #2: Connect to Your Heart

Next, place your awareness on your heart. Gently smile inwardly at your heart. Breathe in and acknowledge your heart. Breathe out and say to your heart, "Thank you." Do this for three full breaths, still inhaling and exhaling calmly, smoothly, and quietly. Feel the warmth of being connected to your heart.

As the great psychiatrist Carl Jung is quoted saying, "Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."

7 Elements to Explore for Your Life Vision

Once you're in the right frame of mind, proceed to discover what's important in your life. Here are a list of elements to consider when you're ready to create your personal vision statement:

[Core Values](#): What are the five to ten things you stand by and value the most?

See: [7 Steps to Discover Your Personal Values](#)

Interests: What are five to ten things you enjoy doing the most? What elevates you? What can't you live without?

Areas of Focus: What are the major categories of your life that always need your attention? (A list of sample categories is [available here.](#))

Strengths: What are you naturally good at? (Take a free assessment to discover your strengths [here.](#))

See: [How to Increase your Authentic Happiness](#) (includes Martin Seligman's 24 signature strengths)

Dreams: If this was your last day on earth, what would you regret not doing, seeing, or creating?

Skills: What are three areas you strongly want to cultivate skills in that will in some way enrich your life experience?

Profession: What are things you must do to feel fulfilled in your work?

Craft Your Personal Vision Statement

[Block off time](#) in advance to reflect on the questions above. They represent the raw material for your vision statement. Remind yourself that this process doesn't have to yield a "perfect" vision. Any vision is better than no vision. Whatever you create is not set in stone. It can evolve with you over time.

So for now, simply create a "working vision." Look at it as a first draft. The goal of crafting your vision is to simply capture the things that are most important to you.

Keep the words of late mythologist [Joseph Campbell](#) in mind:

"Just sheer life cannot be said to have a purpose because look at all the different purposes it has all over the place. But each incarnation, you might say, has a potentiality, and the mission of life is to live that potentiality.

"How do you do it? My answer is, 'Follow your bliss.' There's something inside you that knows when you're in the center, that knows when you're on the beam or off the beam. And if you get off the beam to earn money, you've lost your life. And if you stay in the center and don't get any money, you still have your bliss."

Take your time in crafting your vision. Return to the above questions repeatedly. It won't serve you to rush through this process with the goal of completing your vision quickly. (It might take weeks, if not longer.)

Instead, allow the questions to percolate in your mind. Ask these questions before you go to sleep. Keep a pen and pad by your bedside. You don't need to use force to draw these answers out of you. You need only allow them to come forward. If you perform the above exercises to quiet your mind and connect to your heart prior to asking these questions, the process will go more smoothly.

Personal Vision Statement Examples

How many of the above elements are essential for your vision statement? That's up to you. Your vision statement can be a sentence or two. For example, Oprah Winfrey's vision is:

"To be a teacher. And to be known for inspiring my students to be more than they thought they could be."

And Richard Branson's vision is:

"To have fun in [my] journey through life and learn from [my] mistakes."

Or your personal vision statement can be a page long. Here's a sample template of a long-form vision statement:

Each day I uphold the values of [insert values] in all that I do. I am filled with vitality and passion when I [insert passions]. Each week I grow in the key areas of my life including [insert areas of focus]. I feel content and enriched each day because I capitalize on my natural strengths of [insert strengths] by doing [insert how you apply these strengths in your work and home life]. I'm continuously developing [insert skills] for the sheer joy of doing something I love doing.

Allow your vision to paint a mental picture of your life five to 20 years from now. Have it highlight what matters most to you, what you stand for and [who you are committed to becoming](#). Write it in the present tense so that it feels as if it exists right now.

When to Use Your Life Vision

Once you have a draft of your personal vision statement, here are specific times to review it:

- Revisit your personal vision statement at the start of the week.
- Sunday night, take a few minutes to connect with your vision to prime you for the week ahead.
- When you feel lost or confused, when you're distracted by 10,000 things, pause and review your vision.
- When you feel a part of you questioning the purpose and meaning of your life, remind yourself that you have created personal meaning. And return to your life vision.

Review it frequently until it becomes a part of you.

How to Use Your Personal Vision

A few words on a screen or a piece of paper doesn't hold much power. If you want your vision to drive you to your desired destination, don't just read it. Embody it. Bring it to life.

Create a mental picture of it in your mind's eye. See yourself in the end picture with your vision actualized. What do you look like? What are you doing? As you're actualizing your vision, how do you feel?

The more clearly you can connect with the images and feelings reflected in your vision, the more likely you are to take the right actions toward manifesting it. And somehow, when you're living your vision, you get external help too.

As author Paulo Coelho put it [The Alchemist](#), “And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”

Read Next

[Seven Steps to Discovering Your Core Values](#)

[How to Center Yourself](#)

[Change Your Fixed Mindset to Activate Your Potential](#)