

Personal Vision & Quality Services

Developing Your Personal Vision

"Here is the very heart and soul of the matter of leadership: If you seek to lead, invest 50% of your time (attention) leading yourself — your own purpose, ethics, principles, motivation, conduct. Invest at least 20% leading those with authority over you and 15% leading your peers. Use the remainder to induce those you "work for" to understand and practice the theory. If you don't understand that you should be working for your mislabeled "subordinates," then you know nothing of leadership. You know only tyranny. Lead yourself, lead your superiors, lead your peers, and free your people to do the same. All else is trivial."

--- Dee Hock, founder and CEO Emeritus

Visa International

Personal Vision

Developing your personal vision — what you want to create of yourself and the world around you — is essential to individual satisfaction and happiness. It is an absolute prerequisite for leadership. A unique personal vision exists in each of us, yet remains unarticulated for most. To make your vision one of greatness you must articulate it, then implement it. Both take work and courage.

Our vision guides us in all facets of our life. It is our constitution, expressing our core values, our hopes and dreams. It is the criterion by which we measure everything.

In our professional life, vision guides us in choosing the type of work we do and how we choose to do it. It governs our relationships with our clients, the client community, co-workers, opponents, decision makers, and the legal system itself. It guides us in how we want the law to serve our clients and the low-income community and how we see our role in achieving justice.

Whether advocate, lawyer, or legal assistant, developing a vision means asking: are you doing what you want to do, how, when and where you want to do it? What do you consider "quality"

service? What areas of the law intrigue you? Do you like litigation? administrative advocacy? community legal education? community economic development? legislative work? technology work?

More Questions on Vision

Here are more questions to help you think through your vision, particularly at work. There are no correct answers. Answering them should provoke more questions than answers.

Why are people poor? Does my job have anything to do with alleviating poverty?

How do legal work and social work differ? Should legal work involve social work?

What is my role in working with clients? the client community?

What should my relationship be with clients? Partner? Employee? Friend? Parent? Guardian?

What do I see as the client's role and responsibilities in individual cases? in other services?

How important is helping clients to help themselves?

How important is anticipating and preventing legal problems?

Does my work provide long-term value for my clients? the client community?

Does what I do for a client solve the client's problem while also benefiting others in the client's community?

Do I look at the bigger picture surrounding the client's problem?

Am I thoughtful and creative about solving client problems? Should I take time to do so? Can I use standard solutions to client problems so I can dispose of the matter as quickly as possible?

How do I decide what is ethical conduct? by professional responsibility rules for lawyers? By what I believe is right?

How do I deal with opposing parties and their representatives? Do I press every advantage or deadline? Do I compromise to maintain a good working relationship?

If offered a solution in a negotiation that was very unfair to the other side would I take it?

How do I want to act with my co-workers? My peers? Those that I supervise? Those that have authority over me?

What is effective teamwork? What kind of team member do I want to be?

How do I define effective collaboration? with other organizations? with potential opponents?

Do I want to be a person that people in the community know to call when things are happening?

Do I take time to listen to the community? Am I willing to rethink priorities based on what they tell me?

How do I see my role *vis a vis* social service agencies, community based organizations, client advisory groups?

Some reasons why doing a vision statement may be difficult

"I can't have what I want."

In a preemptive strike against disappointment, some people denigrate any object of their deep desires. Others feel they may have to trade it off against something else: a successful career or satisfying family life, but not both.

"I want what someone else wants."

Some people choose their visions based on what others want for them; what the various "cultures" that they belong to dictate that they should want. In developing your vision statement, try to focus on what you truly want.

"It doesn't matter what I want."

Some folks assume that what they want is not important. If, like many of us, you doubt that you deserve rewards, imagine the rewards you would want if you did deserve them.

"I already know what I want."

Great! A personal vision, however, is not a "done deal" waiting for you to unearth and decode. It's something you create and recreate throughout your life.

"I'm afraid of what I want."

What if you don't want this job anymore? What if you get out of control or are forced to change your life? This vision can't run away with you; it can increase your awareness. If the subject frightens you too much, ignore it. You may want to come back to it at another time.

"I don't know what I want."

Peter Block in the *Empowered Manager* responds: "A vision exists within each of us, even if we have not made it explicit or put it into words. Our reluctance to articulate our vision is a measure of our despair and a reluctance to take responsibility for our own lives, our own unit, and our own organization. A vision statement is an expression of hope, and if we have no hope, it is hard to create a vision."

"I know what I want, but I can't have it at work."

Some people fear that their personal vision won't be compatible with their organization's attitudes. Even by thinking about it they may jeopardize their job and position. This attitude keeps some folks from articulating their vision or letting this exercise go very far. Some folks do test it by asking what the organization really thinks of their "dangerous" position. More often than not the answer is, "It's no big deal." When approached directly organizations tend to be far more accepting of goals and interests than our fears lead us to expect.

Yet your vision may be "unacceptable." If you can't have it at work at this place, then your vision might include finding another place to work that will allow you to grow and flourish.

Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization* (Doubleday 1994)

Personal Vision & Quality Services Worksheet

Developing a vision statement requires introspection, analysis and commitment. Not a casual affair, it may take some time before you've written something that you're satisfied truly expresses your values and directions.

We want you to begin the process of developing a vision statement before you come to the College of Advocacy. You'll discuss your

preliminary thoughts at the first small group meeting and work on expanding and clarifying it throughout the training. During the last small group session, you'll have a chance to share your vision statement with your small group.

Consider the Result Exercise below as a warm up to help you start thinking about vision. At the end of this worksheet, you'll have an opportunity to draft your own vision statement or at least note the elements that you have identified as important.

1. Result

Imagine achieving one result in your life that you deeply desire. (It could be a place where you most want to live, a relationship that you most want to have, etc.) Use the present tense to describe it. Write (or sketch) that result here. Use these questions to help you: What would it look like? What would it feel like? What words would you use to describe it?

2. Consider

Reflect on your answers in Step One. Is it close to what you really want? Remember, you're trying to learn what your vision is.

Whether or not it's possible is literally irrelevant. Suspend your doubts, worries, fears and concerns about the limits of your future.

Was it difficult to describe a vision that is close to what you actually want?

If yes, re-read “Some reasons why doing a vision statement may be difficult” on page 1/4.

3. Describing Your Personal Vision

Here's your opportunity to look at all of the elements of your personal vision.

a. Column 1: Using the left hand column below, answer the questions again a) – g) using the present tense. Adjust the

categories if they don't quite fit your needs. Continue until a complete picture of what you want is filled in.

Imagine achieving the results in your life that you deeply desire. What would they look like? What would they feel like? What words would you use to describe them?

1. Personal Vision Elements	2. If I could have it now, would I take it?	3. Assume I have it now. What does that bring me?
<p>a) Self-image <i>If you could be exactly the kind of person you wanted to be, what would your qualities be?</i></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, only if...</p> <p>No</p>	

1. Personal Vision Elements	2. If I could have it now, would I take it?	3. Assume I have it now. What does that bring me?
<p>b) Relationships <i>What types of relationships would you like to have with friends? family? co-workers? others?</i></p>	<p>Yes Yes, only if... No</p>	
<p>c) Work <i>What is your ideal professional or vocational situation? What impact would you like your efforts to have? Describe what high quality services to the low-income client community should look like.</i></p>	<p>Yes Yes, only if... No</p>	

1. Personal Vision Elements	2. If I could have it now, would I take it?	3. Assume I have it now. What does that bring me?
<p>d) Community <i>What is your vision for the community or society that you live in?</i></p>	<p>Yes Yes, only if... No</p>	
<p>e) Personal Pursuits <i>What would you like to create in the arena of individual learning, travel, reading or other activities?</i></p>	<p>Yes Yes, only if... No</p>	
<p>f) Other <i>What else in any other arena of your life would you like to create a vision of? Consider: home, health, ownership of material things, etc</i></p>	<p>Yes Yes, only if... No</p>	

1. Personal Vision Elements	2. If I could have it now, would I take it?	3. Assume I have it now. What does that bring me?
<p>g) Life purpose <i>Imagine that your life has a unique purpose fulfilled through what you do, your interrelationships, and the way you live. Describe that purpose as another reflection of your aspirations.</i></p>	<p>Yes Yes, only if... No</p>	

b. Column 2: *Expand and clarify your vision.*

Part of the purpose of this exercise is to suspend your judgment about what is "worth" desiring, and to ask instead: Which aspect of these visions is closest to your deepest desires? To find out, expand and clarify each dimension of your vision. Go back through the components of your personal vision that you have written down including relationships, work, community, and life purpose in a)-g).

For each element ask: If I could take it now, would I take it?

Some elements will pass (Yes, I want it now), others will pass conditionally (Yes, I want it, but only if...). Some won't pass at all. (No.)

Sometimes this first vision is not as clear or precise as it could be.

What would be the impact of each element of your vision if you could have it now? Supposing you wrote that you want to win the lottery. But if you actually did win, with the accompanying "celebrity" status, requests for money from all sorts of people and meeting folks who suddenly want to be your "friend," your life might change for the worse. Or would you amend your desire: "I want to be financially secure."

Using the Worksheet, make your notes in the second column.

C. Column 3: *Assume I have it now. What does it bring me?*

Now turn to the third column.

Assume I have it now. What does it bring me?

This question allows you to see the underlying implications of your vision more clearly. It's like peeling an onion, every layer being valuable. What does it bring me to have a society where people's basic needs are met? What does it bring me to have a deeper relationship with a child?

Supposing you want to be financially secure, what does that bring you? Maybe you want to be able to provide for an extended family; maybe you want a sense of freedom or the ability to travel. Perhaps you want to be able to work at the job of your choice without regard for the amount that it pays.

You may find that the components of your vision lead you to the same 3 or 4 goals. To keep asking; "What will it bring me?" immerses you in a gently insistent structure that helps you get to the core of what is most important to you.

Using the Worksheet, make your notes in the third column.

4. Personal Vision Coach

Go through the components of your vision once again with at least one other person acting as a coach and sounding board. If others want to go through the first four steps themselves, you can take turns acting as coaches for one another during this step.

Taking turns, lead the other person through the components of your personal vision statement gently prompting one another to understand: "if you could have it, would you take it? What would it bring you?" Your task is to support others' choices whether you agree with them or not. You're not analyzing them or their choices but helping them bring their vision to the surface.

Use the present tense: what does your job look like? Encourage the person to describe each scene as if it were happening before their eyes. Help them identify what they really want and help them distinguish the end result from problem solving or from something they think they ought to aspire to.

5. Your Vision Statement

Don't worry about crafting the perfect statement; at this point, words or phrases are fine.

For the purpose of introducing yourself to your small group at the College of Advocacy, strive to include as many aspects of your vision as you can. At a minimum, include your vision of your "work" and "community."

- What should high quality services to the low-income client community look like?
- What vision of your community or society at large are you working towards?

Vision Statement

6. Your Organization

Review the information that you collected in the *High Quality Services and Competence Questionnaire*.

Helping Factors

In what ways does your organization help and support you in carrying out your vision?

Hindering Factors

In what ways does your organization hinder you in carrying out your vision?

Which hindering factors can you address and how?

7. Strategic Directions

Write down some general directions and goals for the next two years. In the first session, you'll discuss your thoughts about general directions. By the last session, your goals will be formalized and incorporated into a written plan.

To help you think about goals, consider:

- Areas of the law you want to work in
- Kind of work you want to do within each area
- How you will build your expertise
- Where and who you want to work with
- One thing you could do that you aren't doing now that if you did on a regular basis in the next year would make a positive difference in your professional life
- One thing you could do that you aren't doing now that if you did on a regular basis in the next year would make a positive difference in your personal life

8. Support

What help and support do you need to achieve your goals? During the training? After the training?

9. Plan

By the end of the training, you'll incorporate your vision, goals and support into a two-year plan.

Two Year Plan

What's your plan for achieving your goals? By when? With what help?

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Goals	Tasks	By when?	With what help?