

Importance of **Having** a Personal Vision

Numerous experts on leadership and personal development emphasize how vital it is for you to craft your own personal vision for your life. Warren Bennis, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, and others point out that a powerful vision can help you succeed far beyond where you'd be without one. That vision can propel you and inspire those around you to reach their own dreams. ***If you don't identify your vision, others will plan and direct your life for you.*** Too many individuals late in their lives will say, "If only. . . ." You don't have to be one of them.



Senge defines vision as ***what you want to create of yourself and the world around you.*** What does your vision include? Making a vital change in an area such as health, technology, or the environment? Raising happy, well-adjusted children? Writing a book? Owning your own business? Living on a beach? Being very fit and healthy? Visiting every continent? Helping others with their spiritual development? What are you good at? What do you love to do? What aren't you good at now, but you'd like to be? All of these important questions are part of identifying your personal vision.

“With vision there is no room to be frightened. No reason for intimidation. It’s time to march forward! Let’s be confident and positive.”

-Charles R Swindoll



TOOL #1: Personal Vision

Use this Tool #1 to think through and start to craft your personal vision. It's adapted from many sources and should prompt you to think and dream. Find a place without distractions such as a quiet table at a restaurant. Answer as many of the questions as possible, and discuss your responses with someone you trust.

Things I Really Enjoy Doing	What Brings Me Happiness/Joy	The Two Best Moments of My Past Week	Three Things I'd Do If I Won the Lottery
Issues or Causes I Care Deeply About	My Most Important Values (Circle)	Things I Can Do at the Good-to-Excellent Level	What I'd Like to Stop Doing or Do as Little as Possible

Did any of these questions trigger some ideas about what you'd like to be doing with your life now and in the next two to five years? If so, keep thinking about the questions and your answers, and continue your personal research.

TOOL #2: Personal Vision Statement

It's now time to pull together your research and write a Personal Vision Statement. Your vision must be unique and appropriate for you, so we offer the following

Personal Vision Statement *only as an example:*

I am more physically fit, almost finished with my formal education, actively involved in two close personal relationships, worshipping and serving God regularly, having fun every day, and making at least 75% as much money as now doing work that I love.

Notice in this sample that the person included *several areas of life* (physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, emotional, and career). It's a *picture* of how the person sees himself/herself and is written in the *present tense*.



Use the following tool to synthesize what you've learned about yourself and to write your own statement.

Personal Vision Statement

1. Based on my personal research, these are the main things that motivate me/bring me joy and satisfaction:
2. My greatest strengths/abilities/traits/things I do best:
3. At least two things I can start doing/do more often that use my strengths and bring me joy:
4. This is my Personal Vision Statement for myself (in 50 words or less):



Talk about your findings and your Vision Statement with someone you trust. If necessary, make a second, better draft, but don't compromise your passion. Think big, and hold onto your excitement! Now you're ready to turn your Vision Statement into an action plan.

TOOL #3: Personal Development Plan

1. Look at your completed Draft Vision Statement again, and **choose one goal** that will help you take a first key step toward reaching your vision.
2. Write the **goal** in the space, "My First Major Goal."
3. In the first column, write **up to three steps/objectives** that will help you accomplish one key part of your Goal.
4. Write the objectives as **skills, knowledge, or attitudes** to attain. Some people choose easy objectives that can be reached immediately (in order to build success and momentum). Others choose the most important objectives that will ensure they'll master the goal.
5. For each objective, choose a **measure/proof** to show you've reached it, at least one **learning/development activity** (class? book? internship? research on the Web?), some **potential mentors** who could help you, and finally a **target completion date** (December 31, 2012?) by which you'll reach the objective.

Take at least an hour to work on your plan. Use a pencil if that feels better than a pen or computer. Talk to someone you respect about your proposal, and make changes as needed. Be sure your plan is **challenging** and **compelling** enough to excite you every day but **not so difficult** that you won't do it.

Humans have the remarkable ability to get exactly what they must have. But there is a difference between a "must" and "want."

