

DEVELOPING A PERSONAL VISION TOWARD YOUR IDEAL SELF

[These are selected exercises that appeared in McKee, Boyatzis and Johnston, *Becoming a Resonant Leader: Develop Your Emotional Intelligence, Renew Your Relationships, and Sustain Your Effectiveness*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Mass. 2008.]

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We become what we dream. Creating a vision for the future has been shown to produce Gold Medals in the Olympics and other feats of amazement. By spending time in the realm of what is possible and hope, we are thinking, in part, with our left prefrontal cortex and engage a multitude of positive emotions.

The exercises and questionnaires in this workbook are offered to assist you in developing your personal vision. A personal vision is the deepest expression of what we want in life. It is a description of our preferred future, not a prediction of what will be. In this sense, your personal vision should describe what you want out of life and work and what kind of person you want to be. Instead of a forecast of what you think might be likely in the future, your personal vision is a description of the future you dream about. A wide variety of exercises and questionnaires are used to increase the likelihood that you are tapping into many aspects of your dreams.

The exercises and questionnaires are best completed over a period of time. Do not try to complete them in one or two sittings. Each should provoke somewhat different reflections, thoughts, and feelings. If you are involved in a loving and caring relationship, you may consider asking your spouse, partner, or significant other to complete these exercises and questionnaires as you explore your personal vision individually and then your personal vision as a couple or family.

SECTION I: DREAMS OF THE IDEAL FUTURE

I. List 27 or more things you'd like to do or experience before you die.

- 1.
- 2.
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-

What themes appear in your list above?

I.2. You just won the super lottery, and received 50 million US dollars or euros after tax, how would your life and work change?

I.3 It is fifteen years from today. You are living your ideal life. You are living in a location that you have always dreamed about. You are living with the people with whom you most want to be living. If work is part of your ideal image, you are doing the type and amount of work you love.

A NETCAM (i.e., network camera the size of a button) is attached to your shirt or blouse. What images would we see in a video stream of your day? Where would you be? What are you doing? Who else is there?

I.4 Taking a Fantasy Job

This is an opportunity to imagine yourself doing the kind of work or jobs that you sometimes fantasize, or wonder, “What would it be like if I were doing X?”

Make believe the following three events have occurred:

1) You enter a new machine called a Neurophysiological Remaker. A few minutes inside of the machine, using genetic reengineering and non-invasive neural implants, gives you the body, knowledge, and capability to do any job-- and do it well;

2) You are given the financial resources or certifications (i.e., licenses) based on your new capability to do any job well; and

3) For one year, you are free of all personal, social, and financial responsibilities in your current or desired life.

List five to ten jobs that you would love to do or try. Consider a wide variety of jobs like those in other countries, jobs in sports, music, medicine, politics, agriculture, religion, Consider jobs you have heard about or seen in the movies or on television.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Choose the three to five of the jobs in your list that most interest you or seem the most exciting or rewarding. Describe each of them below, including what you will enjoy or look forward to the most about each job.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Sometimes a person describes a “fantasy” job as one they really wish and want to do. Other times, the job represents some interesting or exciting activities or conditions. In other words, sometimes, it is not the job that is the fantasy but some aspect of it or condition under which the job is done. As you read your descriptions of the three to five jobs you would most like to do or try, do you notice themes or patterns? How are these different jobs similar? Are there activities (such as being outside) that are part of each? Are there conditions of the work (such as working with a team) that are part of each? Are there consequences (such as being famous) that are a part of each? List those themes or patterns below.

SECTION II: MY LEGACY

II.1 My Legacy

What would you wish to have as your legacy in life? In other words, what will remain or continue as a result of you having lived and worked all of these years?

II.2 My Obituary

At your funeral, some gets up and gives a eulogy that makes you feel warm and proud. What would be elements of this eulogy?

SECTION III: WHAT DO I VALUE? HOW DO I VALUE?

My Values

The objective of this exercise is to help you clarify your values, or beliefs. Since our values and beliefs change from time to time, after reflection or certain events, it is useful to review and consider our values and beliefs regularly. This exercise is adapted from numerous instruments used to assess one's values based on the ideas of Milton Rokeach, described in The Nature of Human Values, New York: Free Press, 1973.

Attached is a list of 49 values, beliefs, or personal characteristics for your consideration. The following steps should help you identify which are most important to you as guiding principles in your life. You might find it useful to determine degrees of importance by considering whether you would be upset or elated if your present state or condition in life regarding a particular value would be significantly reduced or increased. Sometimes, you might find it helpful to consider two values at a time, asking yourself about the relative importance of one over the other.

Whatever technique or method you use:

1) First, please identify the fifteen or so values that are most important to you, and mark them with an asterisk or circle them;

2) Second, from this list of fifteen or so, identify the ten that are the most important to you and write them on the lines on the following page;

3) Third, from this list of ten, identify the five that are the most important to you; and

4) Fourth, rank each of the five from "1" being the most important value to you to "5" being the least important of these five important values.

If you would find it helpful, you may want to rank the next five values (i.e., the "other five" from the list generated in step #2 above).

List of Values, Beliefs, or Desirable Personal Characteristics

ACHIEVEMENT	(a sense of accomplishment, success, or contribution)
AMBITIOUS	(aspiring to promotion or progress within career)
ADVENTURE	(new and challenging experiences)
*AFFECTION	(love, caring)
BEAUTY	(aesthetics in nature, art, or life)
BROAD MINDED	(open-minded)
CHEERFUL	(joyful)
CLEAN	(tidy, sanitary)
COMPETENT	(capable, effective)
COMPETITIVENESS	(winning, taking risks)
COMFORTABLE LIFE	(prosperous or easy life)
COOPERATION	(working well with others, teamwork)
*COURAGEOUS	(standing up for beliefs)
*CREATIVITY	(being imaginative, innovative)
DISCIPLINED	(self-controlled, restrained)
ECONOMIC SECURITY	(steady, adequate income)
EQUALITY	(egalitarianism in life, equal opportunity for all)
EXCITING LIFE	(a stimulating or challenging life)
FAME	(being famous, well known)
*FAMILY HAPPINESS	(nuclear and/or extended family that is happy)
FAMILY SECURITY	(nuclear and/or extended family that is safe)
*FORGIVING	(willing to forget a judgment of others)
*FREEDOM	(independence, autonomy, free choice, self-reliant)
*FRIENDSHIP	(close relationships, companionship)
*HAPPINESS	(contentedness)
*HEALTH	(being physically and mentally well)
HELPLESSNESS	(assisting others, improving society)
INNER HARMONY	(being at peace with yourself)
*INTEGRITY	(honesty, sincerity, genuineness)
INVOLVEMENT	(participating with others, belonging)
*INTELLECTUAL	(conceptual, abstract, or symbolic)
LOGICAL	(rational)
*LOVING	(affectionate, tender)
LOYALTY	(duty, respectfulness, obedience)
*MATURE LOVE	(sexual and spiritual intimacy)
NATIONAL SECURITY	(protection from attack)
ORDER	(tranquility, stability, conformity)
PEACE	(a world at peace, without war or conflict)
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	(personal growth)
PLEASURE	(fun, laughs, an enjoyable, leisurely life-style)
POLITE	(courteous, well-mannered)
POWER	(control, authority, influence over others)
RECOGNITION	(social recognition, respect from others, status)
RELIGION	(strong religious beliefs)
RESPONSIBLE	(dependable, reliable)
SALVATION	(eternal peace)
SELF-RESPECT	(self-esteem, pride, sense of personal identity)
WEALTH	(making money, getting rich)
*WISDOM	(understanding life, discovering knowledge)

My Ten Most Important Values:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

My Five Most Important Values:

- Most Important Value Rank #1 _____
- Next Most Important Value Rank #2 _____
- Next Most Important Value Rank #3 _____
- Next Most Important Value Rank #4 _____
- Next Most Important Value Rank #5 _____