

Setting Your Vision And Defining Your Goals

Shenandoah Chefalo



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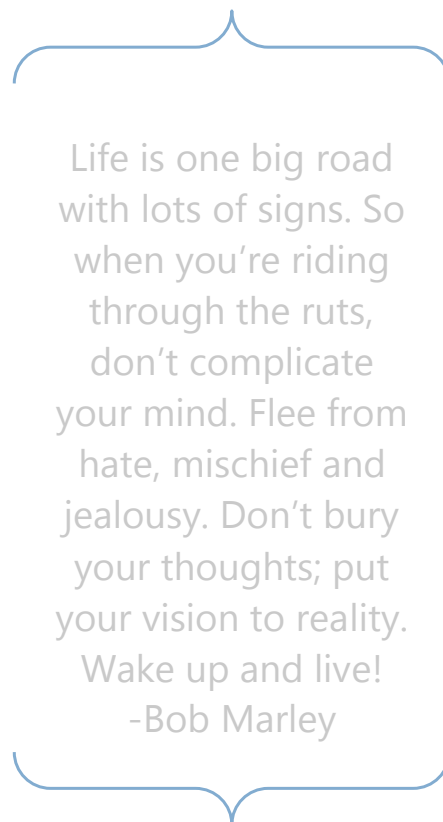
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Introduction

Where do you go when uncertain about what you truly want out of your life and career? Most say they simply want to be happy. But what does happiness mean? And how does one control the direction life takes? By learning the necessary skills to create an adaptable life vision.

Creating a personal vision statement can be an incredibly rewarding activity. In an age when people rush from one task to another, crafting a vision requires that we slow down and take time for self-reflection and care.

Many successful companies operate by a mission statement written to embody the core values and goals of the company. Similarly, a carefully crafted vision statement will become the roadmap for your life.



Chapter 1

1.1 Vision



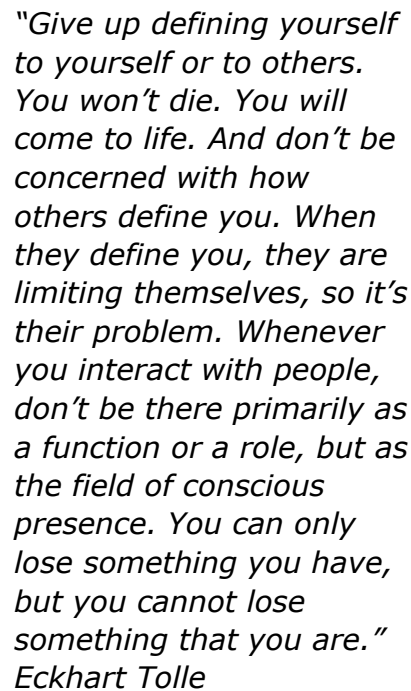
When asked to define ‘vision’, the first thing many say is the act of seeing with ones’ eyes. While sight can play an important role in creating a vision statement, one must become more introspective for a deeper understanding of the type of vision being explored here: a prophetic vision or the power of anticipating what may come.

People are commonly influenced by more than one type of vision throughout their lives. For instance, a person may have a personal vision statement, a corporate mission statement, and a vision statement pertaining to one aspect of his/her life (volunteering, parenting, faith, etc.). Some decide to have one over-riding vision statement to guide and direct their lives.

Personal vision and corporate mission statements are similar in that they represent a *future picture* of you, your business or the company you work for. Setting the framework for future planning and goal setting, vision and mission statements answer the following questions respectively:

What do I want?

Where are we going?



"Give up defining yourself to yourself or to others. You won't die. You will come to life. And don't be concerned with how others define you. When they define you, they are limiting themselves, so it's their problem. Whenever you interact with people, don't be there primarily as a function or a role, but as the field of conscious presence. You can only lose something you have, but you cannot lose something that you are."
Eckhart Tolle

Whether personal or corporate, vision/mission statements are created to help articulate dreams and aspirations. Using your imagination without limitation will help capture your inner passion. Let's get started!

1.2 Defining Yourself

Before creating your personal vision statement, first identify who you are as an individual. Though difficult at first, practice will help you better understand yourself and prepare you for the next steps. Start with the following exercise.

Exercise 1: *Who Am I?*

1. Introduce yourself to a stranger. Note what you say.
2. After the introduction, list words used to describe yourself. For example, did you use your name, job title or relationship status?
3. Review the list carefully. What do you notice?

4. Next, write an introduction without making reference to the following:
 - a) Name
 - b) Occupation
 - c) Gender
 - d) Nationality
 - e) Health
 - f) Personal appearance
5. List the differences between your initial introduction and the written introduction.

Most introductions start with something like, “I’m Sally Smith, Account Representative for ABC Inc.” Using the steps above, Sally might redefine herself by saying, “I’m adventurous, spending all my spare time sky and deep sea diving, bungee jumping, and parasailing on the Great Lakes.”

The differences will uncover the *true* you. Remember, use your imagination without limitation. Capture the inner passions that will clearly define who you are while laying the foundation for your personal vision statement.

The exercise above can also be used for business leaders crafting a mission statement for an organization. For step one, include information about the company and the products and services you offer. In step four, describe your company without reference to your products, services, or other identifying characteristics. Once complete, you will be better positioned to start drafting your corporate mission statement.

1.3 Core Values

Another crucial element to creating a personal vision statement includes identifying core values. Often referred to as building blocks, core values are the fundamental beliefs of a person or an organization. The guiding principles dictating behavior and/or actions, core values are as unique to each individual as a thumbprint and help to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad.

Often individuals and companies struggle without understanding why. Typically, core values are at the heart of the problem. Since core values determine our way of life, without them people generally feel lost and conflicted. Core values may change as we grow and enter different stages of life so examine them often so you can reprioritize and adjust along the way.

Like learning to define who you are, identifying core values may seem complicated. The following exercise will help simplify the process and move you one step closer to writing your personal vision statement. Give yourself a minimum of 20 uninterrupted minutes to complete the assignment.

Exercise 2: What Matters Today?

1. Write at the top of a blank piece of paper, ‘What Matters Today?’
2. List everything that comes to mind without making any judgments about your responses. Take a look at Table 1 for some ideas to help you get started.
3. Ask yourself the following question for each of the items on your list:
 “What does [insert item] mean to me?”
 For example, if *time* made the list of things important to you today ask yourself, “What does time mean to me?” Does time mean flexibility? Order? Peace? The answer will uncover your underlying core values. In this case, flexibility, orderliness and peace.
4. Look for patterns as you dissect each of the items on your list.
5. Narrow your original list to the ten items you value most, arranging them in order from the most important to the least.
6. On a blank piece of paper, list your top three values in order. Write a statement defining what success looks like for each value. For example, if *happiness* made the top three then ask yourself, “At the end of my life, how will I know I’ve been happy?”

Once core values are identified, you are ready to take the next step in preparing your vision statement.

1.4 Extended List of Values

If you are still struggling to understand what some of your values may or may not be, the following is a non-inclusive list they may help you get started.

- Abundance
- Acceptance
- Achievement
- Adventure
- Aesthetics
- Appreciation
- Authenticity
- Balance
- Beauty
- Bliss
- Caring
- Career
- Cheerfulness
- Clarity
- Commitment
- Compassion
- Co-operation
- Confidence
- Contentment
- Courage
- Creativity
- Daring
- Dedication
- Detachment
- Determination
- Devotion
- Diligence
- Discipline
- Discernment
- Discrimination
- Empathy
- Empowerment
- Energy
- Enthusiasm
- Excellence
- Faith
- Family
- Fame
- Flexibility
- Forgiveness
- Freedom
- Friendship
- Fun
- Generosity
- Good will
- Grace
- Gratitude
- Growth
- Happiness
- Harmlessness
- Harmony

- Healing
- Health
- Honesty
- Hope
- Humility
- Inclusiveness
- Insight
- Integrity
- Influence
- Intelligence
- Intimacy
- Introspection
- Intellectual growth
- Intuition
- Joy
- Justice
- Kindness
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Learning
- Love
- Loyalty
- Maturity
- Money
- Openness
- Order
- Passion
- Patience
- Peace
- Positive
- Power
- Prosperity
- Purity
- Purpose
- Recognition
- Relationships
- Respect
- Reverence
- Sacrifice
- Security
- Serenity
- Service
- Sharing
- Silence
- Spirituality
- Spontaneity
- Strength
- Status
- Support
- Surrender
- Success
- Tolerance
- Trust
- Trustworthiness
- Truth
- Understanding
- Union
- Unity
- Wisdom
- Winning
- Wealth

Read through the list, and select 20 values that naturally appeal to you (not needs, should, role based duties, etc.).

Review the list and narrow to your top 5 values. In doing so ask yourself these questions:

- If you NEED it to be happy, it's a need, not a value
- If you are doing it in order to get something else, it is not a value
- If you want it, but it doesn't come easily, it is probably a "should"
- If you did it when you were eight years old, it is probably a value
- If it is really exciting and you're afraid of it, it may be a value

This should help determine what your TRUE VALUES are!

1.5 Integrity

In the building trade, integrity refers to the integration of the bricks, mortar, foundation, plumbing, interlocking pieces, and strength of materials. When built and assembled properly, the building has integrity and does not require propping.

Integrity in people refers to the design of our personal life system whether it works easily and effortlessly or with great struggle. Without integrity, we spend much of our time propping ourselves up, which is costly, exhausting and distracting.

To be our best, we must be whole: responsible for our actions and inactions, responding fully to the lessons being offered to us, honoring our bodies and ourselves, and respecting the realities of the physical universe.

Integrity is a measure of personal wholeness, describing how well your actions align with your core values and represent your purpose. You define your level of integrity by vigilantly developing the fit between calling and conduct.

Integrity is dynamic. Integrity is not a state you try to achieve but a reflection of who you are in any moment, and the dynamic relationship you maintain between purpose and path. As you progress through these lessons to build a stronger personal foundation, you will also find your integrity increasing. Your wholeness is based on a strong personal foundation made up of many parts working in harmony.

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“Self” work and “integrity” work. “Self” work involves increasing awareness of how you interact with yourself, others and circumstance – mostly on an external basis. The objective is to see yourself reflected in many multifaceted ways and dimensions in order to increase your “self” knowledge and awareness and to strengthen your relationship with yourself. The “integrity” work of personal foundation begins to look at the alignment between who you are and the behavior you engage in. Integrity work allows you to make the shift from operating from an automatic pilot, reactive state of decision making to a well thought out and well explored plan, based on what really creates your uniqueness in the world and serves you the best.

Personal levels of integrity. Everyone has a unique degree of integrity required to be who he or she is intended to be. We are all at different points along the path of development. There are distinct integrity requirements at each point that permit us to grow to the next one. And until we are living in the integrity required to be at any given place on that path, we will not grow to the next place. We begin to see that all of life gets easier as we move along, and the integrity levels will naturally increase.

The Integrity Equation. Integrity is the result of having the following conditions in life:

- No unresolved matters
- Alignment
- Responsibility

Each of these are discussed in various lessons, but you should be aware of them now. Briefly you are in integrity when:

1. **You are clear of the past and in the present.** That is, you have corrected any wrongs, fully communicated any censorships, holding back or disturbances with another, made personal changes to make sure life works well and fully handled every task and job.
2. **Your life is aligned and balanced.** That is, your goals are aligned with your core values, your actions are based on what is true, not a fantasy or delusion, and your commitments are aligned with your vision or purpose. Your life is aligned with something bigger than your ego.
3. **You are responsible for all that occurs in your life.** This does not mean responsible as in to be blamed for having caused the problems – rather, responsible as in handling whatever occurs and then making necessary adjustments so this type of problem does not occur again. Being responsible does not mean complaining; it means handling and resolving.

Follow these 10 steps to restore integrity and wholeness:

1. Make a list of 10 ways you are currently not in integrity.
2. Get to the source of each and every item; resolve all fully.
3. Make a commitment to start living in integrity, as you see it.
4. Let go of at least 10 “should, coulds, woulds, oughts, wills.”
5. Involve a coach or other strong, able person to help you.
6. Start getting 50 percent more reserve than you feel you need.
7. Utilize additional resources.
8. Stop associating with people who are poor role models.
9. Eliminate adrenaline and other unhealthy “rushes” in your life.
10. Let go of everything you know is not good for you.

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Chapter 2

2.1 Crafting Your Vision & Values

Now you will begin organizing what thus far have been abstract thoughts, the results of using your imagination without limitation.

2.2 Developing a Vision

When developing a vision statement, focus on the future in a positive and inspirational way while keeping the statement simple and easy to remember.

For a personal vision statement, reflect on strengths and talents when asking yourself the following questions:

1. Why am I special?
2. What makes me happy?
3. What do I love about me?
4. What am I best at?
5. Where do I excel?

For a corporate mission statement, ask your team the questions above and include the following:

1. Why do we exist?
2. What is our purpose?

Vision and mission statements set the framework for future planning and goal setting by describing the future in present and powerful terms. Whether for yourself or your company, the statement should be...

- ...written in present tense.
- ...positive.
- ...aligned with your core values.
- ...specific and include action.

Microsoft's mission statement went public in 1980 when Bill Gates pronounced, "We will put a computer on every desk and in every home." On the verge of a technological revolution, most people underestimated Gates' vision. His statement was a glimpse of what he imaged the future could be. Today, nearly every household, business and school operates using a computer.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy declared, “By the end of the decade, we will put a man on the moon and return him safely to Earth.” An unimaginable prediction at the time, Kennedy’s passion for the space program inspired a vision that people worldwide still benefit from today. This year, NASA turned 55 and celebrated iconic moments including the orbit of the Hubble Space Telescope and the launch of two rovers to Mars.

Many more examples like the ones above exist to inspire and guide your efforts. Spend time researching successful people and companies to see what influences their success and take note. Every success story started with a vision.

2.3 Defining and Understanding Wants

People are eager to talk about what they want... more money, more time, more flexibility. Developing your vision statement includes identifying what you want and, just as importantly, discovering what you don’t want from life.

When writing your statement, consider the following to help you define exactly what you want.

- What do I want more of in my life?
- What do I want less of in my life?
- If money were no object, what would my career look like?
- What relationships do I need to nurture? Let go of?
- What is my relationship to money?
- The dream I never mention because it’s too big to think about is...
- What are my fears?
- What must occur during my lifetime to call my existence well lived with few or no regrets?
- What would bring more joy into my life?
- What am I grateful for?

As you reflect on answers to the above, review your core values. Are the things you want in alignment with the values originally chosen?

2.4 Make Your Vision a Reality

Ensure your vision statement represents you. If you discover that what you want fails to align with your original core values, start over. What you want **must** be fully aligned with your core values in order to live in harmony with your vision statement.

After refining your statement, follow the suggestions below to help make your vision a reality.

Measurements Define and development measurements for success. Visions typically include ambitious ideas so organizing your thoughts will help to manage the tasks at hand. Break your vision into bite sized goals and celebrate each triumph leading you towards achievement of the bigger vision. Like the old saying goes, “How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!”

Accountability Find someone you trust to serve as an accountability partner. A partner will be honest and unbiased when questioning the systems developed to measure success. Together, you and your accountability partner will identify potential roadblocks and develop a plan to guide you when challenges arise. Finally, your partner will remind you to celebrate the victories while keeping you mindful of the bigger vision.

Planning What do bite-sized pieces of your vision look like? In what order does each step need to be complete? Outline an action plan with small steps that must be accomplished in order for the bigger vision to be realized. Plan to celebrate each success along the way.

Rewards A reward system can keep you on track and give your accountability partner another tool to guide you on your journey. For instance, if *health* is a core value and your goal is to lose 100 pounds, perhaps you establish a mini reward of a manicure for each 10 pounds you lose. When you reach your entire weight loss goal, then you might reward yourself with a vacation or a spa weekend.

By now, you have an excellent start on your vision statement and a clearer understanding of what you want. What's next?

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Chapter 3

3.1 Clarifying the Vision

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. Carl Jung

To ensure your vision aligns with your core values and beliefs, test the statement again using the exercise below. Creating a plan and setting goals only to discover later that you were not vested in the original vision can be discouraging. Avoid the pitfall and test your vision again. This is often referred to as gap analysis.

Exercise 3: WIIFM (*What's in it for Me?*)

- Ask yourself why you want the vision. What's in it for you?
 - If your vision includes a statement about being healthy and fit, ask yourself what that does for you. Perhaps you answer 'A better quality of life.'
- Write 'Why' before each item on your list.
 - Why will I have a better quality of life? Because I will have more energy and physically feel better.
- Review your answers to verify the vision created is one you can live with. The reassessment will also help you better understand why the vision is important and identify areas where changes can be made to guarantee your vision is in alignment with your core values.

Once you have completed this process you are able to make the necessary adjustments to your vision statement and you are ready to begin getting organized.

3.2 Limiting Beliefs

Limiting beliefs refer to negative thoughts and stories individuals tell themselves that ultimately discourage achievement of one's goal. Essentially an opinion (yours or someone else's), limiting beliefs often prevent people from taking crucial steps forward. The good news? With a little work, limiting beliefs are reversible!

Limiting beliefs are frequently excuses in disguise. “I can’t lose weight because I never have time to work out and health food is just too expensive.” Riddled with limiting beliefs, what **can** this person do to achieve her weight loss goal?

- Rearrange schedule, making exercise a priority
- Reexamine budget, eliminating unnecessary expenses
- Reconsider lifestyle, adopting new habits to support weight loss

The example above demonstrates how limiting behaviors can prevent individuals from making necessary behavioral changes, changes essential to the achievement of one’s goal.

Limiting beliefs can also cap one’s achievement. “Without a degree, I probably won’t make more than my current income.” A common assumption, consider how the above statement limits individuals. How does one overcome this limiting belief?

- Consider higher education, trade school and other educational courses
- Apply for a promotion
- Work for a different company offering higher wages
- Start a business
- Explore additional revenue streams

Limiting beliefs are sneaky. Like the examples above, they often include negative self-talk peppered with excuses. Limiting beliefs can also be disguised as fear, perfectionist thinking, beliefs conditioned from one’s culture and justifications.

If limiting beliefs are hindering your success, or if you are unsure how to identify your limiting beliefs begin by asking yourself the following questions:

1. What rules do I live by that limit my ability?
Example: To be successful, I need to stay with a company until retirement.
2. What recurring negative thoughts prevent me from pursuing my dream?
Example: I don’t have the money necessary to start my own company.
3. What unnecessary assumptions do I make about committing to this goal?
Example: I’ll never secure the needed financing for start-up costs.
4. What clichés, quotes, aphorisms or other catchy phrases limit me?
Examples: No one’s perfect. Better luck next time. If life gives you lemons...
5. What stereotypical beliefs or cultural myths am I allowing to hold me back?
Example: I don’t have the right [education, appearance, background] to successfully do the job.

6. How do standards about “what” and “how” things **should** happen limit my abilities?
*Example: Is there only **one** correct way of doing things?*
7. What values might interfere with achievement of my goals?
Example: Do I value something that contradicts what I need to move toward?
8. What self defeating behaviors do I engage in? *Examples:*
Eating fast food after committing to a healthy lifestyle. Submitting to your child’s demands after saying no.
9. What reoccurring stories, narratives, or mental scripts do I play over and over again in my head that disempower me?
Example: I’ll never be able to do that because...
10. What philosophies keep me frozen in a passive way?
Example: Mistakes equate to failure.

If a pattern of limiting beliefs starts to emerge, isolate one you feel most encumbers your success. Let’s examine the belief further using the exercise below.

Exercise: Dissection of a Limiting Belief

1. *Identify one limiting belief.*

Choose a belief impacting your ability to take action, one intruding on your personal and professional growth. Example: I don’t have enough money.

no.1
nine years
in a row

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2. *Why do you have this belief?*
What contributes to the seeming deficiency in financial resources? Examples: I don't make enough money, I have too much debt.
3. *What evidence undermines the limiting belief?*
You may feel destitute however, the belief may simply not be true. Examples: You have basic needs met (food, shelter, clothing).
4. *In what ways are you not fully alive and engaged in life?*
How does your limiting belief restrict you from enjoying life? Example: I don't have enough money to take a vacation.
5. *How do you feel about these missed opportunities?*
Give special attention to the feelings you have knowing what life should be like and the ways your belief has prevented you from experiencing it fully. Write down your feelings.
6. *What would you do with your life if you no longer had this limiting belief?*
Imagine the belief disappeared instantly. How would this change your perceptions of what you can do? What goals would you set for yourself?
7. *Is there any current truth to this limiting belief?*
What actual circumstances support your limiting belief? Example: I didn't go away for vacation this year because I'm broke.
8. *What can you change about the circumstances listed in your previous answer?*
Many limiting beliefs are disguised as excuses. Once corrected, circumstances are less limited than we thought. Example: Are you broke or will a few minor changes in your budget allow you to travel (eat out less, open a vacation savings account, break an expensive habit)? Are there alternatives to a luxury vacation that would offer rest and relaxation at little or no cost (camping, hiking, visiting friends and family)?
9. *What outcome do you fear most tied to this limiting belief?*
What is the worst thing that could happen if you take no action? Example: I worry about suffering from stress and depression.
10. *What do you think the odds are of the worst things happening?*
Release the limiting belief and take action. Based on your answers to question 8, how likely are you to experience the worst case scenario?

11. *How comfortable are you with the ambiguity of feeling fear and uncertainty but taking action anyway?*

All change involves risk, even when one calculates every possible outcome. You must take risks in order to grow and create a better life. Become comfortable with the presence of ambiguity and uncertainty.

12. *How does the limiting belief impact your relationships?*

Often we compromise our relationships when we remain stuck in a false belief. Can you see how any of your close relationships have been impacted? Example: Time that could be spent bonding with family is being spent in frustration.

13. *Write your limiting belief on a small piece of paper and seal in an envelope.*

Put the belief “on hold” for a week. Assign the belief a number between 1 and 10, with 10 being extremely limiting and 1 being not very limiting based on how you feel today.

14. *What is the most compelling goal listed in your answer to question 6?*

Of all the things you’ve wanted to achieve but avoided due to your limiting belief, which one stands out as the first you’d like to work toward?

15. *What are 3–5 small, manageable actions you can take towards the goal identified above while your limiting belief is sealed away?*

Acting as if you have no limiting belief, create a few actions you will commit to take towards the achievement of your goal and write them on a calendar.

Once the barriers to positive thinking are identified, you will start creating a new belief system to replace your previous limited thinking. The biggest challenge will be to catch yourself engaging in negative self-talk or self-defeating behaviors and changing how you communicate with yourself. Create new mental scripts promoting a positive perspective:

Mistakes are the stepping stones to mastery.

Choice will determine my success.

I am alive, everything is possible.

Now that you have isolated a limiting belief and sealed the negativity in an envelope, use this time of freedom from the belief to take action. Commit to the actions outlined with actual deadlines, repeating the new positive mental scripts created for yourself.

Finally, remember to share your beliefs (old and new!) with an accountability partner to help you maintain focus as you shift from limiting thoughts and behaviors to unlimited possibilities.

3.3 Getting Organized

We know certain tasks must be accomplished in order to reach our goals however, disorganization can waste countless hours. Wasted time hinders progress and creates doubt regarding the mission. To avoid this, try the following:

1. Create a list of things to do in support of your vision statement. The list should include short and long term goals. Research suggests a daily task list in support of a larger goal (or vision) can be highly motivating.
2. Establish a designated work area, free of clutter and distractions.
3. Use the POSEC Method:
 - a) **P**rioritize your time and define your life by goals.
 - b) **O**rganize the things you have to accomplish regularly to be successful.
 - c) **S**teamline the things you may not like to do, but must do.
 - d) **E**conomize the things you should do or may even like to do but that are not pressingly urgent.
 - e) **C**ontribute by paying attention to the few remaining things that make a difference.
6. Plan what you do and do what you plan. To stay organized, follow through with your entire plan throughout the day and set boundaries for distractions you can plan on (i.e. cell phone, email, children/family, etc.).



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Chapter 4



4.1 Goals

Break your vision into bite-sized pieces by setting smaller goals along the way and diligently work towards achieving the bigger picture. Goals should always be SMART.

Specific – Objectives should address the five W’s...who, what, where, when, why. Use action words such as create, design, establish, implement, produce, etc.

Measurable – Goals should be quantifiably defined in such a way as to gauge progress, giving a clear indication of when the goal has been successfully met.

Achievable – Challenging and rewarding yet still within reach.

Relevant – Goals should be instrumental to your personal mission and align with your core values.

Time-based – Identify a definitive target date for completion.

Following the outline for SMART goals above will greatly increase your likelihood for success.

Additionally, before you set a goal, there are some key steps and considerations you should consider.

1. Make sure the goal you are working for is something you really want, not just something that sounds good.
2. Does your goal contradict any of your other goals?
3. Write your goal in the positive instead of the negative. For example the goal should not be “Stop being fat” but instead “Lost 20 pounds in 90 days”

4.2 Daily Habits

Another simple way to accomplish your goals involves creating new habits. Habits are defined as a regular tendency or practice and often occur with little or no thought. For example, when you wake up in the morning you may take a shower, brush your teeth, dress and eat breakfast.

If you are working on goals that require new habits, using a chart similar to the one below can be helpful. Perhaps you want to include flossing as a regular part of your morning routine. List ‘FLOSS’ at the top of the chart and track your progress throughout the week.

HABIT	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Floss							
No TV							
Read							
Add Value							
Thank someone							
Rest							
Veggies							
Laugh							
Nails							
Simplify							

Print weekly and display someplace you are certain to see the chart, like a bathroom. The constant visual reminder will help you stay focused on developing your new habits. When items on your list become routine, change your chart to include new habits you want to develop.

TIPS:

1. Choose habits you want to do. There is no place for “should” or “could” in your daily habits. Instead, select habits that you look forward to and give you pleasure.
2. Choose habits that give you energy. Most of the daily habits that actually work for people are the ones that add to the person’s well-being or energy flow. It might mean that you do something like having 5 or more vegetables each day, or that you stop something such as watching television. A ratio of 2:1 of doing and stopping works well.
3. Modify your habits as needed. If you find yourself not doing one or two of your habits, change or replace them with ones that come naturally.
4. Use visual help.

4.3 Public Commitments

Another method used successfully in goal setting involves making a public commitment. Research conducted by professor Gail Matthews found that written goals shared with a friend increased the chance of successfully achieving a goal by 33% over those who simply made a commitment to themselves. An accountability partner can help you reach goals while providing an opportunity to be far more successful than you might have been individually.

4.4 Positive Mental Attitude/Letting Go of Fear

To accomplish a goal, you must let go of fear. Start by staying positive about your goals. Focus on the benefits and achievements your goals will bring. When you start to feel anxious, remember...this is normal. Most fears are related to change. The resulting change your goals bring will have a positive impact on your life.

Avoid “dream stealers”, individuals seeing the positive changes in your life yet insist “it is never going to work.”



“I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons”
Jane, Chinese architect

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If you are still struggling to maintain a positive attitude try these steps:

1. Live for yourself.
2. Understand that even if you can't control outside circumstances, you can control your reaction to them.
3. Leave your work at the office, at least mentally.
4. Slow down.
5. Learn something new every day.
6. Make a list of the positive aspects in your life.
7. Help others.
8. Show gratitude.

Only when we are no longer
afraid do we begin to live. –
Dorothy Thompson

In today's society fear is common. Fear of terrorism, fear over financial problems, fear is a dominating figure in most of our lives. Although fear can help us make necessary preparations, fear can also become quite debilitating. Fear can lead to physical and emotional challenges; fear stops us from living our lives fully. What can you do?

1. **Turn off the news/television.** Although it is important to be informed the news media's job is to bring about an emotional response to every story. Your senses are being bombarded with visual and auditory stimuli meant to evoke fear. A less intense way of staying informed is reading the newspaper or by getting your news online. If you do choose to watch the news send a prayer to those who are suffering.
2. **Mediate or Pray.** Meditation quiets the mind, body and spirit. A simple what to being is to find a quiet spot where you won't be disturbed. Lie down or sit in a chair.
 - a) Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in through your nose and feel the breath travel down into your belly.
 - b) Hold the breath for several seconds and exhale through your mouth. Repeat three times.
 - c) Then begin counting backwards from 10 to 1.
 - d) After you are in this relaxed state, imagine yourself blowing up a balloon, placing all your fears in the balloon, and then releases your fear filled balloon to the universe.
 - e) Once you have released your fear, visualize the highest outcome for any situation you are fearful of.

6. **Spend time outside.** Nature has a wonderfully calming effect on the body, mind and spirit. Take time when you are fearful to visit the beach, a forest or the mountains. Watch the sunrise, the sunset, or simply take a peaceful walk through the park.
7. **Listen to music.** Turn on your favorite music, or a favorite song. Crank it up and sing along.
8. **Read.** When you are experiencing fearful thoughts find inspiration in books of poetry, personal growth, motivation or whatever inspires you.
9. **Seek positive people.** Avoid “dream stealers” and seek out people who inspire you to be better whether at a place of worship, bookstores, community centers, social groups, wherever you can find them.
10. **Seek help.** If you are still experiencing fear, or the inability to let go of fear, seek professional help. Spiritual counselors, life coaches and psychologists can empower you with tools to help you let go of your fear.
11. **Savor every moment.** Life is perfect right now, right at this moment. Perhaps this is the most important element in eliminating fear. None of us knows our fate . What we do know are the gifts that are present in our lives at this moment. Every day make time to find the perfection in your life.

The power of our thoughts, intentions, and actions can greatly affect the outcome of our lives. By implementing some of these strategies you can learn to let go of fear and being to live your life fully.

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Conclusion

You will undoubtedly complete this process numerous times during your lifetime. Both creating and recreating your vision statement as well as that for your own company or the company you work with. Your vision should be always changing. As you engage in new experiences, learn new things and evolve, so should your vision.

You now understand that your vision statement should provide an essential overview of where you are and where you want to go. Few thriving individuals or companies have attained their success without developing such statements as elements of their own plans. However, merely drafting the vision statement is not enough. To realize your vision you must model your beliefs, values, collective commitments and goals around your vision. Perhaps, most important, your vision should establish clear expectations and standards for yourself.

Lastly, do not be afraid to try. If you craft a vision and upon starting in on your goals you may realize that the vision is not what you had originally thought. Do not be disheartened. Go back, clarify where needed, restate new goals and begin again!

About The Author



Extraordinary journey forges unique perspective, valuable insight

What's in a name? For Shenandoah Chefalo, plenty.

Embarrassed by her first name and the unwanted attention that came with it – made worse by a nomadic childhood that kept her from building lasting friendships – Chefalo developed tough skin at an early age. Along the way she learned how to deal with disappointment, push through discomfort, overcome adversity and accurately gauge people – qualities that make her unusual first name and unconventional upbringing almost bearable. At least in hindsight.

“My childhood was challenging in many ways,” she says. “But it also shaped who I am.”

Born in San Diego to a U.S. Navy welder and a free-spirited mother who bounced from place to place and job to job, Chefalo was named Shenandoah because her parents met in Las Vegas, home of the ill-fated Shenandoah Hotel and Casino.

“I’m glad they didn’t meet at the Tropicana. Shenandoah was tough enough,” she jokes. But in all seriousness, she hated her name. “Everyone asked me about it. I learned to answer in a way that got people to stop asking questions. I wanted to be Stephanie or Jennifer so badly. I just wanted to fit in.”

Shenandoah – or Shen, as she is known to friends and colleagues – lived the “gypsy lifestyle” typical of military families. But that continued even after her father was out of the picture.

“I lived with my mother until I was 12, and in all that time I never stayed in the same place for more than three months,” she says. “People find that hard to believe, but that’s exactly how it was. If I had a school project due at the end of the semester, I never bothered to **start** it. I knew we’d move before I had to turn it in. I have no favorite teachers from back then...no best friends.”

There is only a hint of sadness in Chefalo’s voice. She chooses to focus on the positive.

Kids who grow up together fall into cliques at an early age, and some people spend their entire lives trying to overcome those labels,” she says. “I don’t have to carry around any baggage from back then, and I don’t have to prove myself to anyone.

“And by moving around so much, I could recreate myself every few months and be whoever I wanted to be. I learned how to **meet people**, read them pretty quickly and find something in common that we could both relate to.”

Chefalo’s road to maturity took a leap forward at age 12 during a trip to visit an aunt in Michigan.



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“My mother announced that we were moving to Nebraska, and I told her I wasn’t going with her,” she says. “I was tired of the constant moving and change. I said, ‘I’d rather be in foster care.’ And that’s what I did. She didn’t fight me on it. I was pretty independent. I was already getting myself ready for school every day, doing laundry, making my own lunch. I was taking care of myself.”

“I remember forging my mom’s signature on a report card once, not because my grades were bad but because she’d never do it. So I did it myself.”

Chefalo was in foster care for only a short time before setting out on her own as a teenager. Refusing to allow her circumstances to decide her future, she worked hard to graduate from Caledonia High School (near Grand Rapids, Mich.) and was accepted at Michigan State University. She planned to study criminal justice and focus on helping troubled teens, but she eventually earned a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in social science.

“I was average at everything, which was exactly what I wanted,” she says. “If you’re the best at something, people want to know you and be around you. I didn’t want that; I wanted to fly under the radar.”

Chefalo realized, however, that “average” would never provide the happiness and success she ultimately desired. To get there, she would have to face her fear of intimacy and allow people in – not an easy task for someone who’d spent her life keeping others at arm’s length.

“Let’s just say I know what it’s like to be out of your comfort zone,” she says. “That’s never fun, but it’s usually beneficial.”

While working at a law office in Lansing, Mich., Shenandoah was introduced to Gerald Chefalo, who was interviewing for a job with the firm. She was impressed by his positive outlook and genuine concern for others.

“I’ve learned a lot from Gerry,” she says of the man who would become her husband. “He won’t allow people to be ‘rubber stamped.’ He genuinely cares and always offers something more – something to help them turn their life around. He makes a difference.”

The two eventually moved to Traverse City, Mich., where they opened a law office in April 1999. Married in 2002, the couple built a successful business “through raw determination and by being so dumb you don’t know how dumb you are,” she says. “There was a time when we had next to nothing, but we refused to quit. We just worked as hard as we could.”

Chefalo believes the lessons she learned as a child, along with the years she’s spent as the law firm’s office manager, have given her the ability to effectively coach and counsel others.

There is nothing I haven't seen. Nothing shocks me. So I come from a place of support and friendship, not judgment," she says. "I want to help, I know how to help, and I can cut through the BS because I can see it from a mile away.

"I have pretty good gut instincts. I can usually tell who is trying to hide and who needs to be forced out of their comfort zone. In the workshop setting, it's amazing to see what things people are comfortable sharing with complete strangers once they're able to push through their initial apprehension.

I've never viewed myself as a victim, and I don't like it when other people play the victim card. I've been run over a time or two, but you have to learn to pick up the pieces and move on as quickly as possible."

Chefalo knows her "tough love" philosophy doesn't sit well with everyone, but she isn't going to apologize for it.

"I'll be the first to congratulate you, but I won't coddle you," she says. "If you want someone to coddle you, I'm not your person. I can be abrasive; I know that. But people who can handle it will move forward quickly."

If you are interested in the coaching methods of Shenandoah Chefalo please call for a free strategy session to see how living life on your terms can change your life or the life of your business.

Shenandoah Chefalo

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