

Elements: V is for Values and Vision

This edition of Elements is dedicated to "V" and the twin themes of Value and Vision.

Love them or hate them, we all benefit by being clear about them. Leaders need them. They take many forms. Successful leaders use and apply values and vision. Vision is the destination that you, your project, or company is heading. Values are choices on that path that bring you to the vision.

Thank you for the great conversations and feedback on U for Understanding!

Chris Strutt reminded me that sometimes it's not-understanding that is important. Not needing to understand allows for new possibilities. The challenge is in knowing what and when to understand. When do you let go of the need to understand? For example, do you need to understand how a plane works in order to trust that you can fly in one safely? Do you need to understand why someone hurt or manipulated you? It depends, yes and sometimes, no. A guideline to determine the need to understand is - does it help or hurt you in moving forward towards a vision using your values? Is there trust in others or yourself? When is the need to understand born out of revenge or ego? The need to understand can cause people to relive past events, stay stuck, and even seek retribution.

Here's to your best visions, reached by following the path of values,
Star

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Vision: Love, Hate, or Tolerate It



Great leaders have vision, implicitly or explicitly. They may have multiple visions that maybe distinct for life, work, career, project, self, team; or ones that converge those visions into a unified one. They use these various visions to influence and direct themselves and others daily. Several studies have shown that the most successful people over a long time period did something every day towards a future goal.

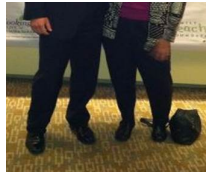
Steve Jobs took bold action in his life towards a vision, unknowingly at times. However it wasn't until the end of life with the help of his biographer, Walter Isaacson, that he was able to gain greater clarity on his life's vision by examining his past. He applied imagination to create value by connecting artistry with technology. Here's a young Steve Jobs describing what he saw as [his vision](#) of the world then.

Leadership is an integrated cycle: Ready, Aim, Fire. Reflect, Plan, Take Action, and Repeat. Vision begets motivation begets buy-in begets more action and creates a movement towards the fulfillment of a vision. More movement creates more action and more motivation.

My Personal Vision



It happened in an instant. I had clarity on my life's vision. I knew what had to drive my actions for many years ahead. I was sitting in a large and crowded hospital cafeteria on the phone negotiating a new work contract. Next to me were my two boys, ages 11 and 16, and some extended family. My recently divorced



ex-husband had been upstairs in a coma for about a week and most likely was going to die. It was unexpected. He was 47, a large, vibrant, charismatic man full of life. In addition to their parents recently divorcing, my boys were now going to be facing a lifetime without their loving dad. I knew this would change their lives forever. My clarity was that the most important thing was to ensure my boys had a path to grow up healthy. I had to protect

them and provide them what they needed to grieve and heal so that they could grow up to be loving and confident men. I wanted for them to be able to acknowledge their dad's death and yet not be overshadowed by it. I was committed to doing this, even if I went broke. I put the work contract on hold. Having never been in a situation like this, there were many stumbles and unknowns along the way and there still continue to be.

The entire situation was a high-tension soap opera drama. I believe that by keeping my vision first and foremost and using my values, I was able to avoid spending time on some of the bizarre, petty, or ridiculous behaviors. Instead I focused on helping to provide my sons with a secure emotional foundation for their lives. My sons are now 20 and 25 years old and I am proud of them and the lives they continue to create for themselves. Ironically, too, the work contract came back and turned into a significant job. As each day passes that vision fades to the background. A new vision for me is not appearing quite as instantaneously. Meanwhile as I shape a new vision I rely on my passions, values, and beliefs to gently nudge me forward.

During the week of the Boston marathon bombings, my emotions cycled through disbelief, fear, anger, sadness, tears, joy, pride, and patriotism. There are thousands of stories. The life visions of many people have been changed forever. Values guided people through the unknown. Friends who were 20 feet from the first blast relied on their values and Boy Scout training to assist the injured. The value of helping, community, and patriotism has been strongly reinforced by these tragic events.

Crafting a Vision and a Team Vision



A vision can inspire and give meaning to work, or it can be ridiculed and ignored. Many corporate visions are unknown or not clear or too lofty to be used. A vision isn't just the domain of those at the top of an organization. It can be a useful tool for managers and leaders and individuals at any level.

Here's a true story of how a vision was used in the workplace:

A project manager's job was to do hundreds of installations of video conference rooms across the country. The installation team was worn out from traveling to remote locations and they were not always welcomed or accommodated at many sites.

Their attitude was - We have a job to do and a checklist to complete within a certain time frame and budget - which was all true. The project manager, in exploring how to be a better leader by building up her influencing and communication skills, learned that face-to-face communication is 50% more effective at getting clear messages across. She also focused on connecting with and getting to know each site and the people there. She crafted a project vision for her team. She was excited and embraced the vision with her team. When they were engaged with the vision, they viewed each opportunity to connect with a site and learn about the people there. The team's motivation, attitude and bottom line productivity increased, and they became more welcome and got the job done faster. The vision was, "We optimize communication, which improves ROI, by installing video conferencing at all our sites."

A good project or team vision has these attributes:

- 1 - Specific to that project or team
- 2 - Strategic and aligned to the larger company's vision
- 3 - Understandable (easy to relate and connect to)
- 4 - Inspiring and motivating
- 5 - Not too wordy

Vision is a tool for leaders at all levels. Vision creates focus, motivates, and guides decisions. Here's a tool for crafting your [own personal vision](#) statement, by Daniel Pink.

Here are some [sample corporate vision statements](#) to inspire you in crafting your project or company vision.

Values: The Path to Vision



Values are the boundaries on your path towards goals and vision. Values are highly personal for each individual and team. Honesty is a value espoused by many, yet there are multiple interpretations of honesty. Here's an example of how honesty can be translated in communication:

A person was two days late in delivering a key task.

Radical Honesty -You delivered the task two days late.

Compassionate Honesty - We expected it two days ago, what happened?

Half Truths - It was a little late.

Ignore the Truth - Don't say anything.

White Lies - The task was done well.

Gray Lie - You did OK.

Lie - Your entire performance was excellent.

Values are consciously and unconsciously used daily in the choices we make. They show up in areas such as communication, problem solving, relationships, and decision making. By fully understanding and using values, a person becomes more in alignment with who they authentically are, and in turn experience less stress. Here are some ways in which values are uncovered in coaching:

1. Review a past and future peak experience, and see what values are present within it.
2. Imagine your 20-year future self and the values you would embody.
3. What makes you angry? Anger is an example of a value being violated.
4. What do others see as your values?
5. What are you wearing? Does it speak to your values?
6. Identify non-values. What's the opposite?
7. Who do you admire? What values do they have?

Values in the Workplace: Two Stories



At times, he needed to make quick decisions with a minimal amount of data. The second guessing he had to do was stressful and overwhelming. He was ready to leave his profession even though he loved helping others in trouble and most of the time got it right. His hobby was playing in a local jazz band. The music they created was fluid and improvisational. He gave a lot of value to the creativity that showed up in his music. When he got clear on this value and how he could use creativity as a guide in making quick decisions at work, his confidence in his decision making and his decisions improved, while reducing his stress level.

Through observation and active discovery she became aware that two of her important values - harmony and openness - were not present at her place of employment. Once she was aware of the absence of values that were important to her, she was then able to choose how to proceed. She attempted to change the culture at work by being more open with others and trying to create a harmonious environment of collaboration and team building. However, the changes didn't have enough senior level management support, or produce enough of a change to feel satisfying to her, so she eventually left. As she looked for a company to better suit her, she learned to ask questions and listen for stories that could reveal or highlight those values she was looking for in a company. She found a company where harmony and openness was truly a part of the culture.

Quotes on Vision and Value

Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality. Warren G. Bennis

It's not hard to make decisions when you know what your values are. Roy Disney

On the Value of Freedom: "This is our f**king city and nobody going to dictate our freedom. Stay strong." David Ortiz

Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world. Joel A. Barker

Life is one big road with lots of signs. Bob Marley

Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion. Jack Welch

All successful people men and women are big dreamers. They imagine what their future could be, ideal in every respect, and then they work every day toward their distant vision, that goal or purpose. Brian Tracy

The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision. Helen Keller

Nothing contributes so much to tranquilize the mind as a steady purpose... Mary Shelley

Tell me what you pay attention to and I will tell you who you are. Jose Ortega y Gasset

Events, Business Coach of the Year Nomination, and Book Review

Nominated for Business Coach of the Year by International Coach Federation - New England, event June 17. [To attend](#)

Radio Blog Talk: Tuesday, May 14, 11:00 - 12:00 EDT, Coaching, Consulting, & Mentoring for a Successful Career. [To listen live or to recording](#)

Webinar: Wednesday, May 15, 11:00 - 12:00 EDT, Corporate Coaching for Sustainable Success and Tangible ROI, [To register](#)

In Person Training in MA, [To register](#)
MDP454 Leadership and Communication Skills
September 30 (Waltham)

MDP455 Facilitation Skills for Project Managers
October 22 (Waltham)

MDP456 Working in a Matrix Organization
November 18 (Waltham)

MDP457 Coaching Skills for Project Managers
December 5 (Waltham)

MDP645 Leading and Developing High Performing Teams
July 31 - Aug 1 (Waltham)
November 13-14 (Boston)

MDP647 Effective Communication and Influencing Skills
August 14-15 (Boston)
November 4-5 (Chelmsford)

Book Review - Women and Leadership, *Lean In*, by Sheryl Sandberg, [click here](#)

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