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PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENTS

(The following exercises are taken from the Covey Leadership Center)

Mission statements are a powerful way to cultivate a passion and vision that lives within you. It captures what you want to be and do – what qualities you want to develop, what you want to accomplish, and what contributions you want to make. Clarity on your mission statement affects everything else -- goals you set, daily decisions you make, and the way you spend your time.

Don't be overwhelmed by this task. Bite it off in pieces you wish to digest (I took 6 careful, relaxed, and enjoyable months to formulate my current mission statement). Remember, this isn't a final draft of your mission statement; only the draft for now.

In thinking about your mission statement, think about the answers to these questions:

- What would I really like to be and do in my life?
- What do I feel are my greatest strengths?
- How do I want to be remembered?
- What have been my happiest moments in my life?
- If I had unlimited time and resources, what would I do?
- What are the 3 or 4 most important things to me?

I did not treat the above questions as hypothetical questions, but rather as questions to ponder deeply and write answers to. Because we are individuals, mission statements will reflect that individual uniqueness, both in content and form. I set aside 1 day a week solely to consider each question, one question at a time. This was my time to devote to myself. I invite you to do something similar that fits into your schedule. I believe you will find it beneficial. Remember that this mission statement is for no one else but you. Write it in whatever form you choose (prose, song, poem, letter, etc). You are not out to impress anyone. Be candid and honest with yourself. Writing an empowering mission statement is not a “to do” to be checked off some list. To be empowering it has to become a living, breathing document, one that is absorbed into your heart and soul. The following characteristics may be helpful in writing your mission statement.

An empowering mission statement . . .

- Represents the deepest and best within you. It comes out of a solid connection with your deep inner life.
- Is the fulfillment of your own unique gifts and capacity to contribute.
- Deals with all the significant roles in your life. It represents a lifetime balance of personal, family, work, community, etc.
- Is written to inspire you -- not to impress anyone else. It communicates to you and inspires you on the most essential level.

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Covey suggests that we place ourselves in an environment that inspires us and grounds us. He suggests the outdoors, where we may be in touch with the balance and grounding of nature and be in the presence of its grandeur; conscious of something bigger than ourselves.

Mission Statement Workshop

The following are some questions and tools to help you create your personal mission statement or examine your current one. These questions and tools are designed to help you think deeply about your life.

What are Your First Things

List those things that are most important in your life.

How effective are you at keeping these things first in your life? Why?

Two Important Questions

Now that you have identified your first things, take a few minutes and answer the following questions. Your responses to these questions will assist you in the continual exploration of your personal mission statement.

If you were to do one thing in your professional life that would have the most positive impact, what would that one thing be?

If you were to do one thing in your personal life that would have the most positive impact, what would that one thing be?

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The Urgency Index

When urgency is the dominant factor in our lives, importance is not. The following questions will help you determine the level of urgency in your life. Circle the number (0=Never, 2=Sometimes, 4=Always) that most closely represents your normal behavior or attitudes regarding the statements at the right.

- | N | S | A | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1. I seem to do my best work when I am under pressure. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2. I blame the rush and pressure of external things on my failure to spend deep, introspective time with myself. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3. I am frustrated by the slowness of people and things around me; I hate to wait or stand in line. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4. I feel guilty when I take time off work. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5. I seem to be rushing between places and events. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6. I find myself pushing people away so I can finish a project. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7. I feel anxious when I am out of touch with the office for more than a few minutes. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 8. I am preoccupied with one thing when I am doing something else. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9. I am at my best when I am handling a crisis situation. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 10. The adrenaline rush from a new crisis seem more satisfying to me than the steady accomplishment of long-term results. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 11. I give up quality time with important people in my life to handle crises. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 12. I assume people will naturally understand if I have to disappoint them or let things go in order to handle a crisis. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 13. I rely on solving a crisis to give my day a sense of meaning and purpose. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 14. I eat lunch or other meals while I work. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 15. I keep thinking that someday I will be able to do what I really want to do. |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 16. A huge stack in my "out" basket at the end of the day makes me feel like I have really been productive. |

_____ Total Score

- 0-25 Low Urgency
- 26-45 Strong Urgency Mindset
- 46+ Urgency Addiction

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Quality-of-Life Index

Review your current quality of life by completing the following questions as they relate to you

<u>Factor</u>	What level of importance do you place on this factor in evaluating your overall quality of life and happiness? (N = None, S = Some, H = High, V = Very High)	How effective is the time you spend in accomplishing your desired results in this area? (1 = Low, 5 = High)
Physical Health	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Economic Well Being	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Housing	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Possessions	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Relationship with yourself	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Family relationships	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Friends	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Professional Relationships	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Professional growth	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Development of skills and talents	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Historical, social, and political knowledge	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Special interests and hobbies	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Professional contributions	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Social/environmental/humanitarian contributions	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Spiritual contributions	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Increased purpose of life, mission/vision	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5
Life balance	N S H V	1 2 3 4 5

Place a check mark beside the factors that indicate an imbalance.

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Influential People

Who are the people who have most influenced your life?

What outstanding characteristics or attributes do you admire in these people?

Which of these qualities do you value enough to include in your personal mission statement?

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Project Your Life Forward

Visualize your 86th birthday. Relax and imagine friends and loved ones as they individually stand to pay tribute to you. These individuals represent the roles you now fulfill in life (ie, parent, teacher, manager, child, community volunteer, relative). Assume that you have fulfilled these roles to the utmost of your potential.

- What would each person say?
- What difference have you made in their lives?
- What qualities or characteristics will you be remembered for?
- What outstanding contribution would they mention?

Answer these questions using the following model:

What is the role:

Who is the person speaking to that role:

What tribute statement would they make:

Annual Evaluation Questions

Your answers to these questions should give you some excellent input for your mission statement.

What are my greatest moments of happiness and fulfillment?

What are the activities of most worth in my personal life?

What are the activities of most worth in my professional life?

What talents and/or capacities do I have?

How can I best contribute to the world?

What do I really want to *be* and *do* in my life?