VISION | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | TAKING ACTION

Visions: Are They Minefields to Failure or Roads to Success

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Get Clear: Write Your *Vision*

We've all been told to write our *Vision.* Get clear on what you want and where you are going. How can you get 'there' if you don't know where 'there' is? I exhort my clients to write out their *Vision* and then break it down into smaller steps and short term goals.

The problem, of course, is most of us don't like to do that; and for good reason. Creating a *Vision* and making specific goals to reach it is tough for us humans. For one thing, once you decide on a *Vision* and a direction you've actually done two things. First, you've decided what you are going to do, of course. But you have also decided what you are not going to do. Tough. Most of us want to do it all and have a heck of a time deciding what NOT to do.

Second, a *Vision* can create failure. Once you've set your *Vision* and started down the path, unless your *Vision* is very easily achieved (therefore, not much of a *Vision*) there is room for failure.

Most of us don't like failure. Which really is a shame. *Because failure is going to happen.* There is no getting away from it. Failure

is a fact of life, like death and taxes. You cannot avoid it.

The Difference Between Successful People and Unsuccessful People

In fact a significant difference between successful people and unsuccessful people, is that successful people know they will fail and learn more from their failures than anyone else. But we'll save that discussion for another time. Of course, a good *Vision* can also create success. But the path to that success can be tricky.

It seems your *Vision* itself, may actually be problematic. Although we do want one, it may get in your way! For clarity, let's define what V*ision* means to us as entrepreneurs. Here are two definitions according to dictionary.com: (1) the act or power of anticipating that which will or may come to be: prophetic vision; the vision of an entrepreneur. (2) a vivid, imaginative conception or anticipation: visions of wealth and glory.

Positive Affirmations May Actually Set You Up For Failure!

Here's the rub and I may be on some hallowed ground here, but hear me out. We've been told that it helps us achieve our *Vision* if we:

- Imagine our success
- Repeat positive thinking mantras
- Put story boards together
- Hang positive affirmations on the bathroom mirror or refrigerator

But the psychology literature suggests that is not quite right. Personally, I found this quite disturbing. I've always thought that if we can connect viscerally with our *Vision* – really get emotionally connected to it – that we have a better chance of attaining it (or getting really close!). But maybe not.

Are You Task Focused or *Vision* Focused?

It turns out having a *Vision* is important – no real surprise there

– but that there is a delicate balance between being 'task' focused and '*Vision*' focused.

Not only is there a delicate balance, but we also need to be fairly nimble in adjusting our focus between the task at hand and our *Vision*.

Here's what some of the research (PsyBlog) shows:

When you begin a task – while you are actually working that task – say picking up the telephone and calling potential business partners - the best thing to do to is keep your big picture *Vision* in mind. Get this; self-control is INCREASED by big picture thinking when we first start out! Getting yourself into good strong action with the most self control may actually happen best with your eye on your ultimate destination. But that changes once you are on your journey and evaluating your progress.

Once you are moving forward toward your *Vision* and you start to *evaluate your progress*, it is better to focus on your day-to-day activities. This is especially true on tasks you perceive as more difficult, where consequently, your chance of failure may be high. Keep your thinking localized to the problems and setbacks you have with your day-to-day activities.

If you start to think about your bigger picture when wrestling with recent failures, it destroys your motivation to keep going.

Just keep your head down and get creative about solving the problems you have with your day-to-day activity. Consider getting some help to think outside of your own perspective. But most importantly, when evaluating your progress, keep your attention to succeed focused on your daily task(s).

As you get closer to your *Vision* or when your day-to-day task(s) are easier, then bring back your big picture view. This is when your *Vision* is a huge positive influence. Having your *Vision* in your sights as you are coming down the home stretch or you are checking off task after task,

bolsters your enthusiasm and helps build momentum right to the end.

Bottom Line

Making this practical isn't as difficult as it might seem. Yes, write your *Vision.* And break it down into daily tasks.

- When you first start out – keep your *Vision* in focus. It will help you get your momentum going.
- Once you're in motion and begin evaluating how you're doing, keep focused on the task(s) at hand. Keep your brain power focused on what you are doing rather than where you want to go.
- When you're feeling brilliant and checking tasks off your list or you are closing in on completing your *Vision,* then keep your eyes on the big picture.

Move back and forth at the right time between being task focused and big picture focused and you stack the odds in your favor. You'll allow your daily successes and how far you've come in your journey to keep you in the game to ultimate success. But it all starts by writing your *Vision.*

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