

## *Senior Theology*

### *A Mission or Personal Vision Statement*

Write a mission statement that is reflective of who you are and your sense of calling, purpose, vocation, or meaning of life. Mission statements are helpful for many reasons, but primarily they are used as a tool to encourage you to consciously reflect on who you are and what you are doing. As you progress, you will find that you will take many side roads; you will wander off the path, hurry ahead of yourself, and even become unsure of what or whom you want to be. A personal mission statement is helpful when the way becomes cloudy. Returning to a written statement of your purpose in life can often help you forge your chosen path.

To get you thinking about the development of your mission statement, please spend some time thinking about the following questions:

Why are you here today?

What are the life values that you hold most near to your heart?

About what are you most passionate?

What hopes do you have for your high school/college education?

What hopes do you have for your life beyond your educational goals?

The answers you develop through these activities and exercises will be the basis of your personal mission and vision statement. Please note that your mission statement can be in the form of poetry, an essay, a myth, a map or plan of action, and simple paragraphs. Most are 1 - 2 pages in length.

Here is an example of a personal mission or vision statement by Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is entitled "This Is To Have Succeeded."

**"To laugh often and love much;  
to win the respect of intelligent people  
and the affection of children;  
to earn the approbation of honest critics  
and endure the betrayal of false friends;  
to appreciate beauty;  
to find the best in others;  
to leave the world a bit better  
whether by a healthy child, a garden patch,  
or a redeemed social condition;  
to know even one life has breathed easier  
because you have lived.  
This is to have succeeded."**

A mission statement is highly fluid. As you continue your education, some of your initial ideas and longings will remain the same, while others will be changed. To this end, the personal mission statement is a malleable document that begins today and will continue to represent you. The following worksheets are a guide to help you answer some of those significant questions in an organized format.

## ***Creating or Revising Your Personal Vision***

It's good to create or revise the "personal vision" you have for your life. A compelling vision can help you succeed, be more satisfied with your life, and get the most out of your all relationships and experiences. Following is a tool for doing that:

### ***Importance of Having a Personal Vision***

Numerous experts on leadership and personal development emphasize how vital it is for you to craft your own personal vision for your life. Warren Bennis, Stephen Covey, Peter Senge, and others point out that a powerful vision can help you succeed far beyond where you'd be without one. That vision can propel you and inspire those around you to reach their own dreams. If you don't identify your vision, others will plan and direct your life for you. Too many individuals have said in their lives, "If only. . . ." You don't have to be one of them.

Senge defines vision as what you want to create of yourself and the world around you. What does your vision include? Making a vital change in an area such as health, technology, or the environment? Raising happy, well-adjusted children? Writing a book? Owning your own business? Living on a beach? Being very fit and healthy? Visiting every continent? Helping others with their spiritual development? What are you good at? What do you love to do? What aren't you good at now, but you'd like to be? All of these important questions are part of identifying your personal vision.

Use this *Tool #1* to think through and start to craft your personal vision. It's adapted from many sources and should prompt you to think and dream. Answer as many of the questions as possible, and discuss your responses with someone you trust.

<b>Things I Really Enjoy Doing</b>	<b>What Brings Me Happiness/Joy</b>	<b>The Two Best Moments of My Past Week</b>	<b>Three Things I'd Do If I Won the Lottery</b>

Issues or Causes I Care Deeply About	My Most Important Values (Circle)	Things I Can Do at the Good-to-Excellent Level	What I'd Like to Stop Doing or Do as Little as Possible
	Having integrity Serving/pleasing a higher being or calling Being fit and healthy Having a nice home and belongings Leaving the world a better place Having fun Learning and improving myself Making others' lives easier or more pleasant Enjoying my family Others? (Add)		

Did any of these questions trigger some ideas about what you'd like to be doing with your life between now and your graduation in 2016? If so, keep thinking about the questions and your answers, and continue your personal research.

***Writing a Personal Vision Statement***

In a nutshell, your personal vision is what you want to be, do, feel, think, own, associate with, and impact by some date in the future. Your vision must be unique and appropriate for you. The following is an example (not a great one):

*I am more physically fit, almost finished with my high school education, actively involved in extracurricular activities, accepted to my college of choice, having fun every day, and getting along better with my sister than I ever have before.*

Use the following tool to write your own statement.

***Tool #2: Personal Vision Statement***

**1. Based on my personal research, these are the main things that motivate me/bring me joy and satisfaction:**

**2. My greatest strengths/abilities/traits/things I do best:**

**3. At least two things I can start doing/do more often that use my strengths and bring me joy:**

**4. This is my Personal Vision Statement for myself (in 50 words or less):**

Talk about your findings and your Vision Statement with someone you trust. If necessary, make a second, better draft, but don't compromise your passion. Think big, and hold onto your excitement! Now you're ready to turn your Vision Statement into an action plan.

***Writing Your Development Plan***

Now that you've completed the first two exercises, you're now ready to begin drafting a Personal Development Plan for yourself. For each objective, there are measures, development activities, potential mentors, and a timeline. Try these steps:

1. Print out the blank Plan.
2. Look at your completed Draft Vision Statement again, and choose one goal that will help you take a first key step toward reaching your vision.
3. Write the goal in the space, "My First Major Goal."
4. In the first column, write up to three steps/objectives that will help you accomplish one key part of your Goal.

Write the objectives as skills, knowledge, or attitudes to attain. Some people choose easy objectives that can be reached immediately (in order to build success and momentum). Others choose the most important objectives that will ensure they'll master the goal.

5. For each objective, choose a measure/proof to show you've reached it, at least one learning/development activity (class? book? internship? research on the Web?), some potential mentors or colleague who could help you, and finally a target completion date (June, 2012?) by which you'll reach the objective.

Take some time to work on your plan. Use a pencil if that feels better than a pen or computer. Talk to someone you respect about your proposal, and make changes as needed. Be sure your plan is challenging and compelling enough to excite you every day but not so difficult that you won't do it.

**Repeat** this process for your second, third, and/or fourth major goals.

**Tool #3: Personal Development Plan**

<b>My First Major Goal:</b>				
<b>Knowledge to Gain/Skills to Build/Attitudes to Develop</b> (What must I acquire/improve?)	<b>Proof</b> (How will I know I did it?)	<b>Development Activities</b> (How will I actually gain/build/develop these?)	<b>Potential Mentors</b> (Who might help me with my development?)	<b>Target Completion Date</b> (When will I be there?)
<b>1.</b>				
<b>2.</b>				
<b>3.</b>				

**Step One: Identify an Influential Person**

An effective way to focus on what you want to be and do is to identify a highly influential individual in your life and to think about how this individual has contributed to your life. This person may be a parent, work associate, friend, family member, or neighbor. Answer the following questions, keeping in mind your personal goals of what you want to be and do.

Who has been one of the most influential people in my life?

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Which qualities do I most admire in that person?

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What qualities have I gained (or desire to gain) from that person?

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**Step Two: Define What You Want to Be, Do, and Have**

What I'd like to *be*:

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What I'd like to *do*:

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What I'd like to *have*:

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**Step Three: Define Your Life Roles**

You live your life in terms of roles – not in the sense of role-playing but in the sense of authentic parts you have chosen to fill. You may have roles in work, in the family, in the community, and in other areas of life. These roles become a natural framework to give order to what you want to do and be.

You may define your family role as simply “family member.” Or, you may choose to divide it into roles, such as “daughter” and “sister” or “son” and “brother.” Some areas of your life, such as your profession, may involve several roles. For example, you may have one role in administration, one in marketing, one in personnel, and one in long-range planning.

Here is an example:

Daughter or Son/Sister or Brother, Teammate – Organized-Committed-Leader-NCL Champs- Youth Council-Student of the Month



**Step Five: Evaluate**

It is important that you do not let your personal mission statement become outdated. Periodic review and evaluation can help you keep in touch with your own development and keep your mission statement in harmony with your deepest self. Continually ask yourself these questions:

Is my mission based on timeless, proven principles? Which ones?

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Do I feel the mission statement represents the best that is within me?

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During my best moments, do I feel good about what this mission represents?

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Do I feel, direction, purpose, challenge, and motivation when I review this statement?

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Am I aware of the strategies and skills that will help me live the values and accomplish the goals I have written?

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What do I need to start doing now to be where I want to be tomorrow?

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**Step Six: Write a Permanent Draft**

We recommend that for a while you keep a rough draft of your mission statement to revise and evaluate. Be sure it inspires the best within you.

When you do have a permanent copy, review it frequently. We strongly recommend you commit your personal mission statement to memory so that you keep your vision and values clearly in mind.