Element 3

Establishing personal values and vision

Coupled with a purpose-inspired learning journey, is the need for individuals to have a clear understanding of the personal values they choose to live by and a vision for their own life - their preferred future.

Establishing Personal Values and Vision

If being purpose-driven is a key motivator for self-determined learning, then so too is the importance of having strong self-awareness, especially when it comes to personal values and vision.

Too often younger people have not been encouraged to think through, let alone articulate, the values into which they have been brought up or by which they in reality live their lives. Similarly, while children are sometimes asked what would you like to be when you are grown up, unfortunately they have often not been encouraged to take this further and think in terms of developing and articulating a clear vision for their life's journey.
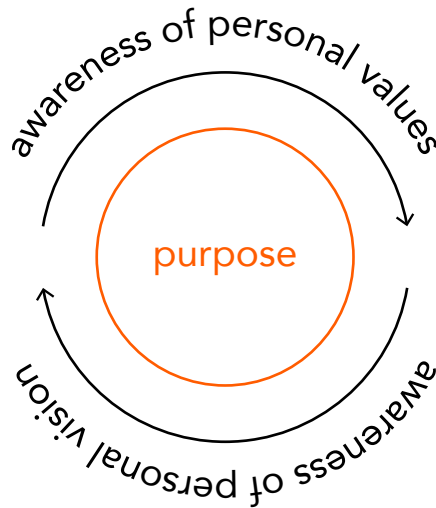
Vision can steer a person in a particular direction. Having high self-awareness and clearly understood vision for their own future can create the basis upon which a learner thrives in their learning journey.

Personal accomplishment begins with a clear vision for our choices and actions. But vision alone is not all the picture. If an individual has high self-awareness of the values that underpin their choices and actions, then this will inevitably bear fruit in the end-products of an individual's learning journey..

Our personal vision for ourselves and even our values can evolve over time. It is appropriate to keep challenging our thinking and ask the right questions:

- *Is my personal vision adequately directing my choices and opportunities? Do I need to strengthen or simplify it?*
- *Has any shift in personal values been helpful, or is it having a negative impact on myself or others? Can I live by stronger and more positive values?*

As a community prepares for new paradigms of learning, a focus on the intrapersonal is vital. When vision and values support purpose, then there is every possibility that deep learning will be ignited. The potential for stronger engagement, accomplishment and confidence as a lifelong learner will increase as people grow their self-awareness and can articulate their personal vision and values.

Then	Now
• Vision as a collective statement	• Vision as a personal statement
• Values listed as a collective statement	• Values articulated personally and lived
• Values & vision provided for people	• Intrapersonal understanding encouraged

Starting Questions

1. What do you or your learning community believe should be the initial starting point for all learning experiences?
2. Are people born with inherent values or do you believe these are something that can be fostered through experience?
3. Why might a focus on the intrapersonal be important for learning?
4. Do existing structures and schedules allow for a clear individual focus on articulating personal vision and personal values?
5. What steps could a learning community take to building a learning culture that supports individual vision and values?

Key Initial Actions

6. Use a collaborative envisioning process to create a collective vision statement for the whole community, as a precursor for focusing on individual vision.
7. Develop strategies and opportunities for individuals to think through and create their own personal vision statements. Encourage learners to have these as highly visible and potentially shared statements.
8. Use a design thinking process to capture the collective values seen as important from across the whole community. Publish these.
9. Initiate learning experiences that help the community to recognise, understand and live the values that they have been immersed in. Take this further by getting people to individually list what values are important to them.
10. Hold the community accountable for living out the collective vision and values, as well as the personal vision and values.

On-going Actions

11. Ensure the collective vision and values statements are visible and easily recalled. If people cannot recall them without prompting, they will need to be simplified and re-crafted.
12. Regularly remind the community of the importance of valid and lived personal values and vision as a key motivation for learning.
13. Help the community to continually link their activities and learning to their personal vision, supported by their wider purpose and values.
14. Revisit personal values regularly in order to realign understanding and to evaluate personal changes that occur over time.

Further Reading

Valerie Hannon, Ch 9 Thrive: Me, myself, I: towards the thriving self

Encourage Your Team To Make Decisions Based On Values Rather Than Fear

A Case Study in Why Core Values Are Crucially Important

How to Define Your Personal Values (and a List of 75 Values)

17 Truly Inspiring Company Vision and Mission Statement Examples

50 examples of innovative approaches to professional growth from across the world

Books

The Values Compass: What 101 Countries Teach Us About Purpose, Life and Leadership

Watch

TEDx Video Bob Keiller: Doing Core Values

Do you envision a future?

The genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was truly shocking. Estimates suggest that around one million people were murdered in just one hundred days. Emerging from this devastating event however, are some heartfelt narratives of individuals who grew a strong and compelling vision for a better future.

The story of Habumugisha and his family is one such story. Habumugisha lived with his parents and two older siblings in the northern region of Rwanda. He was just two years old when his father was murdered in the genocide. This tragedy resulted in two decades of dislocation for his family.

Habumugisha's pregnant mother managed to escape the house with her three children amidst the trauma and hide in a neighbour's food-pit for two weeks, before journeying at night by foot over the mountains to the comparative safety of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

There she built shelter huts for her family, gave birth to her fourth child and gained occasional subsistence jobs in fields to help them survive. Eventually she was able to bring her family back to a United Nations refugee camp in Rwanda.

After some months in the camp, Habumugisha's mother re-established her family back into the community. She built new dwellings and eventually saw her children educated at local schools despite being illiterate herself. Her strong vision for a positive future for her kids inspired her with the determination to keep them together and create a new home and life together.

Habumugisha's childhood and formative years were lived during this period of trauma and transition. Despite these intense challenges, he grew a very clear vision for his own future - to become a leader who would positively impact his community and nurture a collective sense of profound hope. Gaining an education was fundamental whether at school or not.

Habumugisha got the opportunity to attend a post-genocide school for orphans, learn multiple languages and remain in formal education through to Master's level at university. He demonstrated the care that had been modelled by his mother throughout his childhood and formal education. His strong vision as a leader who could contribute and dedicate his life to help rebuilding his nation remains strong.

Highlighted in element 2, purpose must be a central focus in any learning community. Having a clear purpose can inspire deep learning journeys and enable outstanding accomplishments.

Supporting a well-developed sense of purpose, is a clear and established vision, supported by personal values. When individuals have a clear vision for their future and can attach their own values to, it ignites purpose which is observable through action. Accomplishment in learning can be attained through the interdependence of purpose, values and vision.

Key Ideas

1. Having a vision for success and planning around it, is crucial to supporting learning or community accomplishment.

2. Values are unique characteristics that individuals and a community must establish to guide actions, choices and behaviours.

3. Combining vision and values together are the key ingredients required to support individuals or a community in igniting purpose.

4. Ongoing self-reflection is crucial for individuals to establish and revisit their values.

5. It is crucial to deliberately establish personal values and vision at individual and collective levels because they profoundly influence a learning culture.

Questions

- How much emphasis do you place on vision and values to support your own learning or the learning in your community?
- Do you think the typical education model around the world guides and prepares individuals to establish a vision for success beyond formal learning?
- What role do vision and values play in establishing an overall learning culture in your community?
- Is it adequate to allow young people to explore and discover what their vision for their future might be, or should educators play a more deliberate role in guiding them?

1. Having a vision for success and planning around it, is crucial to supporting learning or community accomplishment.

Having a vision is an ideological concept which takes into consideration;

- an ideal future;
- an ideal outcome and;
- a desire for deliberate change[1].

For many students, articulating a personal vision for themselves is far removed from immediate experiences, particularly in formal education settings. Having a vision in learning communities and teaching young people the importance of envisioning and the processes for doing so, can strengthen and support personal fulfilment and provide a pathway for successful envisioning into adulthood.

Having a vision for success is a crucial foundation from which planning for accomplishment can begin. A clear vision can set the scene for making profound choices that can be acted out with purpose by attaching the values that can support success.

2. Values are unique characteristics that individuals and a community must establish to guide actions, choices and behaviours.

Values are the unique characteristics, beliefs and qualities that individuals, consciously or unconsciously, use to guide their actions, choices and behaviours. Living out values that we use on a daily basis is often automatic. For example, we might value honesty and integrity in others, and in recognising it are unconsciously influenced and live by it. Everyone has their own set of values and they vary significantly between people.

---

[1] van der Helm, R. (2009). The vision phenomenon: Towards a theoretical underpinning of vision of the future and the process of envisioning. Futures, 41(2), 96-104. (p. 99)

In a learning community, a shared appreciation of values helps individuals recognise, understand and enact those which are useful. Values provide the energy required to achieve a vision. They help people remain steady in their journey, wherever that might lead to. Some scholars champion the argument that genetic traits form individual values, while others believe socio-economic factors, environment and experiences are the most likely influence. A third school of thinkers favours a mixture of both.

Given the nature of economic, familial and societal structures in the modern world, increased responsibility is placed on educators to model values. Exposure to positive values in a learning community can have a direct impact on learning and behaviour which influences an overall learning culture.

3. Combining vision and values together are the key ingredients required to support individuals or a community in igniting purpose.

The challenge for any learning community is to integrate personal vision and values into the learning culture. Achieving this can generate the impetus needed to support personal growth and learning. Aligning vision with values is crucial in a community because;

- it enables individuals to recognise what matters to them;
- it creates potential for cohesion and alignment at a collective level;
- it establishes shared beliefs with a common language and;
- it clarifies, prioritises and provides a focus for everyone at individual and collective levels.

Vision and values are crucial components that drive the success of any individual or collective purpose. Without having clearly established vision and values, achieving one's purpose can rely more on luck than deliberate action.

4. Ongoing self-reflection is crucial for individuals to establish and revisit their values.

Values are easy to write down but hard to live up to. When an individual embarks on a journey of realising their values, they must begin by self-reflecting. Personal values evolve and change over time and must be re-evaluated constantly to recognise changes when they occur and to support growth and development. The following questions are useful to establishing what those values might be:

1. What is important to me?
2. What sort of story or behaviour inspires me?
3. What type of story or behaviour upsets me?

4. What do I want to change about the world?
5. What would I change about myself?
6. What am I most proud of?
7. When am I most happy?
8. If I could have any career without worrying about money, what would I do?

> *"One must give value to their existence by behaving as if ones very existence were a work of art."*
>
> *Friedrich W. Nietzsche, German philosopher, cultural critic, composer, poet, and philologist*

5. It is crucial to deliberately establish personal values and vision at individual and collective levels because they profoundly influence a learning culture.

A learning culture emerges from a combination of lived out individual and collective values and vision. Building a strong learning culture requires the alignment of these, working symbiotically towards a single vision that can support individual purpose. If any individual or organisation wishes to experience success, clear values and vision must be first and foremost, consciously and deliberately established and understood.

A report by McKinsey & Co. examined a number of educational systems across the world and concluded that setting a vision and direction, supporting staff development, and ensuring effective management systems and processes are the biggest contributors to the success of their school[2]. This sentiment relates to every student as well. Establishing clear vision and values directly supports the success of an individual's purpose - their *ikigai*.

> *'The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.'*
>
> *Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst*

---

[2] Barber, M., Whelan, F. and Clark, M., Capturing the leadership premium
How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future, retrieved from p.7.

Act Now

It is a common mistake for individuals and organisations to use language to voice a strong vision which remains ineffective unless supported by action. Below is a format for success to support the development of a vision; individual or organisational values should seamlessly embed into it.

1. Plan

A plan offers the blueprint for success. This is the stage where dreams are born. The question is, how much is one willing to dream, and if the dream is shared in an organisation, how relevant is it to everyone? A shared vision in an organisation is the only possible way to ensure successful outcomes.

Create a roadmap for success. The vision is the target for the roadmap and it must be evaluated as part of the process. Great care should be taken to ensure it makes sense. Be prepared to complete more than one draft.

Some guiding questions:

- What is it you wish to achieve?
- What values are required to achieve your vision?
- What must you learn to achieve your vision?
- Who or what inspires you to carry out your vision?
- Does your vision align with what you wish to achieve?
- Are you willing to carry out the necessary work to reach your vision?
- Do your personal or collective organisational values combine to meet your vision?

Life experiences often prove that a vision fails because individuals or organisations have not asked themselves some tough questions.

Related information:

[Vision Is Not The Roadmap, It's The Reason For Having The Map In The First Place: Overview of the Strategic Planning Process](#)

2. Research

Conduct research to support your plan. Research does not have to be purely academic; it should be relevant to whatever your vision might be. Varying materials and methods, e.g using written and visual resources, will increase impact because individuals infer information in different ways.

Some guiding questions:

- Is your research relevant to the vision?
- How is your research going to assist in the delivery of vision outcomes?
- Has the research changed your vision? If so, should the plan be updated?

It is a common scenario for research to reveal factors not previously considered and plans must change as a result. This is not a failure. In fact, some of the most amazing achievements are often reached in the pursuit of something else.

(i) Case studies and site visits
Finding case studies exemplifying a vision is very valuable. If the vision is organisational, site visits viewing vision in action is a great source of inspiration. Below is a video tour of an educational community in Australia, who through its vision, took the necessary steps to attach values to that vision and succeed in creating a culture that is both inspiring and achievable:Related information:

Related information:
SCIL: Northern Beaches Christian School Tour

(ii) Understand personal values
A good place to begin understanding personal values is to read about them, watch them in action and reflect on inspiring individuals or organisations.

Related information:
5 Steps To Identify Your Personal Values - And Bring Them To Life

TEDx Video Bob Keiller: Doing Core Values: A short Ted Talk on how to use core values to develop a vision.

(iii) Conduct surveys
Surveying to measure and evaluate behavioural values is useful information-gathering for supporting a vision.

Related information:
Values Survey adapted from Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey's test, A Study of Values: This survey was designed to provide insight into individual values.

The Values Index (the why of human performance): This Values Index helps people better understand their unique value or belief system. It measures what motivates them, what they are most drawn to and where their passions lie.

[www.16personalities.com:](http://www.16personalities.com) Renowned personality test offering insights into personal values and personality types.

3. Execute

If planning for a vision is thoroughly drafted it will provide a robust framework from which to work. The vision should be in full view for referral at any stage during the process of actioning. If the plan is agile, it will offer enough flexibility for amendments without diminishing the vision set. The key is to keep referring back to the vision.

4. Evaluate

Evaluation can occur at any part of a vision strategy. It should be fastened to every process - the planning, researching and the execution phase. If one is not questioning their actions during a process, they are not following a plan closely enough because successful envisioning requires continued reflection.

The most inspired individuals and organisations constantly question their motives and actions. This is not often seen because first exposure is usually the 'end-product'.

Some guiding questions to continually evaluate an actioning process:

- Is the plan reachable?
- Does the plan need to be amended?
- Was the research thorough enough?
- Is the execution phase guided by the plan and will it lead to the vision?
- Are expectations too high?
- Is the time frame for success realistic? Is a time frame actually required?
- Is there a willingness to amend the actioning process if required?
- Is there a willingness to start again if necessary?
- Is the vision being reached?
- What could be done differently next time?

Some guiding questions for personal reflection:

1. Am I living according to my values?
2. Do my learning or career decisions reflect my values?
3. Does my personal life reflect my values?
4. Am I spending time on things that matter?
5. Where do I see myself in 1 year, 3 years and 5 years from now? How can I get there?

5. Begin Again!

Any journey must come to an end, but this creates a new beginning. Beginnings and endings offer experience and growth to support the next envisioning process. It is not always necessary to start from the beginning of an envisioning process. It is an agile format, therefore should be easily amended to suit personal or organisational preferences.
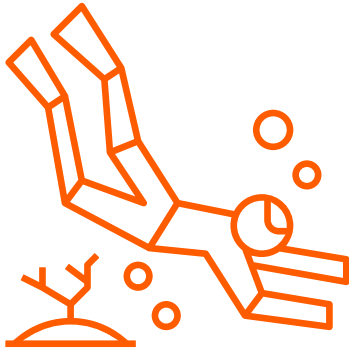
'Pearls don't lie on the seashore. If you want one, you must dive for it.'

Chinese proverb

Examples in Action

Below is a list of examples of educational organisations who are recognised as pioneers. They not only communicate their values and vision, but act them out; this is a simple yet crucial component for their success.

United World Colleges
Global education movement that makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

United Nations School
An inclusive and diverse learning environment which fosters academic excellence, innovation, creativity and cross-cultural communication.

Kunskapsskolan Education, Sweden
Vision: to contribute to an education that empowers every student to master the challenges of today and shape the world of tomorrow.

Stonefields School, Auckland, New Zealand
This learning community promotes and delivers four overarching vision principles; building learning capacity; collaborating; making meaning and breaking through.

50 examples of innovative approaches to professional growth from across the world
Innovative organisational approaches to professional growth and vision from across the world.

Below is a list of individuals, recognised around the world for their varied expertise. The success of each individual has been actualised through unrelenting commitment to a personal vision and the unique values lived out, fuelled by a sense of purpose.

Sport

[Serena Williams](#)
Tennis legend with 23 grand slam titles.

Adventure & Environmentalism

[David Attenborough](#)
Broadcaster, environmentalist, conservationist, global climate action advocate and natural historian.

Music

[Paul Mc Cartney](#)
'I still believe that love is all you need. There is no better message than that.'

Science

[Rachel Carson](#)
Marine biologist, author, and conservationist whose book Silent Spring is credited with advancing the global environmental movement.

[Albert Einstein](#)
'I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.'

Health

[Marie Curie](#)
Physicist and chemist who conducted pioneering research on radioactivity.

Arts

[Leonardo Da Vinci](#)
Polymath and renowned renaissance artist.

Leadership & Humanitarian

[Jacinda Arden](#)
Current Prime Minister of New Zealand, inaugurated on 26 October 2017.

Mathematics

[Margaret Hamilton](#)
Computer scientist, systems engineer, and business owner. Coined the term "software engineering" and developed on-board flight software for the Apollo space program.

Education

[Malala Yousafzai](#)
Activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate.

Technology

[Tim Berners Lee](#)
Inventor of the World Wide Web.

Global Media

[Time Magazine:](#)
100 most important people of the 20th Century

Further reading

[Encourage Your Team To Make Decisions Based On Values Rather Than Fear](#)

[On Becoming Better Human Beings: Six Stories to Live By](#)

[Personal Values and Corporate Strategy](#)

[A Case Study in Why Core Values Are Crucially Important](#)

[How to Define Your Personal Values (and a List of 75 Values)](#)

[16 Personalities Free Personality Test](#)

[17 Truly Inspiring Company Vision and Mission Statement Examples](#)

[Forbes: How To Define Your Organization's Values](#)

Watch

[TEDx Video Bob Keiller: Doing Core Values](#)