

Visioning Exercise Template

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Visioning Exercise Instructions:

1. What visioning is and why it's important. (5-10 min.)
2. Review of Dana's use of visioning, how and why she used it to start any new endeavor. Refer to Dana's articles. (5 min.)
3. Optional: Small group discussion to determine what participants want to focus on. (*Can also just go right into the exercise.*) (15 min.)
4. Guided in-depth visioning exercise. (15 min.)
5. Journaling (15 min.)
6. Talk to one partner – speak your vision. (20 min.)
7. Debrief with small group. (15 min.)

Getting Started:

Ask participants to bring a journal

1) Review of visioning: what it is and why it's important.

Our minds are only able to think of so many solutions, or paths, to the success of a dream. By focusing on our vision, we remain open to many paths for success, not just one.

Visualize your goals regularly, write them down again, talk about them. And let go. Let them come forward in their own time.

Detach from the results. Attachment or "neediness" comes from a fear or belief that you can't create what you want. Discipline your mind and emotions to shift from fear of not getting what you want - to accepting what you get. If you accept what you get, you have a better chance of opening the door to realizing your dreams.

Keep the vision. Continue to send your vision positive energy. Focus on your goals in a clear and relaxed way during parts of your day. It's important not to feel like you are striving too hard for it, or putting an excessive amount of energy into it, but repeat your vision for a successful project often in your mind, refine it as needed, write it down, tell it to people. Keep it alive and present. Be open for creative ways to achieve it.

2.) Practical Example: Dana's use of visioning and her vision

A *Dear Folks* letter from Donella Meadows in 1993. In it, she envisions herself 10 years later.

21 November 1993 • Dana writes:....I was helped by a visioning exercise I did recently with my friends. Wendy and I are accustomed to begin any new enterprise, whether it's a conference or a book or a career or an organization, with a formal visioning exercise. We close our eyes and tune into our higher selves and picture, as best we can, what this enterprise would be like, if it turned out perfect. If it turned out to be, as Peter Senge says, "what you really want, not what you're willing to settle for." With no constraints from fears or doubts, with no limits on "feasibility." Just what you want.

Visioning is astonishingly powerful for two reasons. First, when you let yourself vision, sweeping all limiting considerations away, you're often surprised by what you see. And second, having seen that, you find opportunities, make decisions, and venture forth in a much more clear and purposeful way.

So four of us, all of us on the point of one personal transition or another (some of us chronically so), got together to vision. We tried to picture ourselves at a specific time in the future -- I chose 10 years from now, at age 62.

I could see myself with fully gray hair, looking vibrantly healthy. I was speaking in public. I was a constant presence in public discourse, speaking in the mass media (probably television, but I couldn't see that clearly). I was calm and quiet, not flashy, not charismatic. My purpose was to insert into the discussion as much perspective, as broad a space horizon, as ethical a position as I could. My goal was to be clear, loving and wise.

I had no particular position or power, other than my willingness to show up and to speak truth. But -- and here was the surprising and wonderful part -- I was speaking from and for a community. This was a community in which I

lived day to day. It was composed of people more clear, more loving, more wise, more spiritual than me. Together we studied and spoke about all the issues in public discourse and tried to work toward the clearest, most insightful position we could find. And then I was sent out (I was not the only one) to speak that position in public. The community prepared me for these appearances and critiqued them to help me do better next time. When I lost my way, when I got knocked off center, when I got scared or discouraged or angry, the community lovingly helped me find myself again.

I couldn't see where I lived, on this farm or any farm, though it was clear to me that the community lived by the wisdom it preached. I did not see myself writing, only speaking. (That was weird. Maybe it was a recognition that hardly anyone reads any more.) As with every vision, I arched into the future without any concern about how to get there from here, so I have no idea whether I created this community, or found it somewhere and went to join it.

What I conclude is that all the speaking I've been doing and resenting is probably a preparation for something...And that I must find or create a group of people to live with who are dedicated to a just, peaceful and sustainable world, both in the way they live and in the way they reach out to impact the public discourse, the language, the context, the frame, the mindset of the larger community.

Well, who knows what will happen? I have a new vision now to work toward.

Love,
Dana

Results: Update on Dana's Vision

That community that she saw in her vision, it came to pass. Many people moved from all over the country to join that community, compelled by the vision that created it.

3) Optional: Small group discussion on each person's vision.

This is best for people who have some practice with visioning already and want to refine the focus of the visioning exercise. For newcomers, give examples of the kinds of things or projects to use visioning with, and then go right into the exercise.

4) Guided Visioning Exercise

Calm yourself, close your eyes, take 3 breaths. Let go of everything else. Take 3 more breaths to connect to your purest, highest, inner self. Take 3 more breaths.

Picture something you want. It can be personal, professional, the success of a project, the implementation of an idea. State what you do want, not what you don't want.

Focus on what you want, on the perfect results. Think big, dream. See the success of your dream in full. Do not include feasibility, reality or how. Sweep all limiting thoughts away. Simply state what you want. Picture it. See it in your mind. Feel it. Resist focusing on the solution to how you will achieve it. Focus only on the desired outcome of your dream. Allow the details to take care of themselves.

Visualize what it is like to experience the success of your dream. Use all of your five senses to imagine yourself (select 5 or 10 years in advance) ____ years from now when your dream has become a reality.

Utilize all of the senses to visualize your new endeavor:

Start with *sight*: What do you see?

Smell: What do you smell?

Sound: What sounds do you notice?

Taste: What tastes are you experiencing?

Touch: What sensations are you experiencing?

Define the fulfillment of your dream in detail, using all your senses.

Energize your vision with emotion. Feel how it feels to have what you want. Are you happy, filled with satisfaction, feeling good all over? Have all the parts of your past come together to bring you this success. What does it feel like?

Now describe your mood to your best friend. Tell them every detail about the fulfillment of your dream.

Allow your vision to happen. Cultivate your trust in the process.

Develop *Affirmations* to support your vision. State affirmations in the present tense. For example: "We have a president who supports the

environment.” Use the positive statement to reinforce your desired goal.

Be open to the form. Let all possibilities in. Put your intellect on hold and let your intuition be your guide. Be receptive to many different possibilities and opportunities that our mind alone may not be aware of.

Open your eyes and come back with 3 slow breaths.

5) Journaling

Find a quiet place and take 15 minutes to write in your journal what you saw in your vision. Describe what it felt like, sounded like, tasted like. Write down all the details as you saw them.

6) Speak Your Vision

Talk to one partner. Speak your vision to a partner. If participants want to share their vision with the entire group this can be powerful.

7) Debrief with group.

What was this exercise like for you?

Did you have new insights?

Were there any surprises?

Was there value in connecting to your vision?

How can you stay connected to your vision?