

The Foundation of Personal Mission

by Nicholeen Peck

My mission is to help families to have better relationships with each other and to become united in purpose and communication. When families learn to govern themselves they become free from emotional bondage and baggage. I am guessing that if you're part of a Learning Circle, you probably have a similar passion: to help you, your family, and possibly others, for similar reasons.

Our personal mission is a driving force in all our lives, that urges us to leave the world better for having been here. It makes our homes come alive with purpose and productivity. The tone of a mission-minded home is one of the most powerful feelings I have ever felt. It is inspiring.

We'll also explore what "mission" is, it's relationship foundation and how it is expressed on a daily basis.

At the end of this discussion you'll find additional resources including segments of TSG blog posts that add additional insights to mission, how to use it, and indicators to notice when your mission is being forgotten.

RELATIONSHIPS -THE FOUNDATION OF PERSONAL MISSION

The foundation of mission is relationships: how we relate to others. The whole world, our whole lives are all about relationships.

Very early on in my life I understood the world through relationships. In fact as a young child, I couldn't memorize math facts unless I gave every single number a personality and a relationship of some sort. This characteristic, turned into a lifelong study of how people relate to reach other.

Even now, I go to places just to watch people. I watch the guy who drives the boat, the person who takes care of the cemetery, the gambler, the mother with her children at the library. I absolutely love to pay attention to what the people are doing and saying to each other, and more importantly how they're feeling when they're doing it. If you watch and listen closely, you can feel if their spirits have "turned off" or if their spirits are "turned on". It seems, all of the interactions I observe, go back to how people relate to each other on a spiritual level.

Consider all the relationships you have - with both people and things. As a baby, you have a mommy and it's an immediate relationship. You grow to have a relationship with everything you touch: your blanket, your binkie. You eat and develop a relationship with food. Your first experiences being bathed may cause a strong relationship with water. You may not have liked it at first, but overtime your relationship may have changed as you grew and had new experiences.

Relationships change and grow, and in response we change - adapt.

We grow to develop preferences and attractions to certain things, what makes us feel better and what makes us uncomfortable. We discover what touches us on a deep and spiritual level and we can also decide the things we don't want to get close to -- things that maybe frighten us or things that we feel we should keep a distance from. These are all different ways that we relate with everything around us.

I have noticed that relationships affect our happiness and freedom. We can tell if the relationship is productive or not; there are some relationships that help us sleep soundly and others that keep us tossing and turning all night long. Additionally, no relationship is independent of the others in our life.

At times, someone will contact me with litany of issues - such as, 'I have a problem appreciating my children, I have a problem getting warm with my husband, I have a problem buying too many things, I have a problem with lying, ...' In this case, the many problems they are experiencing and trying to describe are, at it's root, a common relationship issue - their relationship with words and truth.

A problem with one aspect or one relationship, such as a relationship with the truth, that one relationship issue doesn't usually stop with one relationship. They often have other relationship problems in their life --relationship problems with their family, spouse, neighbors and even themselves.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF

We also have a relationship with ourselves because we are made up of more than one part. We are made of the body part, the spirit part which I often refer to as the heart, and the mind part, which does all kinds of intellectual figuring and logic in our lives.

Often we start having a bad relationship with ourselves when we become out of balance; when our emotions or our logic has taken over and all of the sudden we are not leading with the right force, which should be our heart or our spirit. And at that point, our relationship with ourselves is in jeopardy. We start wondering who we are, what our purpose is, where we are going, and a host of lost and destructive thoughts.

When we are leading with the heart, or spirit, we have a good relationship with ourself, our life has purpose and meaning. We are all born with a purpose. Each of us are able to leave the world a better place. In fact, I believe we are called by all that is good, to make the world better because of our time here. Living a personal mission is a duty to goodness; to God.

A while ago a young man asked me, "Nicholeen how did you get to the place you are at? How have you lived this mission? Is it just ambition? What is it?" This young man, who is just starting

to find out what he can contribute to the world, wanted to know if I was living my mission because I forced it to happen.

Mission isn't ever forced. It is lived. Mission is always more about who you are than what you do. No one can take your mission from you, if you allow yourself to live it. There is no competition for mission either. Even if someone is doing the same thing you are doing, it doesn't discredit the mission or make your contribution to the good fight less valuable. On the contrary, the fact that someone else is living a similar mission, or doing a similar thing, is a witness that you are engaged in an important cause.

I told my young, ambitious friend the secret to my success living my mission. I didn't create my mission, God did. I do what I do for Him, not for me. This is called duty. I am not trying to be ambitious, I am trying to live my duty. He has a plan for me and for the message I am supposed to share. I am only hoping to make Him happy with what I have done with this sacred stewardship to help families.

Living my duty as a mother or a wife is no different. These roles are my other mission. They are my primary focus and my primary duty. And, when I put these stewardships first, I have all the power I need to fulfill my other duties.

All of our relationships, especially the ones we started life with, are symbols, and offer direction for us about what our purposes truly are. Our divine nature will always be part of who we are supposed to be, and what we are supposed to share with the world.

LIFE'S KEY QUESTION

Now if there is one question that plagues the heart of man, it is "What is the purpose of my life?" Or, you may have heard the same question expressed like this "What am I supposed to do with my life? What is it that God created me to do? Why am I here? What lives am I supposed to touch? How?" These are huge questions!

Buddha said:

"To know the purpose of life, you will first have to study the subject through your experience and insight. Then, you will discover for yourself the true meaning of life. Guidelines can be given, but you must create the necessary conditions for the arising of realization yourself."

This means that the purpose in life is to *find* the purpose of life and then to *do it*.

Buddha, got it! He and many others have dedicated their lives to great purposes. Mother Theresa. What an example of a person who dedicated her life to healing the sick, to comforting the lonely, to teaching the ignorant, to feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked. She was always giving charity and making the world better for her having been here. She had a quiet, but

powerful, mission.

I suggest to you, that like Mother Theresa, every single one of us is meant to leave that kind of legacy. Now people might not write books about us; though there might be a little journal that's in the top shelf of the closet that a family gets to read one day. But it's no less significant. Every single one of us has the opportunity to become a Mother Teresa--to become the kind of person that leaves a legacy: a wake of change and strength wherever they go. Every single one of us was destined to do something significant...to bring people closer to truth...to heal souls...whatever it may be, finding and living your mission will leave the world a better place because of you.

EIGHT MISSIONS

One of my friends Dr. Oliver DeMille, gave a presentation a number of years ago where he spoke about eight types of missions that a person can have. I'm not sure how he compiled this list, but they are found in the scriptures, so he is not the only source. :

1. Feed the hungry;
2. Clothe the naked;
3. Teach the ignorant;
4. Liberate the captive;
5. Comfort the lonely;
6. Heal the sick;
7. Create beauty;
8. Preach the gospel;

In my book, [Parenting: A House United](#), I talk about how all eight mission types are encompassed in parenthood. You have to do every single one of these things for your children and the people that you have stewardships over. That said, usually there's one of those eight that sticks out to you personally. As a parent and family member, you're going to focus on all of them. But, on a personal level, which of these 8 missions stands out to you.

Take note of the one that sticks out to you the most. That is an indicator of the direction of your personal mission. Write it down. Consider it.

Gandhi's mission was to liberate the captives. He needed to free the people in South Africa and in India from the rulers who were dominating them. He also needed to free their minds. They had to have self-government to be liberated. They had to have strength. They had to see their worth, their potential and their power. Gandhi was able to explain that to them.

My mission is to liberate the captives as well --captives to emotions that are making a mess of families and lives.. Families are in an emotional bondage where they are not able to govern themselves and achieve their goals. They're captive by life. It is my mission to tell people the

truth so they can choose to be more free, even if it means life might be harder at first--there might not be as many excuses, they might have to take on more responsibility, and ultimately more freedom. That's my mission.

MISSION IS THE WAY YOU LIVE

So if I said to you, what is a mission, what would you say? How would you describe what a mission is to you?

Here are a few answers I've been given to that question:

- A driving force;
- A God given desire to help others in some way;
- A mission is like playing in an orchestra where I have a musical instrument that I am playing and I'm part of the bigger picture. So as I live my mission, it contributes to the full orchestra and it is God's orchestra and we each have a part to play and he's the one that plays the music and we listen to his music and we play it and then it changes the world through his power;

Mission is not a thing that you do it's the way that you live.

Sometimes we may wonder how we could possibly be living a mission--we're not accomplishing very much, nobody really notices what we're doing. But mission isn't being the one in the spotlight, getting somebody's attention -- that's not what mission is. Mission definitely has to do with focus, desire, and a sense of harmony; striving to be an instrument --being aligned with the right power, the right goodness. Your mission is reflected in the person that you are and how you choose to live.

Ask yourself, when you wake up in the morning what do you do first? That might give you a clue about what kind of a mission you are living right now. If you run straight for the refrigerator, your mission might be focused a little too much around food. But if you drop to your knees and pray first, you might be aligning your mission with God.

I can be living my mission when I am washing the dishes, at the grocery store or going on a walk with my children to look for bugs, or whatever it happens to be -- I'm living my mission. I live my mission when I brush my teeth, when I shower, when I make my bed, and so on, because my mission (who I'm created to be and the impact I am to have within my relationships) is constantly on my mind. I rarely think about myself and my needs. When I am doing my mundane tasks I often think, 'How can I help people? What do they need? What does my daughter need? What

does my husband need? What can I do to fulfill those needs? How can I adjust my time to make sure that I can meet another need today?' That is how I live. It might sound crazy, but I've found that I am truly joyful living my life that way; because truly my happiness comes from knowing that I was able to be an instrument of good.

LIVING MISSION IN THE MOMENT

There can be days when you have a to-do-list that's a mile long (we all have those days), and we think "I'm going to..." and we list a hundred things we think we are going to do that day. Then all of a sudden, something goes wrong or a neighbour needs help. What can we do? Cancel the lists of things or don't get the list even started, and not feel guilty at all. Why not? Because, our mission for that moment was to adjust, or help the neighbor, or ...so on.... We need to make sure that we keep life and our mission in perspective.

FOUR KEYS TO LIVING YOUR MISSION

There are four vital keys to living your mission I want to share with you.

1. Number one is **follow your heart/spirit**. That's the most important; follow that spirit. You have to hear your inner-voice above the excuse-making-voice, or that voice that's constantly looking for convenience, pleasure, all of those kinds of things. Your heart/spirit voice has to be the number one driving force in you.

If you can't feel it, you can get in touch with it by praying and asking God to bless you with that feeling in you heart when you know something is true.

Understanding and following the heart voice is a lifetime pursuit because constantly you are trying to overpower those other convenience-voices and excuse-making-voices that can get in the way like "I didn't wake up because..." There are always a zillion of excuses.

2. The second vital key to living your mission is **seeing all people as valuable and investing in them more than the task**. That means sometimes the task will

occasionally fail, but the people will still feel they got what they needed.

You can't invest your whole heart into a task. For instance, let's say you started writing something and never finish it, because of other things that you felt from your heart you needed to do. You cannot beat yourself up because you didn't finish writing. If you're still meant to write, your heart will lead you back to the writing. But if not, if you invested in the people you are serving, in your family and you're seeing them as valuable people that need your investment, then you're doing the right thing too.

3. We have to **trust in God's timetable and in his way**. That means accepting no answers, taking brave steps that we wouldn't normally want to take, developing skills we didn't know we had. We have to trust in God's lead so that we don't feel like it's only up to us. We also have to counsel with Him and others often.
4. Number four is **seeing yourself through the right eyes**. Living your mission isn't about how others see you (that's a common misconception). It's about how He (God) sees you. That's a hard one for so many people because socially it just doesn't seem popular to live that way.

Think how powerful it would be in your life if you focused on and asked these questions:

- How is it that God sees me?
- What's the potential that He sees that I have?
- What plans does He have for me?
- What do I already know that He wants me to do?

If you see yourself through God's eyes

- You see yourself empowered.
- You see yourself with potential.
- You see yourself with capacities that you didn't know you had,

because you have someone there to back you up.

And if you start looking at yourself through the eyes of the world

- you are going to make comparisons,

- you're going to see lies,
- you're going to convince yourself of all kinds of shortcomings that are going to waste your time to try and improve.

There are so many things that we do to ourselves psychologically, emotionally and even spiritually --we dampen ourselves when we get too caught up in what everyone around us is going to perceive or think. Now, that doesn't mean that we go around trying to be socially unacceptable. That doesn't get us very far either.

However, the primary person's eyes that we need to see ourselves through is God's eyes. And when we see ourselves through his eyes --through his desire for us, through the potential that he has for us-- we radiate, we shine, people flock to us. That's what happens. When you see yourself through God's eyes, all of a sudden you become the servant too, not sergeant.

So people often think "I'm going to have a mission, I'm going to be the leader of something," so they think of themselves as the sergeant, "...everyone must serve me because I am the leader." Well right there at that moment is when the leader stopped leading and started preaching a lie.

People with a mission serve, and in order to serve we must be humble, teachable, and usable, moldable like clay. Ask yourself a few questions. Write the answers down on paper:

- How does He see me? Consider things like what does He value about you, what gifts did He give you.
- Where can I improve?
- In order to meet that picture of how He sees me, what is that first-- number one thing that I need to do to get closer to who I'm supposed to become? HOW can I improve?

THIS is a starting place for you to become closer to who that person is that you already know you are. Listen to your heart, invest in people, trust your creator's timetable and see yourself through His eyes; these are the four vital keys to living your mission.

HOW I CAME TO KNOW MY MISSION

My mission really is to heal families and free people from the emotional bondage that gets in the way of their relationships. At the time that I recognized what my mission was, I had no idea that it was even significant. Let me tell you a little bit about the experience.

There was a time when I knew that my body wouldn't be blessed to have any more children even though we wanted more. With that knowledge, I found I had this enormous craving to know what the Lord wanted me to do, specifically. I did some soul searching and some studying and did some writing.

(As a side note: whenever you write your spirit seems unleashed to say the things that are important. You can teach yourself which is really beautiful and true. A lot of learning happens when you write, so getting into the habit of writing is always a good idea. This may help you identify mission or solutions to problems in daily life that arise.)

At this point in my search I was already teaching parenting, but didn't really think it was my mission. One day as I was writing, I wrote down, "I will be a bridge for people". And there was an image in my mind that seemed to give definition to being a "bridge" --helping families in trouble arrive at a place of happiness and unity in their relationships.

I also wrote, "I'm going to write a book" and I thought "Whoa, that's a lie! No way! I'm not doing that!" Now, after writing my first book, I can't stop writing! It's so funny, but I never ever thought that that would be something that I would do, I didn't see myself as one of those kinds of people. God knew me better than I knew myself, and he knows you better than you know yourself. He has big plans for your life's mission too. So use the four keys, and trust that in serving people you will live your mission. God will help you become who you are supposed to be if you allow Him to.

No mission is ever meant to glorify the person doing the mission. No mission is a selfish mission. The real missions, whether large or small, are always missions to serve others and bring more goodness to the world.

Extra Resources:

- Inspiration about MISSION through music:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0kJYTz1kuo> --- BEAUTIFUL!!! Enjoy the inspiration!
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBTwNfRgj-E> - Move your feet to the voice inside you!
- Why Mission can be Hard to Find and Helping Youth Find Mission
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/teen-detachment-127>
- When Self Becomes the Focus, Focus on Mission and Relationships
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/age-13-and-defiant-109>
- Mission By Example <http://parentingselfgovernment.com/mission-example-86>
- Defining Mission - ONE of the first steps in Self Government
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/getting-started-142>
- Mission Mindset and the Myth or “Living Real Life”
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/article/myth-living-real-life>
- How to Know Your Life Purpose in 5 Minutes: Adam Leipzig at TEDxMalibu
http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=vVsXO9brK7M&desktop_uri=%2Fwatch%3Fv%3DvVsXO9brK7M Happiness comes with understanding our purpose and by being focused outwardly. (If you need a simple format to define your mission, this is a great format, then seek the Lord’s inspiration as written about above, to learn the details of your mission.)
- Dr Oliver DeMille Article that includes a discussion about the 8 Missions.
<http://www.tjedonline.com/free.php?r=/audio.php> (Subscribe to get the free: “Depth Phase” this article describes what the Depth Phase will look like in your life and that everyone has a unique area of their greatness. You can find your mission through self discovery methods which can also help you to find an appropriate mission mentor. Being a mom or dad is all eight missions.)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does 'mission' relate to 'vision'?
- Can you come up with any other types of missions, in addition to the 8 listed?
- Mission, as Nicholeen sees it, has the essential characteristic of Altruism - selflessly concerned with other's welfare. If asked, some people would say their mission is to make huge amounts of money or learn as much as possible in a particular field of study. What about people who have absolutely changed the world by the pursuit of their artistic talents, like Mozart. How do these fit with the mission as Nicholeen defines it?
- Should finding your mission be a long process?
- Why/How can there be multiple missions in a persons life?
- Should/Must one pursue a career that is in line with their mission? What benefits or drawbacks are there to choosing employment that intimately ties to your mission?
- Are missions illuminated and discovered through our weaknesses or through our talents and gifts?
- If you have a sense of your personal mission, outside of your family, share this with your circle. How did you come to find it? Is it easy to live? What does living your mission look like for you?
- Where do you find inspiration to pursue your mission? - music, feedback, relationship with God
- How do you balance the various missions that you might have for instance: parenthood and a mission that necessitates study, time in the community or travelling?

CHALLENGES

- **FINDING:** If you haven't yet, discover what is your **current** mission in life?
It may simply be a good parent, or it may be something that takes you into your local community, or ...fill in the blank.
- **LIVING:** What can you do to better live your mission?
Consider simple steps you can make to improve in this area (remember even small changes can steer even a great big ship to an entirely new destination). It doesn't have to be dramatic. IT may even be doing what you are now doing, or it could be a bigger change that takes a great deal of effort and persistence to achieve.