

Personal Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Proverbs 29:18)

When I first started parenting my children and foster children, I tried to do everything just like the parenting books said, but for some reason my home still didn't feel happy and peaceful like I wanted it to. There was a feeling of selfishness in the air. Even though we were able to effectively communicate, we were not united in purpose as an entire family. Over the years I have learned that effective, joyful parenting begins with something deeper than philosophy and psychology, which is where parenting principles are rooted. The foundation of parenting and the family is vision.

What is "Vision"?

Vision is seeing with your soul; seeing something you want, and something that is supposed to happen.

My father was a play director. So, I was raised on a stage a lot. I learned how to do this "acting thing" really young. He would put me in plays when I was really little, because they needed kid parts or something like that.

We all had a part in the play. We would sit in this little room before the play & we get into character. We would sit there, & we would envision. We would close our eyes, & we would think- about what our character was supposed to look like, what our character was supposed to say, how our character was supposed to move, what our character was supposed to be. We would have a vision. Then, we would go out & act our character. The same is true for our personal character. We need to start by forming a vision of what we want our characters to be.

If we want to be people of more character, it's as easy as raising the bar for ourselves, & envisioning what we want to be. [For example] - "I am a person that speaks ill of no one". I can declare that. I can declare it to myself, & then be it.

I can improve my character. I can envision it, declare it & then be it - even if I am not a person of perfect character yet. That is the beauty of having a vision of your character, first.

Of the two types of vision, physical vision & soul vision, the type I had to have.... was the stronger of the two, soul vision. Soul vision is seeing with your heart & mind. This type of vision overpowers what your eyes can see. A leader has this type of vision. To lead our families to greatness, we need to look ahead. We need to see into our souls & determine where God wants us to lead our families.

There are many things I could put on a resume to impress people about me, but the only accomplishment that matters to ME, is being the guide that God intended me to be for my family in these times. There just isn't much more important than this.

Vision is a feeling. It is the condition of our hearts. It is a heart & mindset, encompassing our personal standards, our goals & the character we can deliberately choose for ourselves. It is sight, awareness & ownership of our roles & missions. It is personal power & freedom. And, it is power & freedom for our families & homes.

Why do I Need Vision?

“Where there is no vision, the people perish...” (Proverbs 29:18)

Almost all great men who start communities or civilizations begin with vision. Before there was a United States of America there was a Thomas Jefferson & a Patrick Henry among other great visionaries. Before there was a great kingdom called Rome, there was Romulus, the visionary, & the senate & all the great builders & inventors which we still follow today.

Rome was great & its rise quick. But its fall was more sudden than its rise, because in its later years the people embraced leaders who had no vision. They had forgotten the great vision of their forefathers. These forefathers were people of virtue & character. When the vision was lost, so were the virtue & character of the people. The people of Rome became generally corrupt; they had a love of pleasure & idleness. Because of this corrupt-ness, Rome fell.

The same thing could happen to us, our people & our country if we forget the original vision of our forefathers. Our homes are also governments. They are smaller than our national government, but the impact of our home governments, on our nation, is much larger than our huge national government. We must have vision or our family governments will perish – just as the civilization of Rome did.

We Must *Be* the Change

When a person has a vision they are transformed into a new person. They gain permission to behave and connect to people in different ways. Vision means acting deliberately. Either we act deliberately with our vision or we are acted upon with someone else's vision. You are the leader of your family. All great leaders must have vision. Without the vision, the people perish. A great leaders knows that.

Mahatma Gandhi had so much vision, strength, and humility. He was amazing. He inspired the whole world. He saw a way that the people could improve, and he knew it started on the inside of them with Self-Government. He said: “We must be the change we wish to see in the world”.

In the 1930's a boy in India was obsessed with eating sugar. The boys health was not good because of his sugar addiction. His mother was concerned about him and tried to think of

something to do to help encourage her son to stop eating so many sweets. After trying everything she could think of, this mother decided to take her son to see Gandhi. She knew if Gandhi told her son something to do, he would do it. This young boy revered Gandhi as a hero.

After traveling a great distance, & much sacrifice on this mothers part, she finally got the chance to meet with, & explain to Gandhi why she had come, & what she wanted him to do. Gandhi listened to the women, then told this mother to come back in a few weeks. During this time, the boy continued to eat only sugar, & he gradually became sicker. At the appointed time the mother & her son came back to see Gandhi. This time Gandhi looked at the boy & said, "Boy, you should stop eating sugar. It is not good for your health."

The boy nodded & promised his hero he would not continue his sugar eating habit any longer. The boy's mother was both relieved and puzzled. Why didn't Gandhi tell her son to stop eating sugar before? Her son's health had become much worse by waiting. She turned to Gandhi and asked him why he didn't tell her son to stop eating sugar weeks ago when she first brought him. Gandhi simply said, "Weeks ago, I was still eating sugar". This classic tale has many variations, but the point is clear in all of them.

You Set The Tone

I cannot emphasize enough that the way you are, the feeling you bring to the family, is the experience you and your whole family will have. You have that kind of power.

The family organization and the words parents say are important, but the perspective the parent has about her calling as a parent really is the most important part. Do you really enjoy parenting? If you do, your family knows it and responds to your ideas and communication with more enthusiasm and vision. If you don't then your words are going against your feeling. The feeling of love and open communication starts with you. Isn't that exciting? We get to pick how the family is going to feel most of the time.

Developing a family who has a vision of their greatness, & helps every family member stay on track, *STARTS WITH YOU*. That is very important. The power to change your family, is the power of your example. Have vision yourself, & learn how to govern your own behaviors.

Line Upon Line

Making changes in our lives and our homes happens "line upon line", little change after little change. This is how it has to be in order to make a change which we can all be happy with, that will last, and bring us closer to our family visions.

I started out with a picture in my head of what I wanted my family to look like. Then I measured the feeling in my home with that picture and the feelings associated with it each day. After I made a habit of focusing on my vision, I was ready to start working on some of the skills I had learned

from the Utah Youth Village. After establishing our family vision, the teaching self-government skills had a purpose for our family. Learning how to follow instructions, accept no answers, accept consequences, and disagree appropriately were the way the Peck family was going to meet its goal of becoming our ideal family.

Even though I teach self-government skills and trainings all over the country, I still learn new things each day which make me a better parent. I am so used to learning "line upon line" that I find myself looking each day for a new lesson if one hasn't presented itself to me yet. I am so grateful for these daily lessons.

Finding Your Vision

One Way to Find Vision

In an article titled, [Fathers -Parent or Playmate](#), I share a story about Spencer and I coming together to have a common vision. This story below illustrates one way Spencer and I found the same vision, one of three ways that vision is achieved.

For years Spencer was quite dedicated to family meetings and mentor sessions, but he had a hard time wanting to have couple's meetings. I had a vision of having couple's meeting, because I knew it would add so much strength to our home's structure. His reluctance frustrated me. I decided to show him how great a couple's meeting could be.

It was a Saturday afternoon. Spencer had been trying to keep the children focused on their chores. He was frustrated. He sat down on the couch and gave a big sigh.

From the sink I asked him, "What do you want?"

"What do you mean by that?" he questioned. "That's a pretty broad question."

I gave more insight by asking, "What do you want organizationally for our family?"

He responded with, "Well, right now I just want our children to do their chores. They are just not motivated. I don't know what else to do."

"Well, you have been motivating with fear lately. And, fear is an effective human motivator, but it is only temporary. Instead of using fear, use vision. If they catch the vision of the work, then they will follow through with the chores." I said.

"How do you I give them vision?"

"If, as parents we went to bed on time and woke up on time we would be more organized. Then, when it becomes time to work, we can work with them. If we work alongside the children, they will see the vision of work. They will see a job well done, because we will be showing them how to do good work. The best thing is that if we work with the children, we

can praise them more; and praise equals motivation. When we are leaving them alone to work, then we only tell them when they are off task. If we work with them, we can encourage them the whole time during the chore.” He completely agreed, and we decided on a plan that would solve our problem.

In the above experience I showed him that planned communication worked. Then I made a non-threatening observation. He saw that if we met and talked regularly, he could get more of what he wanted. Life would be better. It is also important to note that I spoke to him about what he wanted at a time when he would be open to new vision. If I would have asked right after a frustrating time of trying to get all the kids in bed, he would have thought I was trying to tell him what to do again.

By just asking my husband what he wants I am able to better steer the family toward my vision. Both husband and wife must have open dialog about what they want in life to have a connected atmosphere at home.

Three Ways to Get Vision

Vision is essentially a picture in your mind or heart; probably both. In order to transfer vision your audience must be able to see.

There are only three ways that I know of to get vision.

- The first is gained because you are searching for it through study and prayer.
- The second occurs when you are part of an inspiring experience; you actually see or participate in something new and achievable.
- The third and most common way to get vision starts as a feeling. This feeling comes from an inspiring story; either heard or read. The listener or reader allows himself to become emotionally attached to the story, and is changed or sees things differently because of it.

The second and third methods of finding vision are the only two which can be transferred from one person to another, because the first must be initiated by the receiver. By asking a question and having an effective conversation, I used the second method. My husband was able to see how our effective communication would help him and the whole home. He got the vision.

Writing Your Personal Vision

I challenge families to write down personal and family visions that act as a guide to direct them in their day to day lives. I start with a 20 year vision, then encourage each to identify actions they can take over the next few years and even just the next day to move them forward to realizing their 20 year vision.

Here is my vision as an example. Remember that every person and family will have a unique vision that is special to you and your family's unique character:

I will be 52. My children will all probably have children. We will be at the Christmas Dinner table talking about the latest great books we have read and how we are progressing in the specific missions that God has prepared for us. There will be all of our traditional favorites on the table, which we will all have helped to make. There will be gentle Christmas music in the background. My Husband and I will have grey hair, because I am not sure if I am going to dye mine yet. We will hold hands under the table, because we have focused on building our marital relationship over the years and are more in love than ever.

The grandchildren will be excited for Santa to come. They will be great friends. They will be telling each other what they are giving to Jesus that year, because that is an exciting family tradition which we have. They will reverently do the nativity and joyfully sing Christmas Carols with their parents. I will take them in my arms and on my knee and tell them the reason for that great holiday. I will tell them inspiring stories. They will look into my eyes with their large round eyes and see the greatness that I know they can become.

Those large eyes, of the children, stick out to me more than anything else. They will look to me with those eyes for a vision of what it means to live a fulfilled life. To see what a person looks like who has dedicated herself to the service of God's will; to see a grandmother's love and knowledge.

I want to be that grandmother. I want to be ready to teach and love the owners of those beautiful eyes. That means I have to have vision about my life. If I work on improving myself little by little, and on improving my family at the same rate, then I will be ready in 20 years for our family appointment.

What is your personal 20 year vision? Do you also have a 20 year vision for your family?

More Facets of "Vision"

Using Vision Daily

When I am at a meeting or away at a conference for a day, I find myself thinking while I am in my car on the way home, about the joy I will feel when I see my children. I can't wait to pick them up and hug them and hear all about what they have done while I was away. When my husband and I come home from a date I envision all the fun we will have when we get there. Most parents crave

this joyful atmosphere that home is supposed to be. This is good. We should all strive to have joyful homes. Don't ever lose sight of that vision and you will gradually draw closer to it.

Raising Children with Vision and Character

(from a class by Nicholeen Peck)

There was a time when people were defined by the status of their character. People either had a degree of good character or didn't have any character. *Improving one's character through study of principles was of high importance to those who had vision for the future.* Samuel Smiles spoke of leaders with character: "Men of genuine excellence, in every station of life...command the spontaneous homage of mankind. It is natural to believe in such men, to have confidence in them, and to imitate them. All that is good in the world is upheld by them, and without their presence in it, the world would not be worth living in." In our current society character is under attack, and most people have no idea because noticing a person's character isn't common anymore. We will explore how character development is an essential part of building a leader, and learn different character elements which should be taught during each phase of learning.

Q&A- Is the High Standard Set By Our Family Vision too High?

(From a Gold Call)

QUESTION

I feel concerned about our family vision. We have it written, but as I think about our children's future, I worry that we will create such a high standard for our family that this vision might in future years could create a feeling of not belonging, disharmony or even failure. What happens if the children choose lifestyles or make choices contrary to this vision. I notice that the Peck Family vision says "It is likely that our children will have children of their own" I think this statement is really interesting and wonder if we need to relook at our vision and include more of these less absolute statements... How careful do I need to be in rewriting this? Do I need to make it sufficiently vague, so there is a high probability that we will be able to achieve it together?

I do understand that shooting for an ideal will make it more likely to make it happen, but what happens when, if we fall short in the end as we refer to this vision regularly, it essentially becomes a bad expectation. How do I create a vision that will not tear us apart that could tear us apart if things do not go as planned?

NICHOLEEN'S ANSWER

First, let's talk about another vision before answering this question. Many people in the world

have a vision of returning to live with God again one day in Heaven with the people that they love. What if someone they love makes a bad choice and follows evil? Should all those people stop wanting and working toward living with God because some people might not choose the correct path just so they don't feel bad? I don't think so, that wouldn't make sense, right? It kind of goes against shooting for an ideal.

Now, you are right I added the word "likely" into our family vision, and it was me that made the change, because in my gut I felt marriage and children is one of those things we can't know for sure will happen. So we added the word likely --there are a few places where that would be appropriate, but you don't want to make it so vague that anyone could get that goal. You want it to be something that is something to work toward, something to practice everyday. When I think of my children all having children it's all the more reason to have the feeling of harmony in our home, all the more reason for us to create the feeling now in our home. It puts the whole picture together for us in our family.

In truth, the goal that is more important looking forward to having families of our own.

When you set a goal you want to achieve or you set an ideal it goes right against mediocrity. So if you're going to change a few statements in your family vision, make sure you're not leaning toward mediocrity --statements that anyone could achieve --you want the bar kind of high, you want good standards for your family.

I think that what you need to know is that there are families all over --its kind of like this unspoken vision anyway where they are going to grow up and have kids, have a family, and some don't have a family, but if those people grow up and have a healthy vision, they are super healthy for everybody else-- they don't think God abandoned them, they just support everybody else's place in life even if their life differs from theirs. They love and support in the family no matter what, and families that hold a high ideal, that is what happens.

Families that do not create an ideal, such as, "we're going to grow up and get married and have a family", have a big problem on their hands. Everybody in the family is always wanting everything to be individual for them, "I'm picking this path", and they're more likely to get offended if someone else's path doesn't fit theirs. They tend to compare more than just understand the purpose of the family.

The important thing is that your vision gives a vision of the purpose of a family --what does it mean to be your family --that should be the picture they should get --if it doesn't turn out just right, then that's ok. "Likely" is an ok vague statement to be made.

Don't be vague on everything. Define your family. Even money can be added somewhere in the vision --or you could not add it all and teach abundance anyway. If you want your kids to have the understanding that they can do anything they set their minds to financially then maybe you say, "every person will feel it a priority to come to the family reunion and they will have planned

ahead, making sure they can make it.”

Forward thinking, even though life is not ideal a healthy forward thinking person ‘gets it’. Sheri Dew, now CEO of Deseret Book Company, is an example of someone who wanted to be married, didn’t happen, but “gets it” and lives the vision in her way, highly supportive of families.

Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss what you think of the quote: *“They who have no central purpose in their life fall an easy prey to petty worries, fears, troubles, and self-pitying, all of which are indications of weakness, which lead, just as surely as deliberately planned sins (though by a different route), to failure, unhappiness, and loss, for weakness cannot persist in a power evolving universe.”* --JAMES ALLEN, *As a Man Thinketh* --- Do you have experiences that support or contradict this idea?
2. Do you have a clear vision of what you want in your life – physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual?
3. What do you think of this quote by Samuel Smiles, *“Improving one’s character through study of principles was of high importance to those who had vision for the future.”* Do you find it inspiring? Why or why not? Do you find it motivating? Why or why not? What changed in society and what can we do personally or as a family to make this important again?
4. Do you believe you can determine your own character? How does your belief affect the vision of yourself? If you find you need to change a belief, how can you do this?
5. How “high” of a standard do you believe a personal vision needs to have to be inspiring and motivating?
6. Are there areas of your personal vision that are not clear? Is there an area of your personal vision that seem hard to pin down? Why do you think that is the case?
7. Do you think having a clear personal vision is truly possible? Why or why not?
8. If maintaining a “personal vision” is hard for you, why do you think that is?
9. In what ways do you think the vision of yourself affects “the tone” of your home?
10. What do you hope to experience in doing the Challenge of “Finding Your Vision”?

Finding (or refining) Your Vision

Challenge/Activity Steps

A complete discussion on Vision is found in [Parenting: A House United](#), available on the [ParentingSelfGovernment.com](#) Website.

1. Write your personal 20 Year Vision (or review and refine your 20 Year Vision): Picture yourself twenty years from now. What will you look like? What will your children look like? Will you have grandchildren? What do you want your family to feel like? Picture all of these people in your mind at a family party on your favorite holiday. What will you be doing? What do you want it to sound like? What do you want it to smell like? What do you want the conversations to be about? What will you, & your family, see as its highest priority? What does this party feel like? Remember this feeling. Day dream your vision for five minutes or more. Enjoy your experience of your future. Experience the details. See in your mind & feel in your heart what this event, twenty years in the future, will be like. THEN --write it down, or revise the one you already have written.
2. Close your eyes again & picture yourself at your family party. Then, back up your thoughts to two years from now. What will you look like then? How old will you be? How old will your children be? What principle or value do you want to be the most important to you & your family then? What do you want your home to feel like? How does your home need to feel two years from now in order to achieve your twenty-year vision? Write down how your home needs to feel in two years to be ready for your twenty-year vision.
3. For the last time, close your eyes & picture you, your family & your home, two months from now, on a Sunday afternoon. How do you want to feel? How do you want your family to feel on that Sunday afternoon? What do you want to be doing? What do you want your family to be doing? What is the most important thing - one word - that you need to concentrate on now to feel like this on a Sunday afternoon? Write down that one word.
4. What it is that you need to work on most now, to achieve your 20 year vision? Why?
5. What is your plan for acting on this insight? What is one thing you can do, one action step you can take *tonight*, to “be the change” you seek - in your own heart & in your own home?
6. If the change you seek seems bigger than you, what resources or support do you need? Commit to finding the help, resources, or support you need to achieving incremental changes over time.

*Your vision is the beginning of your learning,
& your teaching your family,
to govern themselves.*

Extra Resources

- Article- What is the Vision of Your Character:
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/article/what-vision-your-character>
- Article- Courageous Parent -One Man's Transformation:
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/article/courageous-parent-one-mans-transformation-al-experience>
- Article- Teen Detachment?: <http://parentingselfgovernment.com/teen-detachment-127>
- Article- Learning from the Dutch: <http://parentingselfgovernment.com/learning-dutch-212>
- Article- Tires Teach Parents: <http://parentingselfgovernment.com/tires-teach-parents-157>
- Article- Fathers, Parent or Playmate, (see part 1 & 3)
<http://parentingselfgovernment.com/fathers-parent-or-playmate-part-1-103>
- James Allen (As A Man Thinketh) Notable Quotes:
http://www.notable-quotes.com/a/allen_james.html#MOHE7ZUWy7BFM2Fz.99
- More about Sheri Dew:
<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/375015072/Sheri-Dew-Living-the-unexpected-life.html?pg=all>