

Visioning exercise (Dana Meadows)

Instructions:

1. What visioning is and why it's important. (5-10 min.)
2. Guided in-depth visioning exercise. (15 min.)
3. Journaling (15 min.)
4. Talk to one partner – speak your vision. (20 min.)
5. Debrief with small group. (15 min.)

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.

With visioning, 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.

2) 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.

3) 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.

4) 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.

5) 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?

Visioning Exercise

Ask group members what kind of community they would like to live in as an adult. Explain that the object is to collect as many ideas as possible--nothing is too small, too big, or too crazy for consideration. This technique has been used in real-life cities with great success, as they will learn later.

"Why bother with visions of the future when today's problems seem overwhelming?" Both problem solving and visioning are important; they are quite different approaches that should be used in combination.

- Visioning generates a common goal, hope, and encouragement; offers a possibility for fundamental change; gives people a sense of control; gives a group something to move toward; and generates creative thinking and passion.
- With problem solving, a group can become mired in technical details and political problems and may even disagree on how to define the problem. Problem solving, although useful, rarely results in any really fundamental change.
- *A problem is something negative to move away from, whereas a vision is something positive to move toward.*
- In moving toward a vision, you will be likely to encounter a number of problems to solve.
- Ask, "What would your community be like if you had the power to make it any way you wanted? Where would people live? Where would they work? How would they get to their schools and workplaces? On their days off, where would they go and what would they do? What kind of a house would you live in? Where would you shop? How would you get there? What kind of energy would be used for heating? For transportation? For travel? Where would it come from? How would the air, water, and environment be kept clean?"
- Break into small groups to brainstorm what an ideal community would be like in 10 to 20 years. Encourage group members to be specific. As a guide, the group leaders might use the categories used to describe change in your community. The categories are people, housing, schools, job/businesses, health care, crime, transportation, amenities, environment, and public involvement.
- Return to the large group. Ask one member from each group to make one positive, declarative one-sentence statement about how the community will be in the future. Make the statement in the present tense. Examples: There are lots of bike trails. You can walk at night in safety. Transportation is fast and cheap.
- Write these statements on a piece of newsprint that all can see and that can be saved for revision later. Continue around the room, and then repeat the sequence with another member of each group. Continue until time is short or ideas are being repeated. Then ask if there are any other hot ideas. (Note: you may have to rephrase ideas into simple declarative present-tense sentences. Ask the speaker if you have retained the gist.)
- Note that in multicultural groups, you may get different visions based on different cultural backgrounds. Be alert to statements that may have cultural, ethnic, or even gender roots. The goal is not to find the majority opinion, but to arrive at a vision that reflects the thinking of the diverse groups in any classroom or community.
- Ask group members to highlight some of the major differences between now and the future they have created. Most will initially focus on population size and technology change, but also try to elicit changes in attitudes and values regarding the community or surrounding environment, in concepts of what constitutes "progress," and in standard of living and quality of life. (Standard of living refers to

economic success and comfort; quality of life refers to more intangible satisfaction with life in general.)

- Ask group members to put themselves in the place of a resident 50 years ago and to try to imagine the likelihood of some of these changes. Were some changes predictable? Were others outside the realm of prediction? Remind group members that the changes of the next 50 years will probably be just as astounding. Things that seem impossible now, may become commonplace of their grandchildren.
- Spend about 20 minutes trying to group elements of the vision into some common themes. Find the areas of consensus, and identify any areas of disagreement. Focus on the areas of some consensus. Create a new sheet listing items that have strong support from either the entire class or a subgroup. Be careful to nurture ideas that may come from an ethnic or gender perspective even though they may not initially gain the support of the entire class. Vision statements can include ideas that pertain to only one segment of the community, such as, women can walk around at night without being afraid; the community has developed a cultural center open to all with an exhibit of local art; and students can walk to school without interference by drug dealers.
- The common vision statement can be presented in a graphic form. It can include photos, maps, and other images. Or it can be a list of ideas. Simply articulating a vision can be a powerful learning tool.

In the real world, of course, having a vision is only a first step. An old proverb says,

*A vision without a plan is just a dream.
A plan without a vision is just drudgery.
But a vision with a plan can change the world.*

Planning the next steps toward achieving their community vision will be beyond the scope of most classes, but some may actually become involved in communitywide efforts. Students could begin, for example, by presenting their ideas to the city council, organizing a small awareness-raising event, or writing an opinion piece for the local newspaper. They may discover other strategies we cannot imagine.

Fremtidsværksted

Robert Jungk var en østrigsk forfatter, journalist og aktivist. Han udviklede blandt andet fremtidsværkstedet som et socialt redskab til at skabe bevidsthed om en gruppes fælles fremtidsmuligheder og som et afsæt til at iværksætte *socialle eksperimenter*. Han beskrev sådanne sociale eksperimenter "Som akupunktorens præcise nålestik, der kan sætte en helbredelsesproces i gang i samfundets tungt bevægende krop."

Herunder følger Jungk's beskrivelse af fremtidsværkstedet fra hans bog "Modets Princip" (udgivet på dansk på forlaget Politisk Revy i 1988):

Fra engang i 1960erne har jeg afprøvet og sammen med mine venner udviklet en metode, som vi kalder "fremtidsværksteder".

"Fremtidsværksteder" er ikke bundet til et permanent sted. De kan påbegyndes overalt: i en stue, i et seminarrum, men også på en eng eller en strand. Principielt bør enhver, der er interesseret kunne tage del.

Overalt, hvor grupper på tre til 20 mennesker mødes for i fællesskab at finde fremtidsmuligheder (og vel og mærke ikke tale dem sønder og sammen) opstår der et 'frirum', hvor deltagernes indre og ydre afhængigheder for en stund kan stryges af. Til at begynde med falder det de fleste svært, fordi de i den grad har inderliggjort hverdagens årelange tvangssammenhænge og rutiner, men også deres egen verdensanskuelses 'fængselsmure', at de kun lidt efter lidt — om overhovedet — kan frigøre sig herfra.

For begyndere er der færrest problemer med at tage del i værkstedets første forholdsvis korte fase. Den er viet til kritikken af de nuværende forhold indenfor det valgte temaområde: Klima, arbejdsløshed, integration, kan f.eks. være genstand for et sådant møde. Men det kan også være mindre direkte politiske temaer som skole, fritid, trafik, erhverv.

I en stikordsstrøm formulerer deltagerne deres utilfredshed med det bestående, og alle stikord noteres med tydelig skrift, synlig for alle, på 'vægaviser'. Denne såvidt muligt fuldstændige udøsning af angst og bekymring har en katarsisk virkning.

Det er en proces, der ikke er helt ulig erindringsstrømmen og 'tilståelserne' i en psykoanalytisk behandling. Men derudover giver en sådan samling af negative iagttagelser og følelser, når man bagefter træder tilbage og betragter dem, mulighed for at erkende nye sammenhænge, som man hidtil ikke har været opmærksom på.

De to efterfølgende fantasifaser — først i den samlede gruppe, derefter i mindre grupper, hvor man arbejder på at konkretisere ideerne til virkeligt overbevisende forslag — varer længere, de er sværere, men også mere lystfyldte. Thi her skal de 'negative' konstateringer forvandles til 'positive', noget 'konstruktivt' sættes i stedet for det destruktive — i det mindste i tanke og ord og ofte også som tegning.

I den fase er det muligt, at fantasispringene bliver høje og overraskende, ja det er faktisk ønskværdigt! Nu er alt muligt. Kritik og selvkritik kan — ja, skal — midlertidigt sættes ud

af kraft. I den følgende fase kommer de igen til orde. Men kun for få lykkes dette 'løft', og også for disse få sker det kun alt for sjældent. Det modvirkes af den mægtige tyngdekraft, som vores socialisering gennem opdragelse og erfaring har skabt. Og også frygten for at miste sig selv i en rus af forbigående vanvid virker hæmmende.

Men ikke desto mindre finder der en markant forandringsproces sted hos så godt som hver eneste, der deltager i et fremtidsværksted. I det omfang de enkelte deltagere erkender, at de andre i denne sammenhæng ikke er konkurrenter, men hjælpere, opstår der ikke blot en gensidig tillid, men også en forstærket selvtilid, og dermed vokser også modet til at komme frem med sine ønsker og idéer, uanset hvor vilde de måtte være. Så godt som hver gang et sådant samarbejde etableres, opstår der til sidst en fylde af indfald, idéer, alternativer, fremtidsbilleder, hvor nye målforestillinger bliver formuleret og dermed også gjort tilgængelige for samfundsmæssig handlen.

I den afsluttende virkeliggørelsesfase vender deltagerne tilbage fra deres fantasirejse til den nuværende virkelighed, og tager nu kritisk stilling til, om — og hvordan — det som de gennem dette udbrud fra hverdagen har fundet, skal virkeliggøres.

Her vil de uundgåeligt støde mod fremherskende holdninger og magtstrukturer, der enten helt ignorerer sådanne forandringsforslag eller umuliggør dem. Men de vil også her og der opdage sprækker eller frirum i systemet, hvor deres forslag og projekter kan trænge ind: arbejdsløshedskooperativer, alternative energi-projekter, selvhjælpsprojekter m.m.

Mennesker, der har lært hinanden at kende i et fremtidsværksted kan blive den aktive kerne og drivkraft i sådanne ansatser til en selvforvaltet udformning af fremtiden.

Life vision exercises

The goal of life vision exercises is to give:

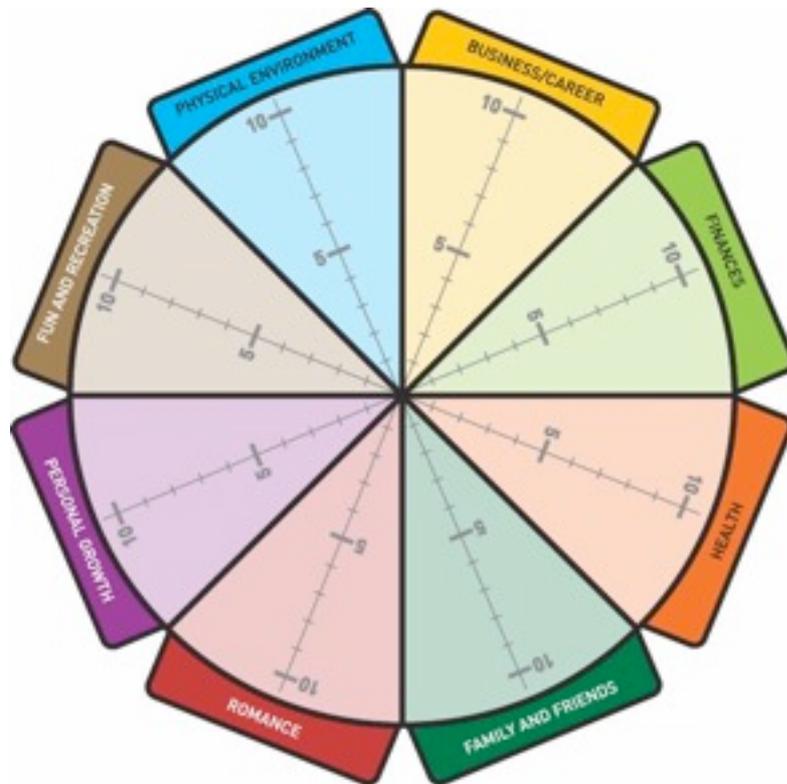
1) **DIRECTION:** When we have a life vision – it gives us something to work towards. It gives us clarity, so we can go through our days knowing we're working towards what we want – and what's truly important to us. This clarity of direction helps us make the right decisions and choices – for us.

2) **INSPIRATION:** A life vision should be inspirational. Our life vision should align with our values, and be inspiring so that we WANT to take action towards it. The purpose of a life vision exercise or plan is to create a desirable future that helps us to focus our lives – and inspire us to take action towards it.

- **Rocking Chair Life Vision Exercise.** This is a writing or journalling exercise where they imagine being 90, happy, healthy and look back over their life and what they have achieved. This gives a broad life vision – and points to key life values which can be helpful when helping to identify a client's values.
- **Get Perspective Vision Exercise.** This exercise asks them to detail where they want to be in 10 years, then 5, 2, 1 and 3 months time. The exercise deliberately works back from 10 years to the present day – this way they really get a sense of what they need to do NOW to make their 10 year goals happen.
- **What would they want said about them in their eulogy – or at their funeral/ memorial service? What would be written on their tombstone?**
- **Ask them to write about their "Ideal Day".** They should start their "Ideal Day" from when they wake up – and write out what they would like their day to be like – what they would do, how they would feel, who they would see, what they are working towards etc.
- **You could do a creative visualisation exercise where you talk them through meeting their future self and explore the life, relationships, environment etc. that their future self is living.**
- **Create a life board – cut out and collect pictures, words, quotes that inspire you or that catch you eye. DO NOT ANALYSE! If it grabs you, tear it out! Then paste and organize these images, words, quotes etc onto a big piece of paper, giving it a title and date.**
 - **The Vision Board MUST HAVE PICTURES – even if they are just line drawings and stick men/women.**
 - **While you look for pictures, allow your mind to run free and dream. INCLUDE ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING that appeals or speaks to you!**
 - **When creating a Vision Board, HOW YOU FEEL is more important that what you think!**
 - **Include PERSONAL AFFIRMATIONS or inspiring quotes to nurture and cherish themselves.**

- Use COLOUR! Coloured felt-tip pens, colour post-it notes, colour pictures, make it VIBRANT and exciting.
- Look for the UNFAMILIAR – to get outside of your ‘normal’ box...
- Finally, remember this is not about creating an artistic masterpiece but creating something that visually INSPIRES and EXCITES you!
- The magic wand question. If they had a magic wand, what life would they create for themselves? What would they do in the next 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, 10 years and then 25 years?
- You could also simply use a Wheel of Life and ask your client what they would like their life to look like in each of the key areas? They could write a list of what they want in each of the wheel segments.
- Devote a whole session to life visioning: Put pieces of paper on the floor representing the next 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, 10 years and then 25 years. Get them to step on each piece of paper in sequence, close their eyes and then ask them questions – what do they see/feel/hear, who is there with them, where are they, what do they love about it? Use the Wheel of Life Categories to ask what is going on in their life.

Wheel of life



Career

Is my job rewarding?
Does it reflect my values?
Do I have opportunity for advancement?

Money

Do I earn enough and live within my means?
Do I save enough?
Am I planning for financial freedom?

Health

Am I generally fit and well?
Do I eat healthily?
Do I exercise regularly?

Significant other/Romance

Do I have/want a soul mate?
Do we share values and intimacy?
Am I nurturing the relationship we have with each other?

Friends and Family

Do I have/want a close circle of friends?
Do I spend enough time with family and friends?
Do I value the relationship we have with each other?

Personal Growth

Am I continually learning new things?
Do I enjoy new opportunities for growth?
Are the things I do growing me as a person?

Fun and Recreation

Do I have fun often?
Do I know how to relax?
Do I enjoy sports or have hobbies?

Physical Environment

Do I like the area in which I live?
Is my home comfortable, tidy and warm?
Do I keep my appearance smart?
Is my car serviced and reliable?