*CHAPTER 9*

*Encouraging Individually Directed Career Development*

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# PL 1. Writing a Vision Statement

Since your career vision statement relies as much on your values and passions, exercises[[1]](#endnote-1) for developing one can encourage you to be creative in picturing your future. Complete the following three exercises in writing your career vision.

*Exercise 1: Ideal life.* Take a piece of large paper and, within colored pens and pencils, draw a picture of your ideal life. You should identify what you are doing; where you will be living; whether or not you have a partner, children, pets; the cars and recreational items you have, etc. Imagine you have magical power and pretend that you can have everything you wished for. Your drawing should have symbols, sketches, pictures, and labels. This exercise encourages you to use symbols instead of words, or your right side (the creative side) of your brain. Based on this picture, what does your vision of an ideal life describe?

*Exercise 2: Values.* What are 10 things you enjoy most in life and work? These are things (events, jobs, readings) that, if you could not live without, that would make your weeks, months, and years of life incomplete. What are 10 things you don’t enjoy and actually want to avoid? Based on these two lists, what are the values underlying what you think are important to your life and work? In thinking of your values, you might consider: individuality, quality, efficiency, collaboration, learning, friendliness, order, diversity, enjoyment/fun, challenge, influence generosity, dependability, flexibility, equality, integrity, service, responsibility, respect, teamwork, excellence, accountability, empowerment loyalty, honesty, accomplishment, independence, security, persistency, and optimism.

Your life has various facets or dimensions: spiritual, work and career, social relationships and friends, family, financial security, mental, learning, recreational, health and fitness. Identify a value which is important to you for each facet. Then list the 5-8 values which are “most” important for you in life and work, by completing the following sentence, “I value \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in my life and work and seek to achieve these by\_\_\_\_\_.

*Exercise 3: Ideal work.* There are thousands of possible career profiles. The following except from the Princeton Review describes the career of a physical therapist.

Working with patients who have limited use of their own bodies due to injury or disability, a physical therapist builds flexibility, strength, and spirit. Her goals are to reduce the patients’ pain, to increase their range of motion, and to give them back their sense of self-determination.” “All day I help people get back in charge of their lives,” wrote one physical therapist, “and that makes me feel great!” This sense of contributing to peoples’ quality of life is important to those entering the field. Physical therapy is emotionally and physically demanding, and a patient’s progress has to be measured in extremely small increments. Still, those who find it rewarding are extremely happy with their choice of occupation.

Review the following website by the Princeton Review and create your own career profile: <http://www.princetonreview.com/careers-after-college.aspx>

You can develop an understanding of a day in the life of various jobs, the quality of life you might expect, and the facts and figures on the career now and in the future.

Next, review the 10 hottest careers. Use the search engine: <http://www.metacrawler.com> and type in “ten hottest careers.” Based on your values, what careers might you find meaningful?

*Writing the Career Vision Statement.* You might try to craft your vision statement in 50 -150 words. You might start by answering the above questions and recognizing the need to balance practical (marketable) with what you find meaningful in life. Your first draft might be more wordy in responding to the questions in the above exercises. Over time, you will revise it depending on what is happening in your life.

I first articulated my vision statement over 20 years ago and find it has guided many of the choices I have made. My rough draft of a my **personal vision statement** includes such words as “writing every day; publishing, on-going life learning (which has included professional learning, languages, recreational, hobbies, travel, woodwork and welding), living and working in different countries and experiencing the world and its beauty and diversity, having positive relationships and impacts on special people, valuing workplace motivation, satisfaction, and health, valuing family and close friends, valuing the outdoors (recreational and adventure hiking, kayaking, sailing, skiing, walking) enjoying the arts (music, theatre, operational, musicals), listening to CBC radio 2, watching plays and movies, hiking, Yoga.”

My current career vision below is slightly shorter and tighter. However, I still find my rough draft useful in directing me.

* To become a responsive teacher, researcher and community participant focusing on important work and life issues --- creative problem solving, stress and wellness, human resource systems which develop human potential – in empowering learners to achieve personal and career satisfaction and success.
* I plan to achieve this career vision through living and working in different countries where I can teach, research and participate in the recreational, artistic, personal, and social experiences of my area.

# PL 2. Developing Your Leadership Action Plan (LAP)

Review the three phases for developing a leadership action plan: (i) assessing “who you are,” (ii) focusing or identifying a framework on “where you are going”, and (iii) developing and implementing a **plan** for “getting there from where you are now.”

* Introduction
* Personal Needs Assessment (PNA) - identifies where we are now
* Your Vision, Goals, Competencies (A framework of competencies, skills, based vision and goals) - defines where we want to go
* Your Action Strategies - defines how we implement our plan in getting there from where we are now
* Conclusion

# References

1. Bolles, R.N. (2004). *What color is your parachute?: A practical manual for job-hunters and career changers.* Berkeley: Ten Speed Press. P 130-133. Ideas for exercises 1 and 3 came from this source. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)