



"A PERSONAL GPS - NAVIGATING SUCCESSFULLY INTO YOUR FUTURE"

A single mom was driving her daughter to college involved in deep conversation about her eighteen-year-old's new chapter in life. The daughter was concerned about what she wanted to become in life and how she could be true to herself. She was looking for a guide, a framework to help her experience a new world and a successful future, while not losing the identity she had grown into.

A young executive struggled with planning his future career path trying to determine what he needed to do as an individual to be himself, hold his own values, all while maneuvering through the corporate maze to success.

An unemployed middle-aged man sat at his desk grappling with how to reinvent himself to fit a competitive job market that had, in some ways, passed him by.

A pastor in transition, leaving the profession he was "called to" at a young age, now fearfully looking at the secular world as intimidating and unsure territory that he must embrace in order to survive.

All of these folks face the same challenge, ***"How do I begin a new life, a new direction, and not lose myself? How can I navigate new, unfamiliar waters and come out whole and even successful?"***

Well, now that a politician told us that "corporations are people too," let's use that revelation to look for a plan to help people.

Every successful company, institution, organization, business, and church has in some way crafted a plan, a strategic plan, to build an identity, create a compelling vision, and create a sound action plan to make the dream a reality. So why not people, real people, with real challenges and transitions and uncertain futures? Why not a plan that serves as a personal GPS?

The simple components of a focused strategic plan can be personalized and customized to become a sensitive, flexible road map for personal identity, growth, confidence, direction, actions, accountability and success.

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Let's break it down and make it simple. But first, it is important to understand that it is best to enter into this personal strategic plan with others. At least one other person ought to walk through the process with you. In institutions, it is important to be collaborative. The same is true for the individual. An objective voice and vision is always helpful, along with the need for accountability that we all have at some level.

Let me suggest this framework for the planning process:

- A Personal Mission Statement
- A Personal Vision Statement
- A Personal Action Plan

*"The Mission Statement is the mirror for all decisions,
The Vision Statement becomes the blueprint for all actions,
The Action Plan becomes the catalyst that gives life, energy,
and accountability to the Mission Statement."*

Getting Started

Getting started means a commitment to making serious time to focus on each step and making it a priority in your life at this time. Blocking time for walking this path will be the key.

Ask yourself a series of questions to get started:

1. What do I think my purpose is?
2. What/who do I want it to be?
3. What is my personal mission?

Next

If I identify and declare my personal mission, what would that look like for me (what would I look like) one, two, three years down the road?

You will be creating a vision or vision statement of your mission unfolding. This snapshot or picture ought to be compelling and motivating to you. It ought to get you excited, not fearful.

Your vision may change as you go. It should grow with you and details will take shape. Let it be a creative process that paints, sculpts, and draws a representation of you as your personal mission is being fulfilled.

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The Details

The next series of questions start to drill down to details that will enable you to take charge.

1. If I truly want to become the person I see in my vision, and live into the mission and purpose I believe is “Me”, what initial objective must I set?
2. What short term goals will help me move this process?
3. What actions will I have to take to make the necessary steps in fulfilling my plan?
4. Who will I be accountable to? Who do I trust to walk with me down this path?

The Plan

To help you launch into this adventure, creating a personal written action plan might get you started off in the right direction. It can set down “bite-sized” steps.

1. What will be my first step?
2. When will I start?
3. What sort of time line will I establish to encourage progress?
4. What check points will I set with my accountability partner?

OK, give it a shot. With all of this detail, planning, brain stretching, emotion bending... be sure to be kind to YOU!

Some of this might feel too stiff and orchestrated. It is important to make the process yours, with YOUR style. But try to work within the framework of the plan. Be flexible and committed in order to give the process a chance.

It's a life long journey and the road will meander, so it is imperative to have a personal GPS to navigate and stay YOUR course.

Keep it simple, keep it clear, and keep it YOU. GO!

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