

## VISIONING: the pathway to having what you want

By Margery Miller

I recently had lunch with a client and her close friend. We were talking about new business ventures. The friend had closed down her business and was starting in a new direction. I asked her what she wanted – had she visioned it out?

She sort of hemmed and hawed – said, well, she thought it might go this way or that. I'm not saying she didn't have an idea of what she wanted, but it wasn't clear. Not having a client relationship with her, I didn't say much – but I did ask her if she had thought about writing a vision of how she wanted this to look.

In this age of media bombardment and instant gratification, we take some things for granted – especially how important it is to map out what we want. A great teacher, with whom I study, tells the story of being and industrious four year-old digging a flower-bed. His next door neighbor came over and gave him sage advice: “Be sure to plan exactly what flowers you want and plant a lot of them – otherwise your garden will fill up with weeds.”

How many of us go part of the way – even prepare the soil for our garden of life – then only half-way plant the garden? Sure, you say, all I have to do is say what I want, and I'll get it. Not the way *my* life goes!

I think the reason people don't connect with the power of visioning is that they get too attached to the details, the forms, the outcomes. They get hung up on what they think it *ought* to be, not the qualities of how it *could* be.

Let's use an example of creating a vision of your ideal job. One way would be:

I work in a company that provides insurance services to small businesses. My boss is a woman who takes time to train me and help me grow as an individual. I have my own private office with a view of downtown Dallas. The carpet in the office is a soft blue, the walls are light gray. I have a state of the art computer and free access to the company's internet system. I get free parking. I'm paid \$50,000 a year and I get three weeks vacation every year.

Sounds pretty good, doesn't it? So why don't you have it? The problem is how it is written. With so much focus on details that you might walk right past your truly idea job because it didn't fit the picture you've made. Yes, you followed the “rules of visioning” – first person, present tense, positive, personal, stating that you already have it. But by focusing mainly on the *quantity* factors – the details – you actually limit yourself.

Here's another version, which I contend would be far more effective:

I work in a service organization that creates synergistic relationships with a variety of businesses. I report to someone who is fair, honest, inspiring and committed to training and developing the potential of all employees. I have many opportunities to be challenged and grow in my knowledge and abilities. I love going to work and am surrounded by interesting people who are motivated to show up and are committed to excellence. We have a warm and pleasant working environment that reflects our company culture. We use up to date, leading edge technology which is available to all employees. I make at least \$50,000 a year and have unlimited potential for growth both in salary and the value I can bring to the company.

The latter version is clear, but it leaves lots of space – giving you the opportunity to explore many more options. What if your ideal job is hiding out in a two-story garden office complex in far North Dallas? If you were hung up on getting a view downtown, you wouldn't even go to the interview!

I'm not saying it is wrong to set clear parameters about what you want. I'm encouraging you to be open to the forms that the qualities you desire could take – and suggesting that being too particular about details might be the reason you haven't gotten what you think you want.

What if you took the time to write out a vision of what you would love to be, do and have in your life? What if you divided the vision into categories, like family, social life, vocation or career, spiritual life? Do you see that you might possibly create it? Have you got anything better you could spend your time on?

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