

“I See You”

By William Peterson

When I reflected upon what the word **vision** means to me, “being able to see within” came to mind. For some reason I could not forget that beautiful exchange in the movie Avatar, between Neytiri and Jake Sully “I see you”. Let’s enjoy the lyrics of the movie sound track...

“I see you
I see you
Walking through a dream
I see you
My light in darkness breathing hope
of new life
Now I live through you and you through me
Enchanting
I pray in my heart that this dream never ends
I see me through your eyes.”

I then realised that for years I had a one-dimensional insight about what the word vision meant. I had been concentrating mainly on the “outward seeing” element of the word vision i.e. “What I want to achieve out there in the world, so that I’m famous, successful and remembered long after I’m gone!” I attached less importance to the deeper meaning of the word vision, which is having the eyes to see deeply within myself.

This inner vision, “I see within”, acknowledges the uniqueness, strength, vulnerability, beauty and potential which lie within me. In other words, what I see and have within will radiate outward into the external. I am the living, breathing, dynamic embodiment of my vision. It becomes difficult to live the corporate, community, country’s or social club’s vision if I haven’t connected with and acknowledged that I am a vision, seeking expression, affirmation and fulfilment.

A vision is a clear compelling statement of what you say you are passionate about and

have fallen in love with, it will consume the best of you and your time, so it makes sense to start treating yourself as a vision - a walking billboard of your unique brand.

Nothing could be more deserving than you receiving your own attention with passion and commitment. I know this might sound a bit narcissistic. I’m however referring to a healthy and well balanced self-regard and a deep reverence for Self.

We are all so busy on this Hamster-like treadmill of life, achieving and doing things. We may have lost touch with our truest desires and deepest calling.

Rene Descartes in his philosophical classic, Discourse on Method, writes ‘I think therefore I am.’ I would like to propose another way of appreciating who we are as we explore vision building, “**I am therefore I do**” as opposed to “I do therefore I am.” Try this mantra; “Be do”, “Be do”, “Be do” as opposed to “do be”, “do be”, “do be” ...catchy tune hey!

The value of who you are is immeasurable; it’s inherent to your humanity. It is given to you (You are gifted!). You cannot earn it. You can only respond to it.

Sustainable vision building to my mind then, is an “inside-out” approach. Realising that as you externalise your vision it’s a love story, an expression of yourself.

If you do not start from the inside, then consider this: If your well runs dry how will you share a drink with those who come to you to have their thirst quenched or needs met? When we do not replenish our own inner needs, we begin to give from the bottom of our well where the water is bitter and muddy, it no longer sustains and quenches. Giving from the dregs never does. Often this kind of continuous, automatic and uninformed giving can become harmful to self and others.

We run the risk of giving in half-measures or the giving becomes painful obligations “I must, I should and I have to” instead of “I want to, I choose to.”

If we are not cautious then this type of giving may reflect in the way we give in our personal relationships, careers, social interactions, etc. We ultimately become resentful, feel guilty or burnt out. Then the blame game begins, the Drama Triangle (Persecutor, Victim and Rescuer) dynamics so eloquently spoken of by Steve Karpman starts to kick in.

In today’s modern world of unbridled, materialism, consumerism and ego worshipping the word vision is often narrowly defined. It is almost exclusively associated with how can I win, be the best, stockpile the most, be the fittest, fastest and survive, “the last one standing, king of the hill”. The king at times can live a very lonely existence and the hill can be a very lonely place. This is a very limited understanding of the word vision.

I believe that when we live our vision from a place of seeing ourselves genuinely as the receptacle, we then realise that the vision acts like a carrier oil, delivering our unique sweet fragrance and our unique service offering to clients, customers, family, community etc. We become less obsessed to exclusively focus on the taking and conquering at all costs. There are innumerable examples in the business arena and elsewhere of unparalleled success when that vision genuinely sets out to serve as opposed to take.

For example, don’t exclusively think about what you can get out of the customer, rather genuinely explore what the customer needs and how best you can serve to meet those needs. Vision living therefore becomes an act of completing as opposed to competing, one of sharing as opposed to one of taking. The competition and completion is with oneself.

It’s a commitment to lifelong self-renewal and self-actualisation.

With our visions we stand in service of each other and our world. We enter the flow and stand in the connected expression and energy of Ubuntu: “This is the insight that persons depend on persons to be persons. Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu.” (Augustine Shutte, 2001)

Let us desire that others will say, like in Avatar “**I see you**” when they are impacted by our vision.”

Now with this in mind allow me to guide you on how to create a vision. This approach is but one of many ways.

Mental visualisation and practice can help you get closer to where you want to be in life, and it can prepare you for success! Victor Frankl, a psychiatrist and a Jew was imprisoned in the death camps of Nazi Germany, where he experienced things that were so offensive to our sense of decency that we shudder to even repeat them. One day, naked and alone in a small room, he began to become aware of what he later called “the last of the human freedoms”. In the midst of his experience, Frankl would project himself into different circumstances, such as lecturing to his students after his release from the death camps. He would describe himself in the classroom, in his mind’s eye, and give his students the lessons he was learning during his very torture. Through a series of such disciplines, using memory and imagination he exercised his small embryonic freedom until it grew larger and larger, and he had more freedom than his Nazi captors.

Research has revealed that mental practices are almost as effective as real physical exercise, and that doing both is more effective. Many athletes use the visualisation

technique with amazing success. World-class athletes use vivid, highly detailed internal images and rehearsals of their entire performance engaging all their senses and combining their knowledge of the venue with their mental rehearsal. The year my son won the South African Junior National Schools 100m and 200m events, he introduced visualisation techniques to his races. Think of Former world heavyweight champion, Muhammad Ali. He used various mental practices to improve his performance as an athlete such as: affirmations i.e. 'I'm the greatest', visualisation and other mental rehearsal. Did he achieve the status of being the greatest? Yes indeed!

Research into the cognitive functioning of the brain is increasingly confirming that thoughts produce the same mental instructions as actions. Mental imagery impacts many cognitive processes in the brain: motor control, attention, perception, planning, and memory. The implication is that the brain is being prepared for actual performance during visualisation. Mental practices can improve levels of motivation, increase self-confidence and effectiveness.

So when you do this next vision exercise, don't forget to **VISUALISE!** **Build it with pictures and place your collage in a place where you can see it daily.**

Let's begin...

Step 1: Specifically state what you want to achieve. It is important to write down enough detail to describe the vision. Being vague and broad will not suffice. For example, "I want to lose weight and look good again" as opposed to "By 29 November 2010 I will have lost 10kg and fit into my favourite size 36 red dress".

Step 2: Think clearly about what it is you are going to give in return for achieving your vision. In other words, how are you going to

share with others the benefits and the rewards that came your way as a result of this achievement? This is an important consideration so that the vision does not become a selfish crusade.

Step 3: Commit to a definite date by when you will achieve your vision. It's okay to put progressive milestones in place which will help you to your final and overall vision achievement. I once heard a radio interview given by a famous South African Cricketer after he had scored a victory clinching century. The reporter asked him how he managed to score the 100, he replied, "five runs at a time".

Step 4: Create a specific and definite plan which will help you achieve your vision. Begin immediately, ready or not. Try not to create the perfect plan; you can perfect it as you go along. Try this acronym "**SMART**" as you review your written plan -

S = Have I been **specific** enough in detailing my plan?

M = Have I said enough in my plan to **measure** my progress?

A = Are the ideas in my plan **actionable**?

R = Are the ideas in my plan **realistic**?

T = Are the ideas in my plan **time** related?

Step 5: Commit to read your vision statement to yourself at least twice a day, preferably as one of the first things you do when you get up in the morning and one of the last things you do before you go to bed at night.

"If your ship doesn't come in, swim out to meet it" - Jonathan Winters.