



## **Guidance and Exercises on Leadership Development: Week 1**

### **Developing Your Personal Leadership Vision and Plan of Action**

#### **How I developed my own leadership vision**

As a university student during the American civil rights movement of the 1960s, I identified Martin Luther King Jr. as my most inspiring leader. What was it that inspired me? It was his powerful vision of people united in purpose to make this a better and more just society. It was his powerful vision: “I have a dream. I have a dream that we will all be at the top of the mountain together, young and old, brothers and sisters, black and white, united in purpose to make this a better and more just society.” It was that vision, more than anything else that led me inevitably into the nonprofit world with organizations dedicated to creating a better and more just society.

The second characteristic that most inspired me was Dr. King’s ability to communicate with passion for his vision. I grew up in an era when men were supposed to be strong and quiet, courteous and caring, but not showing emotion. Now, I talk about the ability of Dr. King to communicate with passion and love and share my own experience and emotions with passion and love in the group. I learned it was acceptable and powerful as a leader to show my emotions.

I share these – the power of vision and the power of emotional communication – as models for what leaders can do and examples of what I learned from thinking about a leader I admired.

My own leadership vision is quite simple. It is to dedicate myself to working, teaching, and writing to help fundraisers, executives, managers, and board members in countries around the world to transform their nongovernmental organizations and community groups into more effective, more efficient, more attractive, and more successful organizations to make this a better world through strategy, teamwork and leadership. I want to promote the value of fundraisers and to honor donors in the hierarchy of human caring.

I know that being a leader is more than just skills – it is how you see yourself and what you do about that vision of yourself. It is about your values. Who are you? As a guest on a recent podcast called “Perception Is Reality,” I opened the interview by saying that I was convinced that if a person has a perception of herself as a leader or himself as a leader, that perception will ultimately become that person’s reality.

I am sharing the worksheets on leadership in seven sessions with each one for one week. Here is the first. I urge you to complete it in the next few days before you get the next one. And be sure to write your plans in detail so you can have them for reference.

Good luck! Or as I said when I was living in Geneva, “Courage!”

## Developing Your Personal Leadership Vision and Plan of Action

### Worksheet I: Developing Your Personal Leadership Vision and Plan of Action

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Mentor \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Objective: Begin to develop your leadership vision for yourself by identifying inspiring attributes you admire.**

This initial activity is designed to stimulate your thinking about the most important leadership attributes for your leadership vision of yourself. These are the steps:

1. Thinking by yourself on your own, identify two to three inspiring leaders. You can draw these leadership models from literature, history, mythology, family, fairytales, or wherever else you find inspiration.
2. Still working by yourself, identify what inspires you about them and their leadership styles? Write down the two or three of the most inspiring attributes in just a few words each.
3. Working now with your partner or mentor, share the attributes you admire and explain why they are important to you in developing your leadership vision for yourself.
4. As you state why these attributes are important, have your mentor capture the key values that you identify. **Values matter.** The reason you want to lead, is not to gain power, status, authority, or money; it has to do with changing society for the better and improving the world.
5. Discuss with your partner or mentor the attributes you say you value.
  - Why are these inspiring for you?
  - How are these attributes useful to meaningful progress and change?

The Leader	What Inspires You About them?	Specific Leadership Attributes
1.		
2.		

## Developing Your Personal Leadership Vision and Plan of Action

3.		
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### Leadership Values Identified – My clear and strong values are:

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| 1. | 4. |
| 2. | 5. |
| 3. | 6. |

From the leadership attributes and values you identified, how would you integrate these attributes and values into your leadership vision? This may be easy or hard. If it doesn't come right now, your vision may evolve as you reflect upon this work.

### My Leadership Vision

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Return to the larger group with your partner/mentor and share your work. Discuss why is a leadership vision so important?

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### B. Objective: Identify your leadership strengths and weaknesses

Continue to work with your partner or mentor. However, take a moment to first reflect, on your own, one successful leadership experience you have had that actually led to changes and another leadership experience that did not succeed or painfully failed. Share these experiences with your mentor or partner.

1. As you speak, ask your partner to identify the skills or methods that made one experience successful and the other one unsuccessful and discuss in greater detail. The best learning often comes from our failures.

<b>A Successful Leadership Experience</b>	<b>A Failed Leadership Experience</b>	
<b>Skills or Methods That Were Used</b>	<b>Skills or Methods That failed and Why</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>	

2. After listening to your partner, identify the leadership skills you have and those you lack to some degree. These are your strengths and weaknesses in being a leader. Remember! All of us have strengths and weaknesses. Review with your partner to determine if accurately captured.

<b>Strengths as a Leader</b>	<b>Weaknesses as a Leader</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> </ol>

## Developing Your Personal Leadership Vision and Plan of Action

### C. Objective: Identify the opportunities and risks you face.

1. Reflect on your current workplace and fundraising efforts. Consider areas where you might exercise leadership - and what potential risks you could face. These are your opportunities and threats in exercising your leadership.
2. Share these opportunities and threats with your partner or mentor. Probe and discuss deeper:
  - a. Why you should step up to leadership in your current position?
  - b. Strategies for how you will do it to avoid problems? And,
  - c. What skills/behaviors you will need to develop to succeed?
3. After feedback from your partner, circle the top two opportunities and threats in each box.

<b>Opportunities to Lead</b>	<b>Threats in Leading</b>
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
<b>Why step up to leadership in your current position</b>	
<b>Strategies to avoid pitfalls:</b>	
<b>Skills/behavior I will need to succeed:</b>	

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### **D. Objective: Develop a Plan of Action – What will you do to develop your leadership in action?**

Now you can develop a plan of action for your own leadership based on your personal vision and your personal assessment for leadership. It's a guide for you and need not be lengthy or complicated.

Develop a short plan of action – What is your plan to develop your leadership?

1. Continuing with your partner or mentor, talk about what you will need to do to develop your own leadership style based on your vision, your personal strengths and weaknesses, and current opportunities and threats.
2. Ask your partner to give you feedback and suggestions and, on the basis of the feedback, draft an actual short-term leadership development plan of action with an emphasis on skills to develop.
3. Your plan will have a stated objective, activities to help you achieve that objective, a timeline to assure progress, and a monitoring system with your partner, mentor or some other person.
4. Feedback from others is always beneficial. How will you do that? What will you do next? How will you know you are making progress? What more are you thinking?

**Leadership Plan of Action for \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**My vision for myself as a leader is to:**

**What I need to work on:**

**Opportunities and Threats:**

## Developing Your Personal Leadership Vision and Plan of Action

**My objective in the coming year is to:**

**Activities and timelines**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

**For monitoring and mentoring I will...**

This guidance and worksheet on leadership is described more fully in my book on *Make a Better World: A practical guide to leadership for fundraising success*, available on Amazon.

Good sailing!

*Ken*

[NGOFutures@gmail.com](mailto:NGOFutures@gmail.com) and [www.NGOFutures.com](http://www.NGOFutures.com)