Personal Mission Statement Worksheet
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"If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."
Lewis Carroll - Alice in Wonderland

Overview

The objective of drafting a personal mission statement is to help frame your direction for personal change as you transition from a college student to college graduate. Many of us respond to the requests of colleagues, teachers, bosses, spouses, or children without much thought about how complying with these requests helps us to move along our path (i.e. meet our own needs) in addition to helping others. Having and being in touch with a personal mission statement makes it easier for us to make choices that will move us along our own desired path in life. It can help us answer the question, "Where do I want to go, and who do I want to be when I get there?"

Stephen Covey describes the personal mission statement as our "constitution." It is the standard by which day by day actions can be judged. His notion is basically one of "where do you want to go in life?" That frame is difficult for many of us to envision. Other authors have an alternative way to frame the personal mission. They would ask you to write your obituary. When your life is over, for what would you like to be known? Remembered? Appreciated?

The benefit of drafting (or re-drafting) a personal mission statement is that it helps you think through your priorities deeply and carefully. The outcome should help in aligning your behavior with your beliefs. The process has strong roots in the "cognitive" approach to managing behavior that suggests "values" drive "attitudes," and "attitudes" drive "behavior."

Balance in life: Multiple domains

Much of the value of a personal mission statement comes from balancing important parts of our lives. Covey describes domains or "centers" (besides oneself) which include partners, family, money, work, possession, pleasure, relationships, and spirituality plus issues of security, wisdom and power. These centers or domains consist

of our roles and responsibilities in the context of life balance, and include work activities, intellectual activities, social activities, family activities, spiritual activities, physical activities, and cultural activities. It might help you to start with your Role Pie Exercise results. The **Values-In-Action survey** (see syllabus for link) results will also inform your understanding of how these centers are expressed in your life. Your first challenge is to identify (list) the values (including domains or centers) that are fundamentally important to you as a unique individual.

Moving from Domains to a Mission Statement

Once you have a sorted list of important values, the next step is to write it in a short form which reflects your particular sentiments around those values. This may take several iterations with time for reflection between drafts. See if you can draft one sentence "position statements." If your experience is like others, your first attempts will be too long and too wordy, so keep throwing out words until you can boil your statement down to a short page.

The Franklin-Covey website (www.msb.franklincovey.com) has a “mission statement builder” that you may find helpful in writing your mission statement. This website also has more examples if you would like to see them.

If you have trouble narrowing your description, select the enduring themes, the ones which reoccur to you across a variety of situations. Remember that your objective is to create an enduring statement of purpose that reflects values and priorities.

Drafting your personal mission statement involves making supportive notes regarding how the mission statement relates to the leadership philosophy assignment. Your mission statement should be one that is value-based and ideal, yet useful and based on your reality. Think in terms of how this mission statement can be useful to you in making choices as you transition to your post-graduation life. Finally, think about how your mission statement relates to your leadership aspirations. How do you want others to see you? What are the values you aspire to express as you lead others, both in leadership positions and when you act as a leader in any situation? Your personal mission statement guides your actions in all situations, especially as a leader.