Vision Activity 1 – Diver Goals and Thriver Goals

Three researchers (from the Universities of Pittsburgh in the US, and Toronto in Canada[1]) worked together to find out what made students in their first year of university particularly successful or unsuccessful. They got 3000 students in the first two-weeks of their university courses to fill out a questionnaire. The 3000 were all students who'd applied to study Economics at degree level, and had really good college grades.

The questions asked them about how hard they planned to work, what their typical study routines were, and most importantly asked them to outline their hopes and dreams.

It's this last section of the study that's particularly relevant to us in this activity. The questions the students had to answer were:

- What are your two most inspiring goals?
- What kind of person do you want to be later in life?
- What qualities do you admire in others?

A year later, the researchers took **the students who'd ended up in the top 10% of their year group**, and compared them to **the students in the bottom 10%**.

There seemed to be some superficial differences at first, but what struck the researchers was the nature of the goals students had set. Students at the top and the bottom had both set goals, but the goals were expressed very differently.

Here's a summary:

Bottom 10% - 7 examples	Top 10% - 7 examples
'be rich', 'get rich quickly', 'being successful' 'having so many successful businesses', 'Have my own company have my own house and car' 'receive a high level of education' 'be an actuary'	'build something' 'I can contribute to the human advancement of…' 'I want to try something different' '…fix people's problems' 'independent person who can deal with problems' 'working in the field of Computer Science' 'build a strong foundation to succeed'

Diver Goals: One group of students – the ones on the left – had diver goals. These focussed on 'being' or 'becoming' something – usually 'rich', or having/receiving something – money, a house, a particular job, status or power. These were goals about an outcome, not a journey.

Thriver Goals: The other group had thriver goals. These placed emphasis on activity and a sense of purpose – building, contributing, trying, fixing, or dealing with problems. These were goals that didn't specify an outcome, but gave detail about a process or a journey.

And the outcomes were clear. **Those students with thriver goals were significantly more successful**. They'd avoided procrastination and worked harder.

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[1] Beattie, Laliberte, Oreopoulos, Universities of Pittsburgh and Toronto, 2016 Economics of Education Review, Volume 62, February 2018, Pages 170-182

Here's list of ten other goals set by the same students. Can you guess which were top 10% students, and which were bottom 10% students? It's pretty easy once you see the patterns but in case you need them, we've snuck the answers in below...

1. 'to enjoy working hard and working smart'
2. 'to own a big company'
3. 'to build my network, name and career'
4. 'become a very rich guy'
5. 'helping tackle space research to deal with overpopulation'
6. 'be rich where I do not have to worry about running out of money'
7. 'a person who changes the whole goddamn world and also can contribute to the whole society…'
8. 'to be a person like Bill Gates'
9. 'to provide assistance to others in need of help and support'
10. 'to be a successful business man'[2]

What goals do you have?

There's nothing wrong with wanting wealth and riches. The problem comes where your goal *is just about wealth and riches, and doesn't emphasise action.* As if the wealth and riches are a magical outcome that just happens. This study showed that students in the bottom 10% actually spent longer thinking about their futures than top 10% students did – but they were just dreaming about what it might be like to be a millionaires. They did less work than their peers.

So instead, frame your goal in terms of what you might want to **do**. Emphasise action – the journey, the process.

Try these starters to help:

- *I want to build…*
- *I want to help solve the problem of…*
- *I want to tackle the issue of…*
- *I want to work every day in the ----------------------- industry…*
- *I want to deal with the issue of…*
- *I want to help people…*

Remember, if you set goals like this, you've still every chance you'll end up very wealthy and successful. And you'll also have the advantage of knowing a little about *how* you're going to make a change in the world. It's a win-win situation.

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[2] The odd-numbered goals were set by top 10% students. The even-numbered goals were set by bottom 10% students.