

OPEYEMI EMMANUEL

Living Your Vision

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Contents

I Part One

1	Introduction	3
2	Everything starts with Vision	10
3	Understanding Core Concepts	16
4	What Vision is not?	20
5	Why Vision?	24
6	Crafting Your Vision	35
7	Death of Vision	46
8	Realizing Your Vision	57
9	The Vision of You	65
10	Visionary Leadership	70

I

Part One

*Your vision of where or who you want to be is the
greatest asset you have*

Introduction

It was a lonely night of June 2016, about 9pm, I had just graduated from college and returned home to wait for admission into the University. It was raining heavily and I could barely hear myself or see anything in the thick darkness of my room because of power outage. As the rain clamped down on the weak zinc roofing sheets, I felt like the roof was going to pull off. I held on firmly to the edge of my bed, wrapped under my big blue duvet. The rumbling and thundering of the rain never stopped for about an hour. Another roaring thunder will get me shivering under the duvet. As I lay down there wondering whether the roof will survive the night, I kept asking myself questions why I was born to such a family as this. We had just killed another snake two nights ago right in the middle of our living room.

My father had just lost his Job and we had to move to our uncompleted apartment because we could no longer afford the rent. The uncompleted apartment we moved into had only one door out of the four exit doors in the building. We fixed two

windows on the side we moved into and left the remaining two-third of the building open. We had no other choice, we had to leave the rented apartment and we had to live somewhere.

My father was a courageous man. He never gave up, he searched and applied for several other jobs. I remember, I'd followed him to all those offices as we drove down the street corners to drop the applications. The reason why I mostly followed him was not because I was the one submitting the applications, but because I had to wait in the car so that when he returned to the car, I will have to push the car to start. Life was fun and hard at this moment in time. My father started a small farm at our backyard in the middle of an estate to keep food supplies available. Our house was in the middle of a nice estate, but father cared less, and would do anything for his family to survive this period. On days we had no money to buy foodstuff in the open market, myself and dad would stroll to the little farm in the backyard and get some fresh vegetables, harvest some yam or cassava and make dinner to stay alive till another day. My mum was supporting with the little she had, because she was only a teacher and was earning little as salary.

In the midst of this chaos that rainy night, I wanted to know why God sent me to this surviving family, why I was not born in the United States to a family like Obama, or Bill Gates, or maybe Aliko Dangote at least. I asked God questions about my identity, my future and what plans does He have for me, bringing me to this world without the option to choose and pick my parents, my background, my gender, my place of birth and what time in history I was born. As I lay down crying under the bolstering rain and thundering claps, I picked up my Bible and flipped through

if I would find some answers, I read the passage of scriptures *“For I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope”*. As I read over and over again, I heard clearly in my spirit, that my family was the best family He could have given me, and my father was the best father I could ever have for me to get to where He wants me to go. I didn’t understand the statement that night at the time but those words made me calm and relaxed for the night. I saw that scripture in a new light, it was striking and my perspective started changing as I thought to myself there must be something special about what God had given me.

I woke up the next morning a totally different person. I started looking for ways to get myself busy while waiting for admission. I look to my father’s shelves to find anything interesting, I saw a book that caught my eyes titled *“How to stop the pain”* by James Richards. Of course, I was in pain at this point of my life so it sounds fascinating, I had lots of unanswered questions, with no one to ask. I started reading the book as a 16 year old, and found unbelievable truths about my pains and the laws of attraction and other things about vision, purpose and Identity. This was the first book I read that literally transformed my thinking and my life.

I began to understand how living in the past, and giving excuses is the single most surest way to inflict self pain. I understood that I might not have control over the five questions I was asking, but I have complete control over who I become and what I do with my life. I learnt about how focusing on the future can free me from pain. I had for a long time been angry with my father that he didn’t do a good job putting us through the circumstances

we were in. It was more like I didn't forgive him for losing his job and for not having a well thought plan that was working to make us comfortable.

This paradigm shifting book freed me from judging others and made me realize that it was not my father's responsibility to give me a great future, it was solely my responsibility to take ownership of my future and design the life I want to lead.

I quickly learnt how to forgive everyone by seeing clearly that they might be responsible for where I am now but they are never responsible for where I want to be. After reading to completion for another two weeks, I learnt forgiveness such that till now, this perspective had freed me from holding anyone in unforgiveness, even to get angry is a thing of the past. I have lost appetite for excuses, anger and unforgiveness, simply because I understood in a new way how to own my pain, set a new course, design my life and live an intentional life.

From that moment onward, I started taking ownership of my life. I started envisioning the future, reading more books about different topics, I had all the time, I was at home all day, and those days, we usually have power outage so no opportunity for watching television. We were living in an uncompleted apartment so I would not invite any of my friends to come visit me and no new friends in the neighborhood were willing to be friends with a nobody. If I was not going out with my dad in search of a job, I was home all day reading, resting, writing songs and making the most of my time. I developed the skill of writing songs during these time, and also read lots of books that shaped my life and prepared me for a better future.

The real problem back then was I was looking at myself, my potential, and my life incorrectly. My vision was so bad, I couldn't see two feet in front of me.

Moreover, I wallowed in pain far longer than was necessary because I didn't take the time to create a compelling vision for my life much less begin to execute that compelling vision. You've heard the expression that "the pain pushes until the vision pulls" ... that's what was happening to me.

I believe that you're great, that there's something magnificent about you. Regardless of what has happened to you in your life. Regardless of how young or old you think you might be. The moment you begin to 'think properly,' this something that's within you, this power within you that's greater than the world, it will begin to emerge. It will take over your life. It will feed you. It will clothe you. It will guide you, protect you, direct you, sustain your very existence. If you let it. Now that is what I know, for sure. – Michael Beckwith

Its important to note that life will throw things at us and most times, we tend to give up under the weight of what life throws at us, but these things are not meant to crush us but to bring out the true person that is on the inside. Situations and circumstances are meant to shape us and direct us into our destiny only if we understand and see those situations from the right perspectives. We need to understand that every chaos and trouble you go through is embedded with precious lessons and treasures that you might have to pick-up along the path of your life.

As I read more books, the vision of the future started forming in

my heart, my assignment and why God has sent me to the world started finding imprint on the surface of my heart. I began to realize that life itself is a journey that has a map and success is predictable. I realized that you can understand and follow the principles that make things work and also achieve the same fit as those before you. The principle of Vision was one of the most profound and important principle I'd learnt while growing up and that vision gives pain a purpose. So many of us go through life not understanding the purposes of our trials. We spend our days walking a crooked path, believing that every obstacle in the road is a problem and something to be avoided.

I envisioned as a 16 year old that I never wanted to work as an employee but to own my own company. I never wanted to work for the government for many years and get fired randomly without justice, or work for 35 years and all I could get is a pension that cannot be influenced to increase even if you have more ideas at 70. I knew I had to design my own future and live a life that I truly desire.

I started my company after graduation from the University at 22, exactly the age I envisioned at 16. I started a second company at 26 that is very successful today with several staffs on our payroll. I had invested the first 10 years working on my own business just as I envisioned.

Vision the most powerful force on earth that can create change and we all must master the art of crafting our personal life vision, writing it down and following it till the end. If anything will change, it must start from vision. God cannot change anything until He first creates a vision in the heart of the change agent

because one of principles that guide the Universe is “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he”, meaning what you see with your inner eyes is what you can achieve or what you become.

In the chapters ahead, I will be sharing, how to craft your vision, how to pursue your vision and live a life by design. Always remember that life is based on principles and success is predictable. If you live your life based on the principles that make the planet itself work, you can be guaranteed of success and a good life.

Your understanding of your life’s purpose and passion will deepen as you read this book. You will understand clearly what vision is and what vision is not. A lot of emphasis has been placed on purpose in the past few years in many circles, but vision is what makes purpose achievable. You only become unstoppable when you fully grasp God’s vision for your life. This book will show you many paradigm shifting ideas that will transform your life if you follow through and put them into practice. Vision is important, its time to learn why and how.

Everything starts with Vision

The Bible introduced God to us in the beginning as a God of Vision. God saw what the earth could be even though the present condition of the earth was void and formless. God saw the beautiful trees, the sun, the moon and the stars before anything was made. He saw the fishes, the birds and the animals and also saw man in a beautiful garden with abundance in the midst of the chaos. This picture of a preferred future moved God to act on what He saw, and God said “Let there be light and there was light”.

I have read Genesis chapter one more than 100 times while growing up and the picture I have of this scripture as do many others is that God spoke things into existence. God said something and it simply appears. I imagined that God must be all powerful. He is the only one that can speak and literally the thing will appear like a magician, but this was not the case here in Genesis, God never spoke things into existence. God operated the principle of vision.

If everything God made simply appeared, with no actual work involved, that should not require days to complete, they can simply appear at once, or at most in one day. I believe it took sometime for all of creations to be made because God did the actual work of making every single thing. Genesis 2:1, told us that God had finished all the work he had been doing, so on the seventh day he rested (NIV). You don't rest if all you've been doing is to say something and they appear.

Gen 1:31 told us "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good". Notice that the word used was "made" and not "created". Notice two words were used to describe what God was doing at the beginning of Creation. The Bible used the Word "Created" and "Made". Things were first created and then made. Man was created in Genesis 1:26, but man was made or formed in Genesis 2:7. The vision was birthed in Gen 1:26 while the explanation of the execution was described in Gen 2:7.

Genesis 2:4 reads "This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens". "Created" is the process of envisioning the idea, and "made" is the process of executing the idea. This two process must take place before anything can exist in the physical realm. God said "*Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground*", at this stage, God was rolling out his vision for mankind and what he saw man to be and become. Gen 1:26 is the vision statement of God for mankind. This is what God saw in his mind, the desired man. God saw the idea of mankind in his mind, envisioned it, declared

it and moved into action to actualize it.

Let's examine the original Hebrew texts carefully as translated in the original Hebrew language. "Created" as used in Genesis means "Bara" in ancient Hebrew and it means *"To bring into being or To bring into existence"*. The first place something is brought into existence is in the mind. Things first appear in the mind before they appear physically.

Heb 11:3 told us *"Faith helps us understand that God created the whole world by his command. This means that the things we see were made by something that cannot be seen."*

Things that are seen were made from things that cannot be seen. They were formed at God's command after the order of what he saw in his mind.

The word "Made" translated as "Asah" in Hebrew means "To make out of already existing material". It is the opposite of "Bara" - To create. Asah occurs 2633 times in the scriptures and its translated as "make or made" 653 times, "do" 1333 times, "wrought" 52 times, "execute" 48 times, "prepare" 77 times and "work" 29 times. You can see that to make or made is what happens after you create. Vision is created in the mind outside of what is visible. You cannot make what you have not created. You have to bring it into existence in your mind before you can prepare, execute, wrought or work on the vision you see.

Nothing simply appears, not the iPhone you are using right now nor the airplanes, not the cars, nor the houses. Nothing just appear, someone somewhere followed the cycle of vision. He

first created it in his mind, He wrote it down, He read it and he ran with it. This is how everything was created and will be created. If you want to create anything or cause a change or make a difference, you must master this cycle of vision. You see it, you write it down, you say it, and you act on it.

Gen 2:2 say “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. God rested from all the work”. God worked on his vision and his vision statement is for mankind to work, dominate by envisioning and creating a better future for ourselves. God’s vision is that we make this world a better place by continuing the process of creating new things, ideas, businesses, products and services.

Vision is at the heart and center of creation itself by God. This is how important vision is. Nothing is created or made without vision. God is a Visionary God and you must be too.

Therefore, the principle of vision is made of the four steps: Conceptualization, Articulation, Action and Actualization. You see it. You write it down and read or say it. You act and You achieve. This is the principle I termed the **Cycle of Vision**.

The first step in the Cycle of Vision, is Conceptualization; this is the ability to envision, to see what does not exist, to see a preferred future state, to see what could be. You must step outside of what currently exist in order to do this. You have to see with your inner eyes a better future, a better product, a better outcome outside of what currently exists or your current realities. Why must you see? You can only make what you see.

The second step in the Cycle of Vision is Articulation; God said what he saw at the first stage of envisioning. You have to say the vision, but before you say it, you must first write it down. To say something is to read something, to read something is to write it down. Habb 2:2; says *"Write down what I show you. Write it clearly on a sign so that the message will be easy to read"*. When you read and say what your vision is, you are moved into action to run with it or act on it. We all have a way of acting consistently with what we say consistently.

The third step is Action; God said "Let there be light and there was light". This doesn't mean in any way that the light appeared immediately after God spoke, just as the tree did not appear nor the animals, nor the birds. How did I know? because man did not appear after God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...". The same way God said in Genesis Vs 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, same way God said in 26. The bible told us explicitly in Genesis Vs 2:1-3 how man was formed or made. God did the work of making man in detail, same way He paid attention to making all the universe and everything in it. You have to act and work on your vision to make it a reality. Step up, step out and get ready to act after crafting your vision with the help of this book.

The whole earth is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. God is still in the business of creating with his sons and daughters at the center of the action. He wants to reveal a picture of a preferred future that is far beyond your wildest dream, beyond what you see around you or what currently exists anywhere on earth. God is still waiting for us to seek him so he can reveal to us new visions.

God is looking for change agents that will follow his vision for their lives. The only reason why we are struggling in Africa as a continent is because we are led by leaders with no vision. It's time to raise a new generation of people with vision who can cause a change in our nation, continent and make the world a better place for all of us.

We must realize that each person on this planet has a God given vision to positively impact his or her world. When this vision is aligned with who we are, it helps us to fulfill our purpose on earth. This means that when I understand who I am and see clearly where I am going, there is a synergy and energy that is generated to live a life that is fulfilled and driven.

Understanding Core Concepts

A lot of people don't understand these three important concepts: Purpose, Vision and Mission. I've seen vision, mission and purpose used interchangeably, differently or not all. There is a distinct difference between them and its important you understand the difference in order to leave a legacy that will last for many generations. Why? because to build a purpose driven company or business is to first live a purpose driven life. You must have vision for your life before thinking about a vision for your company.

Purpose, mission and vision statements can be confusing especially if you look at the organisations' copy. It's rare to find two organisations that agree on common usage, definition and application of the words. Some people substitute their mission and vision for their purpose. Let us find out why each word is relevant and how does each component relate to one another.

Imagine if you want to travel from one city to another, usually, you embark on a journey for a reason. Maybe you whisper

to your husband at night, let's go on a vacation, we've been working several months this year, or you want to travel to get your transcripts in school or you have a meeting in another city. This is the "Why" for the journey. You begin with the purpose in mind. You begin with "why". This is "purpose". Purpose is the reason why you do something or the reason why a thing exist.

Then after concluding on why the journey is so important to you, most times, we begin to imagine what it will look like by the time we arrive at the destination. Will it be raining? Will I be on time? Who will I meet at the office? Will I make it to the meeting and ace the contract. We imagine the picture of the destination. This is "Vision". Vision sees what purpose looks like when accomplished. Vision sees the potential of purpose.

Once you have pictured what it looks like when you arrive, you begin to think of "how" to actually start the journey or get to the other city. What vehicle will get you there? Will you go by public transport or you will drive? What unique methods and strategies will you follow to arrive on time, secure the contract and achieve the purpose why you went in the first place. Your mission is the "How". Mission is the vehicle that takes you to purpose.

Kevin Starr, Director at Mulago Foundations said *"You have to know where you are going to be able to figure out the best way to get there"*.

When you begin any journey, you subconsciously have an inner conversation around these four questions :

Why am I going to a particular destination?

What will it be like when I arrive?

How will I get there?

Who will I go with or who will I see when I arrive?

Without realizing it, you have worked with the vision-driven framework. Let's define these three concepts in another way. Purpose is the ultimate original reason for the creation of a thing. Mission is the general assignment given to fulfill that purpose while Vision is the project that you see in your heart that you designed to fulfill the mission.

Take for instance, Your purpose might be not to live outside under the sun, rain and other elements of nature. Your purpose is to "Cover Yourself from nature". Mission will then be to "build a house" in order to "cover yourself from nature". Vision will then be a "picture of the kind of house" you want to build to "cover yourself from nature". Vision describes in visuals the unique, specific and customized, according to your grace and abilities, the kind of mission you want to accomplish. You can decide to buy a key to a house, or build a small self contain, or build a \$100 million house. This is entirely left to your imagination or vision. Vision determines the scope of purpose. Vision determines how far you achieve in purpose. Once you have vision, then you can start working.

Therefore, all three components are needed to live a life by design. When the kind of house you see in your mind is built, then vision is accomplished. When the vision is accomplished, then the mission of building a house is also accomplished. When the mission is accomplished, then the purpose of providing a cover to protect you from nature is also accomplished. "The

vision is what you see to accomplish what you desire so you can have what you want” Dr Myles Munroe.

Purpose is the expression of your highest self, its the fundamental reason behind your existence. Its connected to something of greater good, something bigger than yourself. Purpose is “Why you do what you do”. Purpose is the reason why you want to do something guided by a deeply-held values and beliefs that inspire you to make a difference.

Vision is the “where” or “what”, its the end goal destination. Its a picture of the ideal world that you want to co-create. Its your destination, at a point in the near or distant future. What you expect to find when you arrive at the destination. Its a snapshot of a moment in the future of what success will look like.

Mission is the “how”, is the path you set to follow to arrive at the destination. When someone asks you where you are going, they most likely will ask you how you will get there. Mission is the how, the unique way you do what you do, the path you choose to follow, the decision you make to get to your destination. How you intend to use your best gifts, talents, and abilities, an expression of your unique genius. The methods and strategies to use in order to offer your best gift to the world. Mission is the vehicle that carry you to your vision.

You begin with purpose because Purpose guides you, mission drives you and vision inspires you. Your mission is your vision in action, connecting your purpose with your impact.

What Vision is not?

There are lots of things that vision is not. If we understand what something is not, then we can better understand what it is.

Vision is not purpose: There is a distinct difference between vision and purpose and we have established this in this last chapter. Purpose is the why of a thing. The reason why a thing exist, while vision sees the outcome of a fulfilled purpose. Vision sees the scope of purpose. Purpose can be similar or the same for two people but vision will determine how much they can accomplish. If vision is limited, you will accomplish very little with your purpose. In summary, vision determines the potential of purpose.

God had already told Abraham *“I will bless you and you will be a blessing to many, in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”*. That was purpose statement, God had affirm the reason for the blessing and why He is going to bless Abraham. But God had to allow Abraham to determine how much of this blessing

he will experience in his lifetime, the purpose of God will be fulfilled ultimately but how much of this purpose will Abraham fulfill in his lifetime is determined by his Vision. So God asked Abraham to look, *"I am giving all this land, as far as you can see, to you and your descendants as a permanent possession."* Gen 13:15. The vision of Abraham thus limited how much blessing he will personally experience.

Vision is not a plan for the unexpected: Vision is not your ability to see that something might go wrong and then plan adequately for it. Vision is not like car insurance where you say, I am doing this just in case my job is not working. Vision is not a side hustle. Vision goes after something with a clear objective in mind. Are you deliberate about your vision? Is your vision clear? Or is it something you do just in case or just because it makes you feel good, or its the reigning thing to do. A lot of people go into ministry because they feel its the fastest way to make cheap money especially in developing nations where the unemployment rate is high. That's not vision. Vision is a deliberate plan that you go after.

Chester Carlson worked diligently for years to interest various companies in his invention. Kodak turned it down. Twice the IBM Corporation studied the invention and twice rejected it, once on the advice of the Arthur D. Little Market Analysis Company. The Haloid Corporation, a nearly bankrupt company, finally decided to risk putting money into the invention to see if it could reverse company prospects. It did. Carlson is the inventor of xerography, and the Haloid Corporation is today the Xerox Corporation. IBM, although doing very nicely with

computers, has never been able to equal Xerox's dominance of the office copier field. —M. Hirsh Goldber

Vision is not Reputation: Reputation is what people think about you for something done in the past. A lot of people usually ride on their past reputation without necessarily having a vision. They are actually maintaining status quo without a vision. Riding on Reputation breeds stagnation. We should not be focused on how people perceive us based on what we have accomplished in the past. What is your present state of focus? Vision is forward thinking, while reputation is an impression based on the past. Don't live at this level, move forward and go after your vision.

Vision is not Ambition: A lot of people confuse ambition with vision. Vision is other focused, ambition is self focused. Generally speaking, there is nothing wrong with ambition or dreaming big for ourselves or striving to achieve personal greatness. However, Vision is all about a positive impact on other people. Are we doing things to really impact the people, or are we doing them just to make a name for ourselves? That is a personal question that we need to answer.

Vision is not a goal: Goals are important. Goals quantify and define the steps you must take. They are the signposts that let you know you are moving in the right direction. They are measurable and keeps you excited on your journey giving you little dopamine as you achieve them. One way to distinguish between a vision and a goal is to ask the "What next?" A vision provides clear ongoing direction – it is clear what you should do next. If what you have is a vision, it continues to act as a

beacon, guiding you in a setting new goals once current ones have been achieved. But if what you have is a goal, once you have reached your goal, it's finished, future directions become unclear because the goal was an end in itself.

Look at these two examples, one is a vision and the other a goal. Both provide a picture of the future, both are powerful, however one ended, and the other continues.

A Vision: Martin Luther King, Jr. described his vision of a world where people live together in mutual respect. A world where children will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. He created powerful specific images of the future. The test of this vision is that it continues to mobilize and guide people on next steps beyond King's lifetime.

A Big Goal: President John F. Kennedy announced a goal for the Apollo Moon Project: to put a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. The reason for this was not clear. Was the purpose to win the space race, or to begin the space defense initiative or just a bragging right among the nations? The image of the end result was powerful, the goal was reached in the face of overwhelming obstacles, but lacking a vision that provided the answer to what next? NASA has shown neither clear direction nor outstanding performance since.

Therefore, you set goals based on your vision and not have a vision based on goals. Goals are signposts on your way to vision while vision is the destination. Goals are realistic, short-term targets that require action. In order to realize your vision, you need to set goals and objectives.

Why Vision?

One day Alice came to a fork in the road and saw a Cheshire cat in a tree. Which road do I take? she asked. “Where do you want to go?” was his response. I don’t know, Alice answered, then said the cat, it doesn’t matter, if you don’t know where you are going, any road will get you there. Alice in Wonderland.

Can you see your future? Why is direction so important? where are you going? Until you can answer that question, you can’t say that anyone route is better than the other. Any road is fine. Experts and life stories have shown that with a vision in mind, you are more likely to succeed far beyond what you could otherwise achieve without a clear vision. Think of vision as a map to your personal and professional dreams. The harsh reality is that if you don’t develop your own vision, you’ll allow other people and circumstances to direct the course of your life. The challenge for many individuals is that they focus on their current condition, not on what they want in future. Remember my story at the beginning of this book, I shifted my focus from

what I was, to what I wanted. In other words, I created a new vision of myself.

It's time to start living on purpose instead of on autopilot. Ask yourself these questions:

Does your life reflect what you really want?

Do you know what you really want?

What is your vision for your life?

The purpose of having vision statements for all areas of your life is not just about getting what you want. It's also about living a fully engaged and exciting life! Individuals with no vision have much less energy and passion for life. Why? As human beings, we need direction to feel fulfilled, Where there is no vision, people perish. We need to be able to individually answer these questions to our own heart's satisfaction. God has not called us to be "accidents going somewhere to happen." He wants us to be people of vision, purpose and direction.

Vision is the bridge between the present and the future. Without it we perish or return to past glories. Vision gives pain a purpose. Vision is what we see but it is also the way in which we see. Vision is the lens that interprets the events of our life, the way we view people and our concept of God. If we have a scratch on our glasses, it may seem like everybody around us has scratches too, but the problem actually lies with us because our vision is impaired.

Jesus said that our eyes are the windows of our heart. Paul prayed that the eyes of our heart would be enlightened. In other words, we perceive with our eyes but we see with our hearts. Our minds

receive images from our eyes but our heart interprets these images. If our heart becomes bitter, jealous, hurt or in some way infected, the lens of our heart is distorted. What we perceive is happening and what is really going on could be two completely different things. The truth is, we see what we believe to be true. Another way to put it is, if you have the wrong pretext you will misunderstand the context.

Therefore, the things we believe to be true determine the way in which we interpret life. These “things” are called “core values.” Core values are the lens or eyes of our heart. It is important for us to realize the incongruence between what our core values presently are and what we really want them to be.

Often, the things we say we believe and the things we actually believe are not the same. We must understand that it is not the truths that we believe in our head that are our core values, but rather the ones we believe in our heart. The things we perceive to be true determine the way we respond to the world around us and to God who lives within us.

Most people live believing that their best days are behind them. Your best days are never behind you, why? because you don't have control of your past, but with Vision, you can control the future. When you see an anointed man or powerful man or a strong man without vision, he will soon become a mockery and lose the battle of life. Samson a powerful man, had everything he needed to be the most powerful Judge Israel could even have, but without vision, he lost his place, he became a mockery. Samson was able to align with God and regain vision, he knew his weakness, he sought for a new vision. He said “I would rather

die killing the enemy than be a slave in captivity”. This single new vision made him kill more enemies at this death than his entire life time.

Vision has the ability to make you accomplish more than you can ever imagine in a life time. Vision gives you speed, direction and accuracy that beats human imagination. You can have eyes and be blind like Samson, you can also be blind and have sight like Samson. Samson experienced both sides of the coin. God is a God of Vision, He wants to show you what the future holds so you can move towards it. Isaiah 43:19 says “*I’m about to do something brand new – its bursting forth. Don’t you see it?*” Our response should be, I can see it Lord, show me more. Samson did more after that one vision with God than he did in his entire life when living for himself.

Has life blindsided you, God doesn’t abandon his Vision for your life when you mess up. You are not disqualified. You are still very much needed, called, purposed and loved. Don’t allow the enemy to win over your life one more day. Take up your vision you once saw, and run with it.

Our lack of vision has led us here as a nation where people are now debating whether Online fraud is legal stealing since the politicians are also stealing. Stealing and corruption has become the norm of the day and righteous people are beginning to ask if righteousness has now become a slow lane. People are beginning to join them if you can’t beat them. “*Delight thyself in the Lord and he will grant you the desire of your heart*”. God is still in the business of revealing his vision to people who are focused on him. God wants to plant a vision in your heart. When God plants

a vision, it means it already exist and it will surely happen. This is how God changes people, or a nation, he plants a vision. God planted a vision in the heart of Moses, Gideon, Joseph, David, Deborah, and a lot of people.

Until you see a vision of what's possible, you will always hold on to the past or run away from the future. When you see a preferred future, it will change your behavior in the present. People only cast off restraints when there is no vision. People steal, cheat, lie, corrupt, abuse themselves and drugs, prostitute because they cannot see a better future for themselves. Imagine if a young lady was told that she will be the wife of the President in the future, would she be involved in prostitution in the present, I don't think so.

Why Vision is important?

One of the single most important qualities of a change agent is the ability to take responsibility. Nothing changes until someone take responsibility for change. People don't take responsibility until they have a vision. This is why Vision is important. God always starts with a vision to create a change. If God will change a person, a people or a nation, He will always start with a vision. God called Abraham out of his tent and told him to look up into the sky and count the number of stars. God used this to create a vision in the mind of Abraham to represent the future of his descendants.

God gave Joseph a vision of the future, how he will lead his family.

God can give you a vision as a solution to a problem that has not yet exist. Just like Joseph, at the time the vision was given, he didn't understand the context of the vision, he must have been excited just with the fact that he was leading his brothers in the vision, but vision is not self-focused but others-focused. Context gives vision the right perspective. Vision is not usually about your promotion, your exaltation or greed. If you don't have this mindset, you will not fulfill the purpose of the vision.

Vision Inspires: Vision gives you the motivational effect to wake up everyone with energy and a sense of direction. This is especially important in difficult or stressful times, as having a clear vision will produce in you persistence and remind you why you started.

Visions is the basis for goal-setting and planning: Like Alice in Wonderland, if you don't know where you are going, any road can take you there. Your vision will help you define your short and long-term goals, and guide the decisions you make along the way.

Vision is more important than strategy: I have seen this over and over again in my professional and personal life that once I got clear on what I wanted, the how almost took care of itself. Always remember that everything begins with vision.

Vision fosters risk taking: Once you know what you want, it gives you the courage to jump out of your comfort zone and go on an exciting adventure into the world of the unknown. Though what you might be doing might be experimental but

its not ambiguous, its perfectly clear to all why you are doing it. The fact is that, anywhere you find risk-taking, you find growth. When there is growth, there is progress, happiness and fulfillment.

Vision creates Energy: Nothing much happens without an inspiring and compelling vision. A vision has the potential to turn a maintenance mentality into a growth mentality. And anytime your vision resonates with your values and mission, it generates the energy that fuels the accomplishment of the task

Vision gives hope: “To be happy, set goals that control your thought, liberate your energy, and inspire your hope”.....Andrew Carnegie. When you allow yourself to dream, it gives you hope of a brighter and better tomorrow. This beautiful future in your imagination will raise your hope of what you can be irrespective of what you are presently thereby creating a motivation, enthusiasm and optimism toward the possibility of a greater future.

Vision Gives Direction: “Imagination is everything, it is the preview of life’s coming attractions”....Albert Einstein. Another great importance of vision is that it navigate you to success, as the mental picture gives you a clue of where you are heading to, therefore you wont get lost on the way because you already have the view of what you want to be. Vision is like a map to your destination

Visions creates focus: “The first indispensable step to getting what you want is; Decide what you want”Richard Barch. It becomes really easy to know where to channel your energy and

attention when you know clearly where you are going. You won't have to waste your strength on doing things that are not relevant to your future. Vision allows you to accomplish a lot with less because the little you have can be properly channeled to achieve the vision. The sharper your focus, the faster your journey and the better you become.

Vision enhances your commitment: "If you are bored with life; if you don't wake up every morning with a burning desire to do things, you don't have enough dreams"Lou Holtz. When you face obstacles and life become meaningless or boring and you feel lonely or alone, Vision becomes your companion, because the picture of this beautiful future alone can encourage you. The picture of the future keeps you going when you are discouraged.

Vision makes you bigger: "Big dream attract big people"unknown. As you start envisioning the future, you start attracting the resource and the people way beyond your imagination into your life. As you dream big, you become bigger because that dream will pull you up to its level.

Visions give you a sense of purpose: "Decide your major definite purpose in life, and organize all your activities around it"Brian Tracy. Vision sees the potential of purpose. Vision is what success looks like when purpose is accomplished. Therefore having a vision makes purpose clearer and definite. Vision helps you to see scope of your purpose and how great it is.

Vision develops your creativity: Vision is a creative process, it's your ability to create in your imagination. Vision helps you develop that part of your brain that sees what's possible beyond

current realities. The greatest men in history who are creative are also visionaries. Vision and creativity are inseparable and inextricable. The more you imagine, the more creative you become, the more creative you become, the more you can imagine. The world need people who can see possibilities, innovations and inventions that could exist.

Why People struggle with Vision?

Cultural Conditioning

From early education, we have been conditioned to make life's decision based on limited range of options. We are trained to select from the options that is in front of us and what we believe is available. Parents tell their kids to not compare themselves with other rich kids, or not dream to have what they have. Teachers tell kids to choose out of option A to D. Religious societies tell kids what will be will be and the race is not to the swift. We are trained to conform and not dream. We are trained to line up in a row, wear same school uniform, write the same test irrespective of our diverse personalities, or choose out of three main career paths, science, arts, commercial, irrespective of the new career paths that are hidden within each of us.

Understanding that culturally, we are conditioned not to have our own personal vision breaks us free from this conditioning. The society is designed to make us live below our true potential,

its designed to make us conform and belong, but we cannot truly realize our true potential by believing only what we see, hear, feel, or learn from the society. We have to listen to the inner man. The real person on the inside has the road map. I believe this map is engraved in our hearts, in our spirit to lead us to a desired future. There is a template encoded in our spirit that if we follow, we will realize our full potential and make a difference in the world.

Visualization is a skill

To see into the future and imagine what the future will look like is a skill that most are not comfortable with. Many of us stop exercising this muscle at some point in our childhood, and now it feels very uncomfortable to try to visualize our future. We fear we are not doing it right. Some people believe they cannot visualize. The more we visualize, the better we get at creating from our imagination.

We are Afraid

We are afraid we may not succeed, a part of us is used to playing small. We question our own competence, our own ability to persevere. We prefer safety to growth. We afraid of failure. We are afraid of what people might say if we speak about our vision. We are afraid not to become a laughing stock among our friends. A lot of people live their fears instead of their dreams. They believe success is not for them. This limiting belief is not intentional, its registered within their subconscious mind. They placed this limitations on themselves because of their environment, family background, country of birth, skin

color, etc. We create several layers of barriers for ourselves based on what we see, who we think we are and our experiences as we grow up in the society.

We think Vision has to be perfect

We believe we need the right vision, the perfect vision. Vision doesn't have to be grandeur or perfect, or look like someone's else vision. Vision is customized and unique to you. Express yourself and have faith in yourself. Do not go out and look for a success personality and duplicate his or her vision. Start from the root of your being and ask, how can I be me?

Crafting Your Vision

People often say “why make a vision when it’s impossible to accomplish those things anyways”, like its just a motivational rubbish like Tony Robbin-ish. Many people think Crafting a vision is a silly waste of time or to even think about a vision for your life. But the truth remains that you cannot change your life and your habits without a definite vision. History has also shown and proven that most successful and interesting people on the planet have a vision for their lives. They seem to know what comes next, like they’ve seen the future. There is a popular quote that says “those who know why they are fighting will always win over those who don’t”.

On the other hand, people who are stuck, broke with hopeless look in their eyes, like they are just passing time in life, without joy or aspiration, those people usually don’t have a vision. I have never seen a hopeless man with a vision. Vision and hopelessness cannot co-habit. Vision sustains hope. Vision birth focus and strength. Vision helps you to know what not to do which even more important than knowing what to do because

of the vast array of options we have in the 21st century. One of the key characteristics of strategic thinking is knowing what not to do which breeds concentration. B.L Hart said “The Principle of war can be condensed into one word, Concentration”. Having a vision make you better able to change your life. Vision provides both a directional and motivational function. If you have a clear vision of where you want to go, you are not as easily distracted by the many possibilities and agendas that otherwise divert you.

To be a visionary entrepreneur or business leader requires you to be a trailblazer. It’s easy to talk about being a trailblazer but living it out requires a lifetime of envisioning, preparation and work. Most people ask me, how does that actually work? How can I have a vision for something that doesn’t exist yet?

Most people think purpose, vision and mission is only meant for organisations or non-profits. To make bigger impact in your life, its important you go through the process of reflecting and defining your life’s purpose, mission and vision, in a similar way that companies do. Going through this process will infuse your life with a powerful sense of purpose and strategic direction and thus will allow you make even bigger impact in the world than you are having right now.

To craft your life’s vision, you must remember this guiding principle through out this chapter - “Be True To Thyself”. Take time out to carry out this process of defining your purpose, mission and vision. You could embark on a retreat or a vacation or just a weekend timeout with couple of friends, but ensure you have enough time to reflect, ponder and write. Many times we are undefined about many parts of our lives. We define our lives

based on what we see in social media, what our parents told us or what society has shown us.

Who are you?

The first step in crafting a vision for your life is to define “Who you are”. Who do you think you are? I want you to get a sense of who you are. Write down on a sheet of paper the areas of your life that you can identify. Physical, Emotional, Career, Health and fitness, Finance, Fun, Family, Spiritual etc. Analyse each components and describe where you are currently. You can only set goals based on critical analysis of our life. Define what matters in life. What is the real meaning of life? How should you live your life? What are the things that matters to you in the following areas:

Health - Exercise, diet, mind, emotionally, perspectives

Ability - Skills, knowledge, character

Relationships - Curate and cultivate them

Time - how are you using time right now. Maximized or stressed out.

Wealth - Create wealth or losing wealth. Creating value or losing value.

Experiences - Travel, vacation, exposure, online courses, new places

Accomplishments - Awards, recognition,

Contentment - Are you happy with who you are

I want you to see your life as a company or a business. I want you to understand that this process is required to live a life by

design. You want to design your life, a life that is deliberate and intentional going forward. You want to be deliberate about your actions, intentions and decisions. You want to be able to measure your life, your progress, your actions, your decision. This process will help you achieve all of these.

To start, we must define who you are! I want you on a piece of paper, write down describing who you think you are not more than 100 words. Write who you are and not what you have or what you do. It's critical for you to think through before you start writing. A lot of people define themselves by what they have or what they do, where they work, this is not you. You are not what you do, cos you can lose your job, and you are not what you have because you can also lose what you have. You are not a mother or a father, that's a role that you play. Who are you? Describe yourself in terms of character, attitudes, attribute and who you express daily. It is important to know clearly who you are right now to know who you want to become. The includes your habits, attitudes, and points of view. If you are unclear about yourself, you will be unclear about your future.

Who do you want to be?

After completing this first stage, the next stage will be to define where you think you are going. Ask yourself, where do you think you are going? Where you really want to go. In life, we have many options and directions, without defining where we truly want to go, any where is good enough. When you know where you are going, then it becomes easy to take a stand to follow in that direction and stick to your plan. After defining where

you truly want to go, you will discover a gap between where you are now and where you want to go. This gap will help us to understand what we need to do, the sacrifices to make, the actions to take, the decisions to fight for and the things to ignore in order to get where you really want to go.

The next step is to envision yourself at the end of your journey, it could at 50 years of age, or at 60, or 70, or at whatever age you desire to die, write down all that you should have accomplished. Don't think about limitation in terms of resources, money, connections, network, or any limiting beliefs, just let your thoughts flow freely. Imagine at 80, you look back, what will you like to write down in your autobiography. How will like to be remembered, what will be your legacy and contribution to humanity, write them out in your Life Book. How would like your great grand children to remember you.

Think about some of these questions and see if you can answer them as guide to envisioning your desired future.

1. What life do you want to have lived at age 20,30, 50 or 80.
2. What kind of people do you want to be surrounded by?
3. what do you believe you're capable of in life? What are the greatest things you could accomplish, given the right circumstances, resource and motivation?
4. What do you wish you could change about the world? What could you contribute to the world that would make you feel proud and content?
5. When you die, what would you want people to say and remember about you?

As you answer these questions, a picture will begin to form in your heart. That's your life's vision.

Now after writing all of these, its obvious to you the gap between where you are now and where you want to go. What is standing between where you are right now and where you want to be. Remember the Principle "Be True To Thyself". Been honest with yourself is the best thing you can do for yourself to craft a vision for your life that is realistic and unique to you. You are the only one that can discover for yourself and to go after where you want to go. Write down everything that you think will limit you from becoming the person you have described in your vision above.

Don't expect a clear and well-defined vision overnight - envisioning your life and determining the course you will follow requires time and reflection. You need to cultivate vision and perspective, and you also need to apply logic and planning for the practical application of your vision.

What do you want?

The question sound deceptively simple, but its often the most difficult to answer. Allowing yourself to explore your deepest desires can be very frightening. You may also not think you have the time to consider what you want out of life, but its important to remind yourself that a life of fulfillment does not usually happen by chance but by design.

Some questions to start your exploration:

What really matters to you in life? Not what should matter, what does matter.

What would you like to have more of in your life?

Set aside money for a moment; what do you want in your career?

What are your secret passions and dreams?

What would bring more joy and happiness into your life?

What do you want your relationships to be like?

What qualities would you like to develop?

What are your values? What issues do you care about?

What are your talents? What's special about you?

What would you most like to accomplish?

What would legacy would you like to leave behind?

What Would Your Best Life Look Like?

Describe your ideal life in detail. Allow yourself to dream and imagine, and create a vivid picture. If you can't visualize a picture, focus on how your best life would feel. If you find it difficult to envision your life twenty or thirty years from now, start with five years—even a few years into the future will give you a place to start. What you see may surprise you. Set aside preconceived notions. This is your chance to dream and fantasize.

A few prompts to get you started:

What will you have accomplished already?

How will you feel about yourself?

What kind of people are in your life? How do you feel about

them?

What does your ideal day look like?

Where are you? Where do you live? Think specifics, what city, state, or country, type of community, house or an apartment, style and atmosphere.

What would you be doing?

Are you with another person, a group of people, or are you by yourself?

How are you dressed?

What's your state of mind? Happy or sad? Contented or frustrated?

What does your physical body look like? How do you feel about that?

Does your best life make you smile and make your heart sing? If it doesn't, dig deeper, dream bigger.

It's important to focus on the result, or at least a way-point in your life. Don't think about the process for getting there yet—that's the next step. Give yourself permission to revisit this vision every day, even if only for a few minutes. Keep your vision alive and in the front of your mind.

Plan Backwards: Define Goals and Objectives

It may sound counter-intuitive to plan backwards rather than forwards, but when you're planning your life from the end result, it's often more useful to consider the last step and work your way back to the first. This is actually a valuable and practical strategy for making your vision a reality.

What's the last thing that would've had to happen to achieve

your best life?

What's the most important choice you would've had to make?

What would you have needed to learn along the way?

What important actions would you have had to take?

What beliefs would you have needed to change?

What habits or behaviors would you have had to cultivate?

What type of support would you have had to enlist?

How long will it have taken you to realize your best life?

What steps or milestones would you have needed to reach along the way?

Plan Forward: Define Strategy and Tactics or Daily Activities

Now it's time to think about your first step, and the next step after that. Ponder the gap between where you are now and where you want to be in the future. It may seem impossible, but it's quite achievable if you take it step-by-step.

There are several ways you can obtain a vision:

1. By Revelation : This is when God opens your eyes to His plan for you. You can see by personal revelation what God wants to do in your future and the light bulb comes on. Gal. 1:15-16, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

Paul was able to receive a vision of his future from God and

understood that he was sent to the Gentile nations and he followed that vision.

2. By Natural Inclination: There may be some things that are already clear to you your future and what you should be doing with your life. Maybe you are naturally inclined towards technology, you see yourself using technology to change the world, or you see yourself feeding the poor and helping people, or some ideas naturally come to you. When you see yourself driving in a direction you do not need to be motivated or pushed to go, its an indication of your life's vision.

Many people take for granted their natural skills, abilities and talents. It is a clue to your God given vision. God pointed out Bezaleel to Moses, telling him how he has blessed him with skill of craftsmanship and the ability to cut stones, carve timber to create great furniture. Who would think that Furniture making can be a blessed skill from God, so is every other skill out there, programming, medical practitioner, driving, sports, etc. Can you identify those gifts and abilities that come naturally to you.

3. By Accidental Discovery: Albeit Einstein's father was an unsuccessful engineer who gave him a toy compass as a little boy. This spark in little Albert an interest in natural laws of physics. This seemly insignificant encounter with his toy opened him up to a world of scientific exploration of atom and the universe. Some of his scientific discoveries laid the foundations for paper

towels, lasers, and more common products. His theory of relativity revolutionized our understanding of space, time, gravity and the universe.

Life is simple and complicated at the same time, why? Life is like a puzzle. we can only fit all the pieces together by looking at the picture on the box. Without the picture on the puzzle box, you cannot fit the pieces together. Vision is like the picture on the box, as we keep our mind on the big picture, we can easily put the pieces of our daily life together in such a way that we can arrive at the desired destination or future.

Death of Vision

Every vision goes through phases. Following your vision doesn't mean you will have it all smooth and creamy. You have to understand that you will go through tough times and the vision might lead you through rough roads, but remember what the scripture says, at the end, it will speak, even though it tarry, wait for it. The vision never lie, it may tarry, take you through unwanted road, stay steady, keep moving because it will come to pass.

Making it to the end of your assignment is more important than the assignment because we are mostly professional beginners and very poor finishers. We have to fulfill the vision so that the mission will be accomplished and God's purpose will be fulfilled. A lot of people abort their vision before they get to the end of the journey.

When you have a vision, get ready for vision terminators. Some people are specialist in discouraging others from their vision.

Some others will hate you for dreaming. Just for you to see beyond your village, or attempt to be more successful than what they are used to around, they will hate you and come after you. The length, the breadth, and the height of your vision will determine the level of persecution the enemy will bring at you. But if you don't have a vision, he doesn't bother you.

Vision attract terminators, be prepared for them. A preacher once said "Talking your dream will make people to be afraid of you but don't stop talking your dream". To achieve your dream, you must verbalize it. For God to bring your vision and dream to pass, you must write it down and continue to verbalize it.

Why Visions die?

Inaction:

God blesses action, not ideas. It's time to get our vision and ideas out of our head and into the Universe. Without vision, you will be making a lot of bad decisions. One bad decision after another and soon enough you are bounded, blind and in chains. Be it abortion, or drug abuse or corruption or stealing or abuse of others. Act on your dream now.

You've surrounded yourself with negative people.

You need to understand that you are strongly influenced by the people around you. When you have a million dollar vision, don't surround yourself with 1 cent minds. Stay away from people still

complaining, still hating, still losing, still not making a change and still making excuses. You are only going to be as good as the people you surround yourself with so be brave enough to let go of those who keep weighing you down. A quote says “You are the average of the five people you surround yourself with.” Now that you want what you want and who you want to become, surround yourself with people that reflect who you want to be and how you want to feel, energies are contagious. Look out for people who are inspired, passionate, motivated, grateful and open minded. If you surround yourself with positive people who build you up, the sky is the limit.

You're holding on to past hurts.

The next obstacle that can be holding you back from your vision is holding on to the past. Each day you spend holding on to the past keeps you from grabbing a hold of the future. Your worst enemy is your memory. When you let go, you are opening up yourself to the future.

Most people are moving through life as if they are dragging a big anchor behind them that is weighing them down. They are holding on to past hurts, past anger or fears. Forgiveness puts you back in the present and sets you on course for the future. Forgive and move on. You don't need to condone their past actions or even ever trust them again. Just learn the lessons from the experience, forgive them and move on. This is not in their best interest, it is in your best interest, because you can now forge ahead and create the future you want.

You are not accepting change

Another thing that vision bring is change, don't resist it. Most time, you have to become a new person in character and competence to actualize the vision you see. If you don't embrace change, you're also holding yourself back from greatness. Understand that change is inevitable. You can either resist change and lose your vision or cooperate, adapt and enjoy it. Surrender to changes that come with your vision, it might mean that you have to change jobs, change friends, change your location or change your current position or status, or develop new skills, ask for help, persevere. Be open to change that your vision brings to you as you travel the journey.

Your limiting beliefs are destructive:

I will spend some time on this point because this is probably the most important and most powerful of all, that can stop your vision from becoming a reality. Limiting your beliefs about your own capabilities or what it takes to succeed could be holding you back. I remember I used to believe for a long time that I cannot get foreign investment unless I have a white partner as a co-founder in my business, I also believed that people will not take my business seriously unless I have speak some UK English accent. These beliefs held me back until I was able to realize it was just a delusion.

Most times, we place limits on ourselves on what we can do or cannot do. I cant do that, I don't know how, there's no one to show me, I don't know the right people, I'm not smart

enough. Many people don't believe that they are competent to handle life's challenges or that they are worthy of success or greatness. It's not in my family, no one has ever made a billion dollar. These beliefs are the pillars of self esteem that holds us back. You can consciously choose to think a different thought. Beliefs are just thoughts you think over and over and over and it become registered in your subconscious and guides your decision making framework.

Believe you are capable of greatness. Use the power habit of positive thinking. Place words of affirmation on your walls, doors, bathroom and read it daily to override the wrong thoughts already planted in your heart. You have to be intentional and consciously undo the thoughts in your subconscious. Believing that you are capable of handling anything that comes up in your life will make you fearless. You can do all things through Christ that strengthens you. You are more than conquerors, there is spirit in man and the inspiration of the almighty give him understanding.

You have the ability to create your life. Once you start believing you deserve a better life and that you have the ability to achieve greatness, your confidence will begin to soar, you will do whatever it takes - one step at a time - to create the ideal life for yourself. Identify your limiting beliefs, reflect all alone in the quiet of your room, what are the things you have strongly held as truth that limits you. It is not who you are that holds you back, it is who you think you are. It's not what you say out of your mouth that determines your life, it's what you whisper to yourself that has the most power.

You have the power to change limiting beliefs and consciously plant the seed for the future of your choosing. As you change your mind, you change your experience. If you believe yourself to be limited in some way, whether or not it is true, it becomes true for you. If you believe it, you will act as if you were deficient in that particular area of talent or skill. Overcoming self-limiting beliefs and self-imposed limitations is often the biggest obstacle standing between you and the realization of your full potential.

These are some of the self-limiting beliefs:

I'm too young or too old

I'm not smart enough

I'm not educated enough or didn't attend the best school in my country

I'm afraid of trying and failing

You have to have money to make money

I've already tried everything

It's selfish of me to want the best in life

I don't have the willpower

All the good ones are taken

We are our own biggest obstacle. The only limits in your life are the ones you create with your mind. If you accept these limiting beliefs then it will become a truth for you.

7 questions to ask yourself to uncover your self-limiting beliefs

1. what is getting in the way of me living the life I want?
2. How am I holding myself back?
3. What do I do to sabotage my progress.
4. What negative thoughts are keeping me stuck?

5. What habits do I have that are stopping me from being the most productive?
6. What has stopped in my track before?
7. What negative comment or opinion am I letting stop me from taking purposeful actions?

Grab your journal. Ask yourself where you are unhappy or dissatisfied in your life. Ask yourself why? Identify the limiting beliefs that are holding you back based on the questions I just asked you above. Find at least four truths that bust each of your beliefs. It could be from the scriptures if you are a believer or from other people's truth. Don't be pushed around by the fears in your mind. Be led by the dreams in your heart. Roy.t.Bennett

A belief is not an idea held by the mind; it is an idea that holds the mind. The main job is to unlearn your limiting beliefs, it's not hard to create self-beliefs that produce a successful and happy life. Your outside world will not change until your inside world changes. In order to achieve our vision, we need to change our behavior, and eventually become a better version of ourselves.

You are afraid of failure

We have a wrong perception of what failure is these days. Most people fear it, they don't even try because of the chance of not succeeding and that's why they never see their dreams come true. The truth is, failure is a precious gift. It's an inevitable step on your way to success, and a step you need to take more than once. It's the proof that you're trying, you're doing something to get what you want, and you're not giving up. It's followed by

lessons and experience, and it makes you stronger, with more willpower, more focused. It shows you what exactly not to do next time, because it didn't work out this time and if you keep trying, eventually you'll get there.

There's no better example than Thomas Edison – his whole life is a proof of the power of failure and how you can work with it for optimum success.

You are giving Excuses

You may often hear yourself say some of the following:

I'm not ready;
It's not the right time;
I'm not good enough;
I'm too old/young;
I don't have enough money/time/experience;
Most people don't succeed anyway, neither will I;
Maybe I'm not meant to do it;
It's too hard;
It will take too long;
I may do it wrong;
People will laugh at me;
or else.

Saying any of these things will only hold you back from achieving your vision.

Procrastination

The only cure for procrastination is to start doing something immediately, without thinking and giving your mind the time to come up with excuses. Without doubting your abilities and fearing failure. Just do a little something today that can push you forward in the direction of your vision

Expectation

A lot of people are not pursuing their vision because they expect people to like their vision or support them. You expect things to turn out in a certain way, or people to behave like you imagined, and when it doesn't happen as you expected, you lose motivation and get discouraged. Don't wait for approval, not everyone will understand your vision, you just need to believe in yourself, remain positive and go get it done. As Steve Jobs said "If you are working on something exciting that you really care about, you don't have to be pushed, the vision pulls you".

Don't give in to distractions, there will be people who will doubt you, sometime people very close to you, your parents, your siblings or your spouse, who can make you lose hope if you listen to them. "Believe in your strength and your vision, Learn to repeat to yourself, it all depends on me." Andre Gide

Lack of consistency

Vision requires you to be steady and stay on course. Consistency is trait of successful people and it becomes a habit. But without it, you won't get far. So break your steps into smaller ones, make time each day and find the will to knock out the goal for the day,

week or month that take a step closer to the vision. You don't get what you want, or what you think you deserve, instead, you get exactly what you work for, what you focus on, what you take action upon every single day.

Essential things you must do to keep the vision alive:

1. Nourish the vision: Feed it with the word of God, study to show yourself approve. Prepare for it. Constantly say what you have seen to people you trust. And constantly remind yourself of what God has told you about this vision. Joshua 1:8. Prov. 4:26 "Make sure you are going the right way, and nothing will make you fall."
2. Protect the vision: As you execute the vision, naysayers and people with small mind will attack you. Expect attacks from doubters and negative people. Never be afraid of confrontation, stand up for your dream and fight for it. Neh. 4:17-20. As Nehemiah build the walls of Jerusalem and execute the vision, he was prepare for battle, that should be your stance as you carry out God's vision for your life. "The builders and their helpers had their tools in one hand and a weapon in the other hand. ¹⁸ Each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. The man who blew the trumpet to warn the people stayed next to me."
3. Uphold the vision: Talk about it, esteem it, magnify it, share it with everyone who cares to listen. The way you talk about your vision determines how seriously others will take it. Rom 11:13, Paul talks about his vision and magnify his assignment and vision without shame or fear of the

people, that's the way you should to, to keep the vision alive. There will be many who listen, some who like it, few who will support it and very few who help make your vision a reality. But you'll only connect with them if you keep telling your story and sharing your dream.

4. No hurry needed: Enjoy the process in between. Do not be in a hurry to fulfill the vision, wait for it, the bible says. Those moments of waiting are what your life and work are all about- not the actual destination. Embrace and enjoy the journey and adventure that is the in-between. Wait for it does not mean inaction or staying idle waiting for someone else to come and achieve the vision for you. Waiting for it means you should be patient enough to follow through to the end, until you see the vision become a reality.
5. Stop and celebrate along the way: As you set goals and achieve them along the way to your vision, celebrate those achievements with yourself or your team. This attitude keeps you motivated to continue, don't be too obsessed with the future vision that you don't stop often to celebrate every little goals accomplished because in reality, the sum total of all the goals accomplished is what makes the vision a reality.

It is your responsibility to keep the vision alive by nourishing, protecting and upholding your vision.

Realizing Your Vision

Anybody can be successful, but its a process. You can pray all you want, fast all you want, take all the degrees you want but know that it takes work, hard work to be successful without cheating. Its not a walk in the park, it's a journey.

"Having a vision for what you want is not enough...Vision without execution is hallucination." Thomas Edison

When you have a vision, usually you will know the next steps but you wont be able to see the entire path. Its like a car, you set out to travel to another city. You know the destination, you know what it looks like when you arrive, but imagine you are travelling in the middle of the night in darkness. Your car will only show you about 100 meters ahead. As you keep moving, you see another 100 meters, you keep moving and see more until you reach your destination. Vision is not about the path, its about the destination. As you take each step, the next step becomes clear as long as you stay focused on your vision.

You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step -
Martin Luther king, Jr.

You have to develop certain competences and character to fulfill your vision. Comprehension and competency are two different things. You can comprehend the vision fully but not necessarily have the competence to fulfill the vision yet. The principle of Vision is to "Follow, and I will make you". You need to become a type of person with a kind of character and a level of competence to fulfill your vision. It's your responsibility to grow and constantly develop yourself to become mature in both wisdom and skill to deliver your God given vision. As you follow, you become. When you follow, you will grow into the person that is capable of fulfilling the vision. To realize your vision you need to:

You need to write it down: The first part of accomplishing any vision is to take it from the unseen world and bring it into the natural realm. This can be accomplished by simply writing down the vision. Articulating the vision on paper pulls the dream that is in your spirit (that no one can see but you) into the visible world so that others can capture it in their own heart. You can use a vision board to represent or describe or visualize what you are seeing in your mind.

Have a plan, Get the right Strategy: The strategy is where the rubber meets the road, God gave Noah a detail strategy on what to do to accomplish the vision. We must listen to obtain the strategy to achieve our God given vision. The victory or defeat of a vision depends on whether or not the right strategy is

employed. The process of fulfilling a vision is in the strategy. Strategy is what you do daily, weekly, monthly that leads up into the envisioned future. You can pray, fast and dream big all you want, if you don't do the right things daily, weekly, monthly, the vision is elusive and won't come to pass.

Noah built the ark for 120 years, God gave him the strategy for building, the exact blue prints, measurements, calculations and all he needed to accomplish the vision. God took him through a process of daily, weekly, monthly activities, goals and planning to build the ark. You need a plan to achieve this vision. How will you get from where you are today to where you want to be. Draw out a strategic plan.

God had given Joshua the vision of a fallen wall of Jericho. God assured him already of victory. I'm sure Joshua must have taught to himself, tomorrow, we fight, we choose our best fighters and attack Jericho, but no, God gave him the exact strategy to use to win that battle. God gives the vision and He also gives the strategy. If you employ man's strategy to execute God's vision, then defeat is imminent. God's vision require God's strategy.

Predictably, the complete lack of a plan can be a big obstacle to getting to where you want to be. What are the action steps you need to take to make this transition from where you are today to where you want to get to? What are the milestones and deadlines? Do you have a clear plan for your business? Do you know how you're going to make money? Do you even know how much money you'll need to make in order for it to become a viable business? The planning stage is not very sexy but it's

pretty critical to making it happen!

Break it down into Goals: After the plan is established, goals must be set. The Bible says: I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus - Philippians 3:14

Goals are simply the vision broken down into smaller pieces that are measurable in time and space. In other words, they are specific parts of the mission that we will accomplish by a predetermined date. Many people don't like to set goals because they think that if they are not able to accomplish them on time, they have failed. The truth of the matter is that, *"If you fail to plan you plan to fail."* Great leaders know that setting goals is what gives the mission a sense of urgency.

You need to turn your vision into goals and plans. You have the vision to become the next music superstar, you need to make time for weekly lesson in a music school, you need to add the goals to your schedule and put a plan in place to achieve the goals. Write your vision down and set daily goals to reach it. A written vision is 100 times more powerful than wishful thinking. Also, what you do not do daily has no power to dominate your future. Become engrossed with your goals. Until your goal become your obsession, your future of significance can never be in view.

Find a mentor, or choose a hero or heroine: Who has been to where you want to be? Who has obtained the future you desire? Study at least two people whose achievements you have great respect for. Then, learn swiftly from them. There are two ways to develop the skills, habits and mindset you'll need to achieve success. The first is to go it alone, and learn by trial

and error. The second path is to learn from others who have encountered and surmounted problems that are similar to your own. Mentorship is learning through the pain and experiences of another. Mentorship is the short-cut to success. The fact of the matter is, mentors will help anyone when they see promise and they feel like they look good by making an introduction for you. Your job is to make them look cool by helping you and you'll be able to get any introduction you want. You connect with mentors and influencers by being valuable to them. Get Outside Help With Someone Who Has Achieved What You Want To Achieve. *"Never take advice from someone you wouldn't trade places with."* — Darren Hardy

Apply wisdom: If you currently have a job that is providing your means of livelihood, never give it up until your desired vision or assignment is up and running and capable of supporting you and your family. This may take time, but you can be sure that you will be able to focus on your assignment and be fulfilled. Divine provision is always at the place of your assignment. Many goals and dreams die due to lack of wisdom.

Your Mindset, Never live out of fear: Where do you think your beliefs and fears are limiting what you think you can do? A lot of people bury their gifts and talents because of the fear of unknown. This fear paralyze them from stepping out of their comfort zone. They prefer to maintain their current status than explore new heights and depths of what is already theirs. They end up forfeiting their contribution to the good of mankind. Life is ten percent what happens to us and ninety percent how we respond to it. People often disguise fear as wisdom when they

enter a place where it will take only God to accomplish the vision.

Stay Open, Flexible and Track your progress: When your vision is honestly birthed by God himself, He will be delighted to direct your steps. Proverbs says, *“The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps”* (16:9). Psalms says, *“The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the one who holds his hand”* (37:23-24).

The most important thing to remember about your steps is that they should be found somewhere in your mission. Go back through your planner from the previous month and retrace your steps. Does it look like they are directly attached to your mission? If not, either redefine your mission or redirect your steps. Remember, history is at stake. Measure and track your progress.

Develop your inter-relational skills: People matter immensely to your success. Your life will always link with others who are capable of helping you to the next chapter of your life. But if you lack people skills, such people will withdraw their participation in your goals. Many opportunities and great connections are constantly being lost due to bad attitude.

Prioritize God in your life: Without God on your side, you are a disaster warming up to happen. You cannot succeed without God's participation. Obedience is the key to divine favor. Excel in obedience and God will ensure that His favor envelops you.

Learn to be patient: Many years of hard work and investment can be lost in a day because of impatience. Nothing significant is achieved over night. Patience is simply the difference between your present and your future. Patience, in my opinion, is the highest proof of your confidence in God.

Develop Your Skill-set: Invest in yourself like your life depends on it. Its critical to have the right skills to achieve your goals. Invest in your skill development and learning — the more the better. The more you learn and experience, the more you master your skill. A skill should be targeted toward a particular niche and an apprenticeship is one of the most effective way to learn and develop your skill-set. To further hone those skills, you need to test your work in situations that matter. i.e the market. Try as much as possible to learn by doing.

Eliminate distractions: Disassociate with anything or anyone that is an obstacle to where you believe God is leading you. You must diffuse the distractions immediately because they can cause you to forfeit your vision with negative and discouraging talk and actions.

Enlist the help of others: You cannot possibly make your vision a reality on your own. You will need some assistance. Enlist the help of those who are willing to encourage and walk with you even when things do not make sense and they cannot see the reality of your vision.

Execute your vision plan: Once you have a documented plan, it is time to take action. Do not waste a lot of time telling everyone who will listen about it, but start executing your plan. What

good is it to have a great written vision plan and never act upon it? When you take action, you unlock the secret to achieving your vision. Stick with your plan and execute your plan.

Examine your processes: As you take action on your vision, you will need to continually monitor your progress to see where you are and if you are on the right path. Examining your vision process regularly lets you know if you need to make any adjustments or changes.

Go boldly after your biggest goals: Identify specific goals that connect to your overall vision and set a target date for each. Begin working steadily toward achieving them.

Network with big players: When you have a big vision, most times, your current association and friends might not be able to help you achieve the vision. Usually, as you pursue the vision, it's normal to gravitate toward people who are the same as you or having big vision like you. A major reason people don't get ahead in business or in their career is that they don't connect with people who are a rung or two higher than them on the professional ladder. For you to get to where you see in your vision, you need people high up in the ladder.

The Vision of You

Congratulations, you made it here to the last chapter in the book. I will like to walk you through the practical steps of designing your life. We have looked at how to craft your vision in previous chapters, but now its your turn. I'm sure most people didn't really follow through in Chapter Six by writing down. Now, its time to write down and design your life. This process will dramatically improve the quality of your life. Through a mix of thought-provoking questions and deep self-reflection, you'll get clarity on what you want in every important area of your life, why you want it and what you need to do to achieve it.

The biggest problem we have is that most of us have been made to think that the entire point of life is only two things: how much money we have and what is our career title. But you are so much more than this, and living the life of your dream is not a myth, but a real possibility.

This is what this chapter is about, its about actually creating a

vision for your life that is truly holistic, that will pull you forward towards achieving a truly extraordinary life in every aspect of your life.

Let's start with self assessment. Assess your current state of life with this self-assessment. How true are these statements to you?

Rate yourself on these statement on a scale from 1 to 10. (1 - least true; 10- most true)

1. I have a clear vision for who I want to be as a person.
2. I know in what kind of environments I want to stay in.
3. I have a clear vision for my ideal love relationship.
4. I know exactly how much money I want to earn and why.
5. I am fully satisfied with my current level of health and fitness.
6. My career is very fulfilling and I love what I do.
7. I have a strong sense of how I would like my life to unfold in the coming years

What is your total score? If you score below 50 points, I will advise you strongly answer the next set of questions and really take time to fill this out. It could take hours, days or weeks to complete, but don't stop until you have designed the life you want to live.

Question 1: What do you really want in Life? Not what society, corporations, parents, teachers, etc want for you, but what do you truly want.

Use this space to write down your answer

Identify these areas of your life and describe what you really want in each area.

Health & Fitness

Parenting

Intellectual Life

Social Life

Emotional Life

Financial Life

Character

Career

Spiritual Life

Quality of Life

Love Relationship

Life Vision

Use this space to write down your answer

What does living an extraordinary life mean to you?

Describe your new level of health and fitness

Describe your ideal love relationship

Describe the dream career that you have every day

Describe your dream environment

Describe the wonderful moments that you are creating for yourself

As you describe these things, let your thoughts be guided along these four basic profound questions:

1. Premise. What are my deepest beliefs in this area of my life that control my behavior?
2. Vision. What exactly do you want in this area of your life
3. Purpose. Why do I want that?
4. Strategy. What do I need to do to get it?

Take time out without distraction and ensure you complete this process. You will end up with a clear vision of what your future looks like and you will begin to have a clear direction of where you should be headed in your life.

I see you in your glory, living your life in full potential, achieving great feat. You are called out to be a blessing to the world. The greatest gift you can give to the world is not your money or wealth. The greatest gift you can give to the world is your gift of vision. What vision will you accomplish with your gift? All impossibilities become possible by vision. Nothing is created without vision. I want you to see the possibilities of what is possible, put in all it takes and make the impossible possible. I believe in the power of vision. I believe you can achieve your vision. I believe in you. Go rock your world.

Visionary Leadership

I realized that the reason why we are where we are as a nation is because we don't understand the power of vision and we don't train our citizens to have vision. We have abundance yet we live in want, we have population to harness human capital yet we have high mortality with low life expectancy. We are blessed with natural resources, yet we import ninety percent of what we need. The principle is forever true that "where there is no vision, the people perish". The importance of vision can be noticed in its absence. Visionary leadership followed by citizens with vision is lacking in Nigeria. We must place priority on vision as individuals, startups, corporates and as a nation. We must teach our young people the importance of vision. This must be taught in primary schools, secondary and tertiary institutions, so that we can break out of the cycle of poverty and slavery of our minds.

When we think about nations, Nations just don't happen by historical accident, rather they are built by men and women with vision and resolve. In Nigeria, however, there are some people

who represent our national importance by calling us the ‘Giant of Africa’. This is an ascriptive perspective. We are seen as giants not necessarily because of the quality of our national institutions and values, but simply by virtue of our large population and oil wealth. But in reality, the greatness of a nation has to be earned and is not determined just by the size of its population or the abundance of its natural resources. China and India have the largest populations in the world, but they are only now rising as important global players. On the other hand, Japan has few natural resources, but has long managed to turn itself into a global economic powerhouse.

In today’s world, skills, industriousness, productivity, and competitiveness are the determinant factors of national greatness. Not even the possession of the nuclear bomb is enough to make a nation great without reference to the industriousness and creativity of its citizens. Since the time of Adam Smith, every serious nationalist and politician has come to know that the wealth of a nation is not based on the wealth and opulence of its rulers, but on the productivity and industriousness of its citizenry.

Nigeria’s underdevelopment is more of poor implementation than lack of development visions and programs. Policy somersault and development projects abandonment are common. We don’t need superheroes in Nigeria, we just need lots of visionary leaders who can lead at very sector, startup, department, organization, parastatal or executive level. We need people who can transform and exercise influence at their own level and ensure things are working for the greater good at their level.

We need visionary leaders not only at government level, but at every level of the society. The kind of change we need in Nigeria cannot be done by one mighty superhero but lots of visionary leaders taking responsibility and causing change at every level of the society. We need change in education, power, communication, transportation, entertainment, law enforcement, Judiciary etc. We need you and I to stand and become visionary leaders and see a vision of a better nation and fight for a cause, the right cause. I strongly believe we are the generation that will transform the history of our nation.

A visionary leader is an individual who sees the potential for how the world should exist and then takes step to get there. You can be a visionary leader without a leadership role - be that person that cause a change at your level, lead people to accomplish a course of action, while having a vision for the change you'd like to create.

These two abilities combined - the ability to see the potential for change combined with the ability to lead others creates a visionary leader. There are three main characteristics you want to actively strive to develop as a visionary leader:

Risk Taking: Most Nigerians are afraid of crisis, war or death. Nobody wants to die. But we can live our life in comfort and leave a dead nation to generations to come. For us to change our nation, we must become risk takers, and stand for a cause. Change is never risk-free. We need to stand up for justice, accountability and good governance. You don't need to put your life on the line - but you may need to put your livelihood on the line. Steve Jobs was fired from his own company. Visionary

leadership is all about change and change means risk-taking.

Listening: Contrary to popular opinion, a visionary leader doesn't just go forth ignoring all the naysayers and do what he or she thinks is best. Yes, you will find that there are lots of naysayers that you need to ignore, but you also have to listen to what people are saying so you don't end up in prison.

If you're not willing to listen and accept advice, look at how the market is change, take feedback seriously, you won't succeed. It's fine to say "No", I've considered all those possibilities and I'm still moving forward with my idea, but if you haven't considered the other possibilities, you're setting yourself for failure.

Taking Responsibility: A visionary leader knows his or her ideas are different and are a significant risk and the people that are following such a leader are also taking a chance in doing so. So its critical that you take responsibility for your action and your vision.

I have heard many people talk about the 1960's been better than present days. How they had free jobs and cars waiting for them after graduation. The only reason people talk like this is because there is no vision of the future.

A man without a vision is a man without a future. A man without a future will always return to his past." (P.K. Bernard)

You see why one government plant trees and another uproots the trees, one governor starts an initiative and another cancels

the initiative. This is waste of time, resources, money, efforts and ultimately leading the nation backwards. There has to be a vision, a blueprint that every government, presidents, governors or local government chairman understands and we are all driving towards. We must craft a national vision that we can all drive toward, and we can hold every dispensation of government accountable for. How do we know if we need a fast rail line or new sea-ports or airports, or new refinery or increase our power generation capacity in terms of megawatts, the vision decides all this.

Remember Alice in Wonderland, it seems Nigeria is in a wonderland, as we move in circles over 60 years of independence. We take one step forward and three steps backward. It's time for us to cast a national vision for our country and rally round to achieve it. A nation where we can all live to our full potential, a nation where we can achieve our dreams, and live a legacy for future generations.

I see a country where all is working, the people are working, the government is working, the roads are good now, the schools are open and the prisons are closing. We must show the government how a nation should run by example. We can build exemplary organisations that show how to manage resources, transportation, human capital, culture, tradition, and religious differences. I see a new Nigeria where we pull together and build a nation we desire, where all of us can be satisfied and live a fulfilled life. That's the goal. We can build a nation that support our dreams, our aspirations and goals. A nation where we are not afraid to live up to our full potential. A nation we can call our own and live freely. A nation we can boldly leave for generations

coming after us.

