

Vision into action

This page is all about your own development as a leader – whether you're in a full-time leadership position or lead as a volunteer.

IN THE FIRST SECTION: You'll be challenged and encouraged to put into action some of the suggestions and to develop the skills in your own life.

IN THE SECOND SECTION: The 'To work through with young leaders' section is a practical guide and resource for you to inspire young people with leadership gifts to grow in this area as well.

In the last 'Ready to Lead' page, we talked about the importance of becoming a visionary and articulating that vision often! Many people may call themselves 'visionary', but really struggle to know how to turn that vision into action. Often, ideas only remain a day dream, even if these ideas are inspired by God. The problem we face is often not lack of ideas, but rather how to turn ideas into action. Transformational leaders capture good ideas as vision, and then turn that vision into action.

On a Saturday morning in May, I was giving a pep talk to a team with a particular mission – completing the Three Peaks Challenge. We were only a few hours away from our launch into a 24-hour marathon to climb the highest peaks in Scotland, England and Wales. For some of the team, the scale of the challenge was only beginning

arrive at 4am to climb the second mountain, after a long journey in the van, you'll be sore, and you'll say "this is perfect". It can't get any worse. You'll need to dig deep to get your self up and moving... And at that moment, the clouds gathered and heavy rain began to fall. This was a defining moment for leadership; a perfect way to start.

The phrase 'it's perfect' became a catchphrase for our team. Later that evening on the top of Ben Nevis, as the rain turned to sleet and snow, and the gale-force wind knocked the heat out of the struggling team, I asked one girl how she was doing. She smiled through chattering teeth 'I'm cold, but it's perfect'. She pressed on to reach the summit.

How do we capture vision? George Barna describes vision as 'a clear mental image of a

Genuine leadership comes from the quality of your vision and your ability to spark others to extraordinary performance. Jack Welch

to dawn on them. We were going to race across 25 miles of rugged terrain, up and down nearly 10,000 feet of elevation, with 450 miles of driving in-between. We had to do this within 24 hours.

I focused on vision to give them something to hold on to when the going got tough. When we

preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances'. This description of vision gives important insight into the nature of vision. Two aspects of this are:

■ Vision is a clear mental image of a preferable

future. The key to powerful vision is in the clear articulation of what you want to have happen.

■ Vision is imparted by God to his servants. In other words, it is there to be discovered, unpacked, and discerned. God-given vision is a gift from God. We need to seek God for it, and also pay attention to the inspirations of our heart.

Immediate response

Take out a piece of paper, and write down a dream that has been floating around in the back of your mind. What would you really love to do? It may be for you personally, or for a group you are a part of. Write down your idea, and then keep writing. The idea will grow as you do this. Do this without judgment. Don't stop because something seems impossible. Just get your idea down on paper with as much detail as possible. It's like panning for gold, at the end of your writing see if you have found a God dream amidst a crazy idea.

Taking it further

Read George Barna's book *The Power of Vision*. It is an excellent resource for understanding and building vision for Christian ministry.

This page is brought to you by Onelife, an organisation committed to raising up transformational leaders. www.onelifeonline.org.uk. The writer, Jamie Treadwell, is a leadership coach, artist, and member of the Sword of the Spirit. www.jamietreadwell.com



To work through with young leaders...

INTRODUCTION: Ask the group what makes a hero. Give an example of a hero in your own life – someone who accomplished something important. Lead a brief discussion about the characteristics of a hero.

STEP 1: Ask each participant to think of something that they would love to achieve in the next year, write it down on the top of a piece of paper.

STEP 2: Ask each person to expand on that idea. Capture a clear mental image of a preferable future. Ask them to write down what success would be like if that idea was fully realised. Tell them to ignore the obstacles. Take a couple minutes and encourage them to think big and to hold nothing back from fully describing the dream that is stirring in them.

STEP 3: In pairs, talk about their ideas for three minutes each. Taking turns with each one playing a role: Person A talks about their idea. Person B asks questions. Imagine you are a detective. Help the speaker explore what the vision is. Person B must not give any of their own ideas, or cast any judgment. Just be curious and supportive. Some helpful questions to use:

- What is happening (describe it as though you are an observer at the event – what would you see, hear, feel...)?
- How would you know that this has been successful?
- What are you doing to show you have achieved what you wanted?
- What are other people doing?

STEP 4: Now write down what the final success would be like. I call these short paragraphs or 'vision snapshots'. There may be a few, there may be a dozen. Each vision snapshot captures an element of the desired future.

STEP 5: At this point, each person has a clear mental image of a desired future. Now step back and see if you have found gold, a God dream amidst a day dream. Lead a discussion with the group about what they discovered. How has this exercise affected them? Is there a vision emerging that stirs their motivation? How does this affect their confidence in moving forward? What might be the next steps to turn their vision into action?

BIBLE: Consider Galatians 5: 24 (Message paraphrase). How does Paul's exhortation relate to what we have been considering in relation to vision? Say that God, through his Spirit, imparts vision to his people. It is our responsibility to pay attention to this vision, and then work out its implications in every detail of our lives. Capturing this vision is a foundation for action. It's only a start, but it's a tremendously powerful start.

FINAL CHALLENGE: Encourage the young leaders to take an action that would move them towards fulfilling one of their vision snapshots. What would they need to do to take the next step? Who could they talk to get help, encouragement, and accountability in moving forward?