

Stephen R. Covey

**A MISSION
STATEMENT
for Your Life**

**Find your purpose. Choose your goals.
Achieve your dreams.**

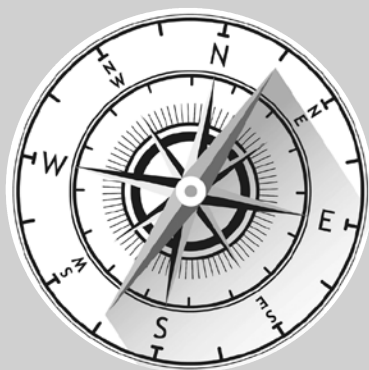


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*“How different our lives are
when we really know what is deeply important to us,
and keeping that picture in mind,
we manage ourselves each day to be and to do
what really matters most.”*



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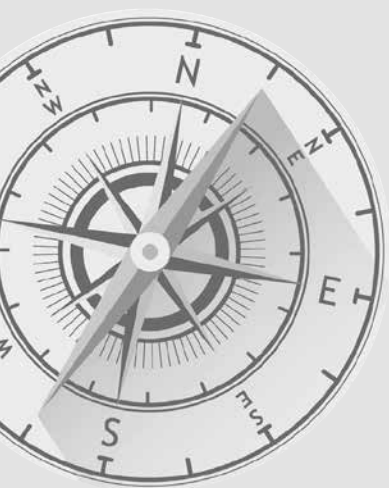
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Find your life's purpose

One of the greatest legacies, my father Stephen R. Covey, left me the knowledge that my future, my destiny, was in my hands and that I had the power to choose who and what I would become. I feel uniquely qualified to write this introduction because I was raised on these principles and habits. Even more so today than ever before have humans enjoyed such a wealth of possibility. Today, we are free to choose how we live, whom we marry, and the type of work we want to do. This sounds good in theory, but brings with it a uniquely modern problem of its own: that of too many options, too much information and the unbearable pressure to make the right choice when there are so many options and choices. We oftentimes become paralyzed with worry about what to do and thus we allow important opportunities to pass us by. The antidote? Develop a personal mission statement and use it to understand what you **really** want to get out of life and then as a roadmap to achieve your life goals.

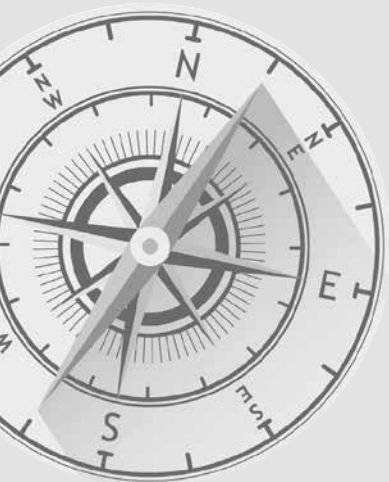
The immense power of a personal mission statement lies in its ability to place your destiny in your hands rather than to allow others to determine your destiny. A personal mission statement provides clarity about your unique purpose and gives you confidence in your daily decisions.

If I could ask only one thing of you, it would be that you lead a life of meaning and purpose and that you stop leaving your life to chance. Return to this workbook as often as you need until your mission statement is fully formed and then return to it often to reconnect; recognize its importance for the rest of your life. Stop saying 'tomorrow' and start working on your personal mission statement today.

I wish you a happy journey of self-discovery!

Sean Covey

NYT bestselling author of **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens**
and **The 4 Disciplines of Execution**



1.

Your personal mission statement: the most important thing you'll ever write

Am I in the right job? How's my private life? What do I really want to do with my time on earth? More and more of us are finding ourselves pre-occupied by such existential questions – and it is not so apparent how we should answer them. How do we go about discovering the true purpose of our lives?

This workbook is designed to help with step-by-step instructions for drafting your own mission statement. Page by page, you'll be guided to reflect on the things that motivate you, your deeply held desires, and what makes you truly happy. By the time you've completed the book, you'll have a truly meaningful and personal mission statement to help you live a more self-determined and effective life.

What is a personal mission statement?

It is French poet Victor Hugo who is credited with having said, "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." A mission statement is just such an idea. Some might also call it a credo, a philosophy for life or a reason for being. What matters is that it is formed by reflecting on the following fundamental questions:

- ▶ What is the unique **purpose** of my life – my personal **why**?
- ▶ What do I want to be? What **traits** are important to me?
- ▶ What do I want to do? How do I want to **contribute** to the world?
- ▶ What can I **do** that others cannot?

- ▶ What **values** and **principles** shape my way of being and doing?
- ▶ What do I want my **life's work** to look like? What **legacy** do I want to leave?

What can a personal mission statement bring to your life?

Your vision, values and principles are more powerful, meaningful and influential than the baggage of the past or the noise of the present. This is why developing a personal mission statement is one of the most important things you will ever do. A mission statement shapes your world view, informs your decisions and affords you a clear sense of direction. It empowers you to act, not simply react to your emotions, external circumstances and the behaviour of others. In challenging situations, it serves as a template for determining a proactive, value-oriented and principled course of action. In short:

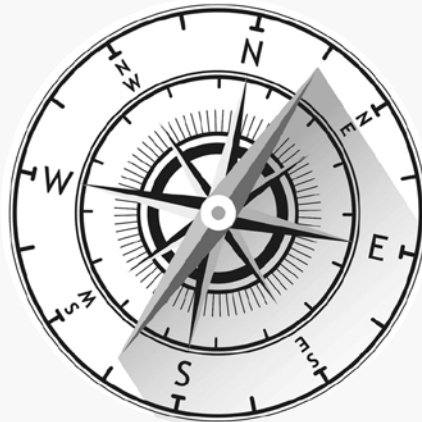


To develop a mission statement is to take active steps towards personal development and the initiation of positive changes in your life. The process will challenge you to rethink your priorities carefully and align your behaviour with your values and principles. You'll find that those around you also notice a change: you are no longer willing to be a pawn of external circumstances.

Working on your mission statement will be an enjoyable and meaningful task: one that will reveal a great number of insights about you and your life. You'll be amazed as you uncover things about yourself you didn't know existed. Note, though, that a mission statement is not something that can be formed overnight. Profound reflection and careful analysis will be necessary to reach the final version, and you may find yourself coming back to tweak things over time. It can take weeks or months to arrive at a result with which you feel comfortable – that is, one that is coherent and authentic to your life. What is indisputable is that the work is worth it. Resolve to start the journey today – and use this book as a compass and source of inspiration to guide you along the way.

Your personal mission statement ...

- ... is the compass that guides you on the way to a meaningful, effective and successful life.
- ... succinctly encapsulates your vision for your life.
- ... creates a portrait of who you are and what you want to do with your life.
- ... illustrates your purpose.
- ... defines the principles and values you wish to live by.
- ... helps you to say no to the unimportant because you have a deeper yes burning inside.
- ... helps you understand what you can do each day in order to achieve your goals.
- ... serves as an ever-present reminder of what really matters to you.



Why we spend 90 % of our lives off course

What do you have in common with an airplane? The answer is that you and the plane spend 90 per cent of the time flying 'off course'.

Plans and course corrections are a vital part of life

Before the aircraft takes off, the pilot knows where the airplane is headed and as the pilot he has a clear idea of the flight path it will take. The airplane takes off and sets course for its destination. Wind, rain, turbulence, other aircraft and myriad other factors repeatedly cause it to divert, in large and small distances, from the plotted route, with the result that the aircraft spends at least 90 percent of its time off course. A disaster? By no means. The pilot regularly checks the suitability of the flight path for reaching the final destination. They monitor the instruments, talk to the control tower and receive ongoing feedback from the air traffic controller, enabling them to making constant corrections to the route. In the end, the aircraft reaches its destination as planned, despite spending 90 per cent of its time on diversion.

Just like the airplane, you have a **destination**: an important, significant place to which you are drawn. This place will be described in your mission statement. Though, like the plane, you will likely spend 90 percent of your time off course, your mission statement will be a means of navigation, a foothold and a source of hope. It will help you return to your course whenever life happens to get in the way.



**This, indeed, is the secret power of a mission statement:
the ability to return you to your course not once, not twice,
but as many times as you need.**

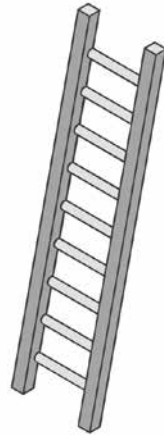
Is your ladder leaning against the right wall?

In order to one day realize your vision, it is important to always be cognizant of whether you're on course. This is easier said than done. A pilot has a myriad of instruments with which to track the plane's travel; warning lights and alarm sounds are triggered upon any deviation from the planned flight path. Back-up comes in the form of the control tower and air traffic controllers, who notify the pilot in the event of unplanned changes. In real life, however, it's not so easy.



**“[Many] work harder and harder
at climbing the ladder of success
only to discover
it's leaning against the wrong wall.”**

If your ladder is leaning against the wrong wall, every step you take just gets you to the wrong place faster. You do not draw closer to your destination; on the contrary, you get further and further away from it, even when you are ostensibly moving forwards. This is why the ladder test – a simple exercise to encourage you to think about where your personal ladder is leaning – is so important. Reflect on the questions on the next page and write down your answers.



The ladder test

Am I confident that my ladder is against the right wall?

Yes, because

No, because

Have I moved my ladder lately?

.....

.....

Could it be time to do so now? Why?

.....

.....



.....

.....

2.

Begin with the end in mind

Before you set about developing your mission statement, you must first make sure your ladder is against the right wall. In taking this important step, you take the wheel of your own life. You become the one who sets the course and the direction – and when you control the course, it follows logically that you also begin with the end in mind. Those who have read the book **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People** might know this as the second habit. Here's a brief recap of all seven habits.

► Quick recap: The 7 habits of highly effective people

Habit 1: Be proactive

Do not be a victim of your genes, external circumstances or the whims of others. Take your life into your own hands.

Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind

What do you want to do with your life? What legacy do you want to leave behind? By crafting a personal mission statement, you set the course for success.

Habit 3: Put first things first

Establish priorities. Say no to things that are unimportant. Do not allow others to pressure you. Spend time on what matters most.

Habit 4: Think win-win

Forget competition, envy and zero-sum thinking. Instead, make win-win agreements based on trust. Ensure that the benefits are mutual and everyone walks away satisfied.

Habit 5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood

Become a master of listening. Strive to understand what others are really thinking and feeling. Listen properly – and take your relationships to a new level. When others feel truly understood, then share your point of view.

Habit 6: Synergize

Sameness is boring and bad for creativity. Appreciate, celebrate, and leverage the power of difference. Learn from others. Draw from their knowledge, experience and strengths.

Habit 7: Sharpen the saw

Make time to preserve and enhance the greatest asset you have – you. Take care of yourself by balancing your four dimensions – physical, mental, social/emotional and spiritual. Allow regular time for self-renewal.

All things are created twice

The second habit – begin with the end in mind – is based on the principle that all things are created twice.

1. Mentally – in your mind

2. Physically – in reality

You might not realize it, but you already follow this principle in many areas of your life.

- ▶ You write a shopping list before going to the supermarket.
- ▶ You read a recipe before baking a cake.
- ▶ You draft a concept before giving a presentation.
- ▶ You plan a vacation weeks before it actually happens.

That everything is created twice is a simple fact of life. To understand its ramifications for your own life, consider the analogy of a jigsaw.

The jigsaw puzzle of your life

Picture the scene: you tip the 1000 pieces onto the table, then flip the lid to see how they should look. To your surprise, you find there is no picture. How can you do the puzzle without knowing what it looks like? If you could only see the image for a moment, you think, that would be enough. Without it, you don't have the slightest clue where to start.

Now imagine that your life is a jigsaw puzzle. Do you have an idea of what the finished product should look like? Is there a clear vision for your life? Are you beginning with the end in mind?

Make your life a masterpiece!

Imagine that your life is a painting
and you are the artist.
The painting can be anything you like.
What would you paint?

.....

.....

.....

**IT'S YOUR LIFE:
MAKE IT
A MASTERPIECE!**

