

SIMPLE Vision Overview and Non-Negotiables

Welcome back to Guidestone University. In this session, we're going to start looking at, and start working through, the SIMPLE Vision Tool. In fact, just a couple things as we get started here to help you complete the tool; you can download the document that's linked here on the lesson. You can download the document, save it to your computer, and then reopen it and type directly into the template, if that works best for you.

Many people have also found that they get better results when they go through the process by handwriting it down. So, whether you're doing it individually, or if this is something that you're doing with a team where you're handwriting the responses out, you're handwriting the information out, and then you come back later and you either type it into the template or you just type your vision document. For me, when I work through this process, either myself or with our team, we do just that. We write it out, and then once we wordsmith it, we finalize the document, we get to a certain place and we type it out and it makes it easier for us to go back and edit and even print out and distribute it. So, whatever works best for you, do that process, at least have it out and follow along with this while we go through the process.

You'll see there in the tool there are four main parts of the SIMPLE Vision Tool. Number one, **non-negotiables**, number two is **purpose**, number three is **huge goals**, and then number four is **details**.

In this session, we're going to start with non-negotiables. There are three key things that are parts of vision that every person is looking for when they come to join an organization, or as they join an organization, or they want to learn more about the organization. They're asking three key questions.

First of all, they're asking, what is it that we belong to? We're trading a substantial portion of our life to work to live, and work, and support, and encourage the people that we work together with. We're doing all of these great work, but what is it that we belong to?

Everybody wants to belong to something; to something bigger than ourselves, and vision is that invitation. To belong to something that's compelling, something that's bigger, something that's great. So, the question is, what do I, or what does my team want to

belong to? Who are we? Again, we're trading a substantial portion of our life; all of this time, to work together with you. Is it worthwhile? Are we trading all of this time, are we trading our life and work and energy for something that's worthwhile? So, these non-negotiables are the driving passion of our heart, the driving passion of our work. What motivates us? For us as guys, it's pretty easy. It's food, fun, and sleep, right? Non-negotiables are those things that really motivate us and that keep us moving forward, especially when we face adversity. They're not the same as core values.

Some people might call them core values, other people might call them core convictions, and I like the term core convictions better because they're stronger than values. Non-negotiables are stronger than values; they define what we stand for. They're worth fighting for, and they're worth taking significant risk for. They're also portable.

No matter what organization we work together with, no matter where we are, we would take these things with us no matter what role we're in. If we're working on these things on non-negotiables for a team, then, if we would move that team and it would go work in another organization, the core convictions or the non-negotiables for that team would remain the same, because they're who they are and they're what they want to belong to.

Non-negotiables must be authentic and discovered within the organization or within the department whatever we're working on the vision for because they're intrinsic, they're not aspirational. They're who we are, not what we want to become. These convictions are non-negotiables that we truly and passionately hold, and we would hold them even if they become a competitive disadvantage for us. So, if there were market changes, there would things that became road blocks or stumbling blocks for us, we would not change these non-negotiables for any reason. We would change markets, or we would go into different segments of the market to remain true to these non-negotiables.

Non-negotiables improve clarity and decision-making for us, because all of our decisions, as we go forward are filtered through our non-negotiables. Many of them without even thinking about it. Again, because these non-negotiables are who we are and how we think. So, if you want to identify these non-negotiables, especially as we're working with our team, there's a tremendous advantage to getting them down on paper, because it helps us to understand what drives us. It helps us understand what motivates us.

I want to give you the following questions to help you think through non-negotiables. What are my non-negotiables? As you think through them yourself, again, if you're

working with your team to work through non-negotiables, here are the questions that you can work through to think through your non-negotiables. We're going to start with you, and then we're going to work toward the company, depending on the type of organization that you are in.

Number one: it helps by thinking, **what non-negotiables do I personally bring to work?** Or what core values or core convictions do I personally bring to work?

Number two: What would I tell my children? **What are the things that I would tell my children are my Non-negotiables for me?**

Number three: **if I were to work for a new organization tomorrow, in a new line of work, what non-negotiables would I build into the new organization regardless of its industry?** So, if you're working with a team, this is where you would stop and you would sort, and organize and prioritize non-negotiables with the team so you can figure out what those core non-negotiables are for you, and you're going to narrow it down to four to six non-negotiables. We'll talk more about that in a little bit.

Then the fourth question: **if I woke up tomorrow with enough money to retire, would I continue to live these non-negotiables?** As you prioritize them, and to help you prioritize them, you ask, "If I awoke tomorrow with enough money to retire, or enough money to leave the market place, to leave the industry, would I continue to live out these non-negotiables no matter what I was doing?"

Number five: **If circumstances changed and they penalized me or they penalized us for holding these non-negotiables would we still keep them?** Would we still be true to them? We've seen this in a market place. We see companies who come under legal action because they firmly believe in treating their employees a certain way, or firmly believe in giving a certain freedom to their employees. Some of these are liberal policies, some of them might be more conservative policies; but they would rather close their doors or they would rather face legal action than compromise their non-negotiables.

Number six: **Can I envision them being as valid for me in 20 years as they are today?** It really helps us to determine, Is this really a core non-negotiable? Is this really non-negotiable for me so that 20 years from now it's still going to be as valid as it is today?

Number seven: **Would I hold these non-negotiables, even if one or more of them became a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace?** Even if other companies started passing us by or had a competitive advantage on us, would we still hold to these non-negotiables?

So, let me give you a couple of examples: here's **Philip Morris**, if you remember the Philip Morris Companies. **Hard work and continuous self-improvement.**

Sony: Elevation of the Japanese culture and national status. Here's a company that not only wanted to be competitive themselves in their market place, but they really wanted to make a significant difference for Japanese culture and national status. Another one of their non-negotiables: Being a pioneer, not following others. Another one from Sony: Doing the impossible. A fourth one from Sony: Encouraging individual ability in creativity.

Walt Disney: here's a couple from Walt Disney. **Fanatical attention to consistency and detail, preservation and control of the Disney Magic.**

Now, here's what's important about that. We don't want you to take these and make them yours. What's important is that you write what really is core, what really is non-negotiable for you, or get to what really is core and non-negotiable for your team.

Here's what we're going to do: you want to write out, in fact, you may need to write out six, eight, ten, twelve, fifteen non-negotiables. Many teams that we work through this process with, they end up with thirty or forty or fifty because they're throwing out all kinds of ideas, and then, as I said, we have this process for winnowing it down to four to six non-negotiables. So, you're going to write out as many as you can and then you're going to work at narrowing that down to four to six non-negotiables. You can initially write them as concepts similar to some of those that I just read you, they're short fragments of sentences.

Then number two, you're going to go through the process of then changing them or expanding them to a sentence that's actionable. You're going to change them or write them as a sentence that's actionable. The reason is because you have to think more deeply about a sentence than you do to single concepts and single words. We want these to really be concreted in your heart, in your mind, in your team and in your organization.

Let me give you a couple examples of the full-sentence versions of non-negotiables. Here's one: **We are committed to the on-going development of talented team members and we are strategic about who is added to our teams and how we develop their unlimited potential.** The concept would be talented team members or developing talented team members, but the sentence says, "We are committed to the on-going development of talented team members and we're strategic about who's added to the team and how we develop their unlimited potential." Here's one more: **We maintain simplicity in our processes and procedures and focus on delivering WOW experiences through great service.** So, there are really two concepts there: simplicity and then WOW experiences. With these organizations those could be two separate non-negotiables. They could separate those out, but the sentence, rather than just having those things and people having to wonder about what that means, they've been clarified as they develop them into a sentence. We maintain simplicity in our processes and procedures and focus on delivering WOW experiences through great service.

And then one more: **We are committed to making great decisions based on solid research and data.** They could just say, "Great decision making," or they could just say, "The importance of research and data," but they chose to expand it because they know just like you and I do that there's a temptation to base decisions on anecdotal data, how we feel or what we think. They thought it was important and I agree that to write it out, we are committed to great decisions based on solid research and data.

Action Step:

Again, here's what we're going to do: We're going to list out as many concepts as we need to, and then narrow them down to four to six non-negotiables. Then we're going to write each one of them, once we've narrowed them down, we're going to write each one of them as a sentence. Sound good? Alright, we'll see you in the next session and we go over the second part of creating simple vision.