

## Three Reasons Most People Give Up on Vision

Welcome back to a new session of Guidestone University. Today, we're going to be looking at three reasons most people give up on vision.

I hear this all the time, people talk about the vision that they had and I talk to a leader and they share with me their vision; it's bold, it's compelling and it's exciting. Then six months later, or a year later, or even years later, we reconnect, and I hear that they didn't accomplish much of the vision that they had; or they accomplish some of it, and then there came a point where they just stopped.

I worked for an organization years ago, and the organization saw some of the most significant growth that they had ever experienced while we were there working with the organization. We left the organization and moved on to another role, and a little over a year later, I went back to that organization and there were projects that we were in the middle of when we left that still were at the same state of incompleteness. To be fair, that reflects on my leadership. Something wasn't passed on in order for those things to be completed. So, as we think about this today, I want us to think about three reasons why most people give up on vision.

Let me tell you a quick story. Years ago, when our daughter was really young, we lived halfway across the country from my family, so when my parents would come to visit, it was kind of a big deal. One particular time, my parents were coming to visit, we knew they wouldn't be arriving 'til late at night, so, our daughter really looked forward to them coming. She even asked us, "Hey, can I stay up and watch for them even though it's going to be late? I want to wait for them. I want to see them when they arrive."

When they finally pulled up in front of our house – I mean it was after 11:30, it was way past her bedtime, don't tell her mom I let her stay up late – but, when they came they walked in the door, Madison got to see them for a few minutes, of course she was tired ready to go to bed so we talked to them for just a few minutes, and then she headed up to bed. As I was helping them get settled in their room, just before I went to bed, I stopped by Madison's room to check on her, to make sure she's okay. As I turned to walk out of

her room, she said to me, "Dad, is it going to be different?" I didn't quite understand what she was asking me. I thought maybe she was just so tired, she wasn't thinking clearly, and so I just said, "Hey, what do you mean is it going to be different?" She said, "Is it going to be different since nana and papa are here? Are we not going to say our prayer?"

Now, I don't know if this is your style or not, but Sarah, my wife, and I, we pray every night with our daughter. In fact, now, years later, we still pray every night that I'm home, every night that I'm there, we pray with our kids. No matter how you feel about that, we're trying to teach our kids to have faith, to pursue faith, to pursue hope, to learn to be generous as well as grateful.

Until that moment, when she asked me that question late that night, I really hadn't realized how important this time had become for her. We were precisely accomplishing or fulfilling what we had envisioned for our relationship with her and for her as she grew as an individual.

Here's a question that went through my mind in a matter of moments that night:

What if I shrug it off this one night? Will it turn into two nights? Will it turn into a week? Will it turn into two weeks? Will we eventually quit that discipline altogether? Would something as simple and as good, and as innocent as a visit from grandma and grandpa, would it derail this discipline, the vision that we have for her, will it derail that discipline for our family?

It was really that situation that reminded me of **3 reasons why we walk away from vision**. Think about even simpler things in your life: a college degree. Some of us it took way more than three or four years to finish a college degree. For me, I worked on a graduate degree at one time that took me almost 10 years to complete. Why do we walk away and have to come back to it? Or a job: you started this job, you're really excited about it before you started it, and then a few months in or a few weeks in or maybe a few years in, you just lose interest. It's not fulfilling anymore. What happens? Why do we walk away from the vision or why do we get so easily derailed? Why do we give up on the vision? The book you're reading, or the workout that you started, or the diet, or the new year's resolutions, or the business plan or your simple personal plan. Maybe it's a relationship, or it's attending church on a regular basis, or getting out of debt, or quitting

smoking. You were doing great and then you weren't. What happened? What is it that causes us to give up on vision? I want to look at three things here just real quickly.

Number one, **commitment**. It's not that we weren't committed at all. It's not that we started it, we just got really excited, it was compelling, it was something that we went after, and then later on we found out that we weren't committed at all; I think that we were. Most people are. But maybe, we just weren't as committed as we thought we were.

We've actually led a training where we talked about commitment. The way that we encourage people to make commitment is to make a commitment to **stick with it long enough to get to momentum**. When you get to momentum, if you still don't like the direction that it's going, then pull the plug, then shift, then tweak, then re-innovate. But most people, the majority of people, the vast majority of people never get to momentum, and, so, they never understand what real commitment is, and the reward of real commitment.

I've seen it in the workplace. A leader has a huge vision for growth, the organization restructures, they launch the new initiative, they began gaining momentum, and then all of a sudden, negative feedback starts. It comes from influential people, and then you find out how committed the leader really was and how committed the team really was. To many people, commitment really doesn't mean that much anymore.

Here's what I know about you: your work is valuable, your life matters, your work matters, and it means something to you. You meant it when you went through the trouble to think through the vision, and to think through your passion, and to think through where you want to go, where you want to head, and you're going to reach the goal if you stay on track; if you make the commitment to stick with it until you reach momentum.

Number two, **lack of clarity**. When we say lack of clarity, it's really lack of clarity around purpose. **Your success, in any endeavor worth doing, is dependent upon your understanding of why you do what you do**; why you're headed where you're headed. Do you understand the purpose? Does your team understand the purpose? Do the people who are involved in helping accomplish that purpose and that vision, do they understand it, and **is it compelling**? We've seen many people give up on significant vision, on significant goals, on significant things simply because their goal was to... For example, with a diet, somebody gives up on a diet simply because their goal was just to lose weight.

While that may be a necessary and a worthy goal for some of us, after a few weeks, the motivation to lose a few pounds gives way to convenience and comfort.

Several years ago, I made a decision that I was going to lose weight. It was less about me losing weight, and more about me being healthy. In fact, the thing was for me to start running, and to get more energy, and to have more focus in my work. It was less about losing weight, again, and more about being healthy. As I began eating right and I began tracking everything that I was eating, I was paying attention to all those things, and then I was working out three times a week, making sure that I was eating healthy, and that I was working out regularly. I began losing weight, as a by-product of being more healthy. So, as I began losing weight, people began to notice, and that went on for months. I lost over thirty pounds during that time, and I wasn't huge at all by any stretch. In fact, I probably lost a little bit too much weight, because I was running so much.

But then there came a time when I shifted roles, and I shifted responsibilities, and I got busier, and I walked away from those things that were really important to me at that time. In fact, the reason why I wanted to eat healthier was because I had the conscious thought, I'm several years older than my wife, and I'm quite a bit older than my daughter, and I want to spend as much time with them as I can. So, at some point, I forgot about my original purpose. If I remember that my goal is to eat healthy and to be healthy and to live healthy so I can spend as much time as I can with them, then my actions and behaviors on a daily basis are much different.

Sometimes we just have to get back to the clarity of our purpose. We have to get back to why we started it in the first place. Clarity of purpose.

So, revisit your purpose. If you haven't thought it through and you haven't written it down, then start there. Make it memorable, make it meaningful, make it compelling.

Then number three, third reason people give up on vision is **distraction** - we all know this is true. Most companies don't fail because of a catastrophic failure of leaders or teams or personnel or products. **Most companies fail because they get distracted someway, somehow.** They start chasing something that isn't core or that wasn't core. They have mission drift, they have vision drift, purpose drift. We live in an incredibly noisy world; we live in an incredibly noisy time in the history of the world. This continuous distraction, life comes at us fast, and our failure to follow through may simply be a by-product of all of this distraction that we're faced with. Something other than the purpose, something other

than the vision, something other than the goal arrested our attention and got us off track. Whatever the reason, it's never too late to get back on track.

You're not a failure. The company is not a failure. Your team's not full of failures. Take a few minutes, refocus on that original goal, and then help them get moving again. You get moving again. Just don't give up.

That night, as I stood in my daughter's room, just a few minutes past midnight, I laid down on her bed next to her and we prayed, and we'll do it again tonight, because I don't want to ever lose the incredible power of vision. The incredible clarity that comes from vision that allows us to get more clarity, that allows us to make more movement to work toward the momentum.

Here's what I want you to do: I want you to think through these three things for a few moments. Three reasons that people give up on vision, and think about your vision. Is it clear?

Number one: Are you committed to it? **Are you committed to stick with it long enough to get to real momentum?**

Number two: **Is it clear?** Do you have clarity? Has it gotten muddy? Has it gotten fuzzy? Have other things come in and clouded the vision? Has the mission drifted? Has the vision drifted? Has your purpose drifted?

Then number three: **Are there things that are regularly distracting you or regularly distracting your team from sticking to the core of your purpose, from accomplishing and fulfilling the core of your purpose and vision?**

I want you to jot those things down. Again, if you want to, shoot those to me in an email. I'd love to get those from you. I'd love to review them with you. We'll look forward to seeing you in the next session of Guidestone University.