

## Three Myths About Vision and Why Vision is Important

In this session, we're going to look at **three myths about vision**. Let me tell you a quick story. Much of my early life was about abuse. I have three brothers and three sisters, and I was one of the oldest— you can imagine being a parent. Both of my parents are extremely busy. My mom was one of the hardest working people that I've really ever met in my life, so she was always busy with the kids; and I was a very active young boy, always had a lot going on, always had a lot going on in my mind. I love just running like crazy, and going like crazy, and really became so much more than my mom could handle. So, there's a lot of abuse there from my mom.

The older I got, I was abused by another person that was really close to our family. As a result of these experiences over and over again in my childhood, I did everything that I could do to plan around the abuse. I tried not to be in situations; I tried to curb my enthusiasm as a young boy, I tried not to make my mom excited or upset, I tried to stay out of situations where I could be abused by this person who is close to our family, and I was often unsuccessful, and so the abuse continued even into my adult years.

These things profoundly shaped my thinking. They profoundly shaped my behaviors; things that I carried into my college work, things that I carried in my early part of my career, and things that I carried into my leadership. Every single one of us has had similar challenges. Maybe not abuse in the sense that I did, but there are painful things that we all experience.

I want to talk just for a few minutes about these things today: Three myths about them, and then some things that we can do to make progress in these areas.

**Myth number one:** Every single one of us need to realize that vision is not just about where we started. In my situation, for example, if **vision was just about where we started**, then I would have a really painful existence, really painful behaviors. The people who work with me would be significantly challenged even today to make progress in areas. It's not just about where we started.

**Myth number two: Vision is not just about the struggle that we are facing today.**

Not only is vision not just about the past, but it's not just about the present, either. While every leader, **every single leader in the world carries a deep wound, how we respond to that wound, and how we process the pain of that wound, determines how successful we'll be in leadership.** Even though we've experienced painful things in the past, even though we're experiencing painful things today, we can process and respond to those wounds, and respond to the circumstances that we face everyday and be successful in leadership, and be successful in creating compelling, exciting, bold vision.

**Myth number three: Vision is not just about where we're headed.** I think this is the mistake that we make more than the other two. We think vision is only about where we're headed, where we've come from, and where we are today informs vision. It shows us a clear path. It shows us what's possible because of what we've already experienced, and gives us the boldness and the confidence to look forward and to move forward. So, vision is not just about where we're headed.

You say, "Well, if vision is not just about where we've started in the past, and vision is not just about the struggle that we're facing today, and vision is not just — in fact, it's not just about the positive things that are happening today — and if vision is not just about where we're headed in the future, then **why is vision so important?**" It's not just about the end-game. Money, revenue, compensation is not the answer to vision. It's not the end of vision. Being the biggest is not the answer. Comfort is not the answer. Freedom is not the answer. Clarity is. Movement is. Legacy is. Serving other people is. Change is.

Let me give you a simple tool in this session that you can use with your team, that you can use even in training with other people. A simple tool that'll help you as you think about vision. Why is vision so important? Here's why: **vision empowers us to move forward.**

One of the things that comes to my mind — and we read a lot of literature and a lot of information on leadership. One of the best illustrations of leadership in my mind is in ancient scripture that says, that scripture itself is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. It helps me conceptualize what we mean by **vision**. What that means is years ago, thousands of years ago, in fact, even hundreds of years ago, when people would go out at night they would have torches or they'd have an oil lamp or a gas lamp, and the glow from that lamp would only provide enough light to show them that the path in front of them to take the next step or the next couple of steps.

See, today things work very different for us. We have cars that have headlights that show hundreds of yards out in front of us. We have these flashlights now that have a beam that supposedly is visible from the moon or will shine to the moon. We have all of these things that are available to us so it's hard for us to think about only having enough light to take the next step, and, really, that's the way that vision works. As we create vision, it gives us enough light to take the next step. As we take that next step, then we get more **clarity**. So vision brings clarity, and clarity allows us to get **movement**. As we think through vision, vision gives us enough clarity to take a step. And as we take a step, that clarity that allows us to take that step, we get enough light to take the next step. Because as we move, the light moves in front of us. So vision brings clarity, clarity brings movement.

The interesting thing about clarity and movement is that, as we get more clarity, we get more movement and then movement allows us to get more clarity and then clarity allows us to get more movement and movement more clarity. The longer that we go, the more clarity, the more movement, the faster that we're able to make progress.

Think about if you've ever been to a camp, or you've ever been hiking at night, and you're using a flashlight that'll shine just a few steps in front of you. You start out kind of picking your way down the path or the trail looking for roots and rocks that are going to trip you up. As your eyes adjust to the light and you get more confident, you're able to move faster to the point where you can run down the trail, even though the light is still only showing just a few steps in front of you. Because you got used to that process of clarity, and then more movement, and then more clarity that came from movement, and then more clarity that allows more movement, and clarity and movement, and you go faster and faster and faster which brings you to **momentum**.

Vision brings more clarity, clarity allows movement. And then there's the cycle of movement and clarity that begins increasing faster and faster and faster which brings us to momentum. So, why is movement important? Why is momentum important? This is maybe the most important thing that I say here: **Change that leads to growth is at the core of leadership. If there is no change, there is no leadership.** If there is no growth, there is no leadership. If there is no movement, there is no leadership. Otherwise, what are we leading people to do? To stay the same? See, there are times when we feel like we want to be safe — especially when we've been somewhere for a long time and we like to stay there a long time — and many people, maybe you have somebody on your team, they want to stay safe. They want to be safe, they want to be comfortable, but the

adventure that we're embarking on, and the huge compelling vision, it'll not make sense to most people, because the outcome is unknown. But, if the outcome is known, then it's not really an adventure, it's an errand. And you are born for far more than running errands.

**Life's not a problem to be solved.** It's not a puzzle to be solved. **It's an adventure to be lived;** You're vision and your passion deep down in your soul, and the collective passion and vision of your team, and the collective collaborative vision of your organization is not about being safe; it's big, it's bold, it's scary, and it's compelling. It's the only thing that going to bring real fulfillment to you and your life, your work, your leadership, your team, and your organization. It's the only thing that's going to fill that huge gaping hole of boredom and mediocrity in your life, and it's not safe.

**Action step:**

I want you to write down one area in which you've been wounded in the past. Then, think for a few minutes about **how has that pain shaped your leadership?** Then, I want you to think about this: **is that pain and how it shaped your leadership bringing unhealthy behaviors into your life, work and leadership today?**

I want to give you a resource real quick. I encourage every single leader to **get a copy of the book "Wild at Heart"**. Read through the book.

In the book there's a process. There's some pain or some woundedness— in fact, all of us bring some unhealthy behaviors into our work, into our leadership, or into our homes. So, having a process to think through how can I acknowledge this woundedness? How can I make sure that I've processed it effectively and that I'm not allowing it to adversely affect my life, work and leadership?

I encourage you to do that. I hope this is super helpful for you and we'll see you in the next session of Guidestone University.