Starr Women Leaders
Educational Session

*Inspire a Shared Vision*

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“Leadership is not a gene or an inheritance. Leadership is an identifiable set of skills and abilities that are available to everyone.”

*Leaders are MADE!*
Purpose

Improve your capacity to execute the two commitments that define Inspire a Shared Vision:

1. Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.

2. Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
1. Introducing the Practice of Inspire a Shared Vision
Data tells us that **credibility** (honesty, inspiring, competent) is the foundation of leadership.

Data also tells us that one quality differentiates leaders from other credible people:
- Being *forward-looking* is the characteristic that differentiates leaders from credible people.

- People also expect a leader to be forward-looking, and have a vision of the future.
Combining “forward-looking” with “inspiring” gives us the essential elements of the practice of Inspire a Shared Vision:

- Envision the Future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.
- Enlist Others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
2. WHAT IS A VISION?
A VISION is:

“An **ideal** and **unique image** of the **future** for the **common good**.”

Kouzes & Posner
VISION ESSENTIALS

- Expression of an **IDEAL**
- **UNIQUE** – setting you apart from the crowd
- **IMAGE** – vivid, positive
- **FUTURE ORIENTED** – about the future, not the present
- **COMMON PURPOSE** – a reason for our associates to enthusiastically join the journey
What speech do historians agree is the most compelling English-language vision speech of the Twentieth Century?
A compelling Vision has five essential elements:

- **Ideal.** Visions are about hopes, dreams, and aspirations. They’re about exciting possibilities. They’re about making a difference, creating something grand, achieving a whole new gold standard of excellence. They tell us the ennobling purpose and greater good we are seeking.

- **Unique.** Visions are about the extraordinary, not the ordinary. They are about what makes us distinctive, singular, and unequaled. They’re not about how we are like everyone else, but how we are different and special.
○ **IMAGE.** We remember our past and project our future in mental pictures. Word pictures, metaphors, analogies, examples, stories, symbols and similar communication methods all help make visions memorable.

○ **FUTURE-ORIENTED.** A vision is a description of an exciting possibility that we desire in the future. If it were a description of what existed today, it wouldn’t be a vision; it’d be reality. **Visions are projections.** They stretch our minds out into the future and ask us to dream. The horizons of visions vary, but generally speaking, five to ten years is a reasonable time horizon.

○ **COMMON GOOD.** Visions are about developing a shared sense of destiny. They are about what the group or organizations or community members collectively desire. Visions aren’t about what the leader wants. They are about what we want. Leaders must be able to show others how their interests are served and how they are a part of the vision, to enlist others in it.
3. Envision the Ideal and Unique Future
People join movements because they care about the cause.

- What are the higher-order values that give direction and meaning to our lives over the long-term?

- These values are aspirations – they take years and years to realize, and we may never complete the journey to reach them.
Visionary values are what propel us forward toward the future. They are the voices that awaken us each morning with a desire to leave the world a better place than we found it.
- To be clear about our ideals and how they play out in the future, we have to spend a lot of time reflecting on them.

- There is no such thing as an instant vision.

- The clearer we are, the easier it will be for us to describe our visions to others.
4. Breathe Life into your Vision of the Future
How did Martin Luther King, Jr. communicate his vision of freedom?
We can more easily imagine and relate to an ideal when it is presented in word pictures.

- Images and word pictures
- Metaphors
- Examples
- Stories
- References to History
- Emotions
- Symbols
- We remember in images and sensations.

- We don’t recall statistics, but we do recall feelings, sights, sounds and smells.

  - This is the magic of communicating a vision!
  - You can take people to places they’ve never been by creating a picture in their minds.
  - You can do the same with the future!
We can’t get any images of places we have never been before in our minds.

For us to recall something, we have to have been exposed to it in some way.

To **Inspire a Shared Vision** you have to learn to communicate in such a way that you can create memorable images in other people’s minds.
5. Find Common Ground with your constituents
“There’s a deep human yearning to make a difference. We want to know that we’ve done something on this earth, that there’s a purpose to our existence... The best leaders are able to bring out and make use of this human longing by communicating the meaning and significance of the organization’s work so that people understand their own important role in creating it.”

- Kouzes & Posner
**EXERCISE:**

- Think about the people or groups you want to enlist in realizing your vision.
  - To whom are you appealing?
  - Whom do you want to attract?
  - What people are needed to support your cause?

- Once you have identified those people, ask:
  - What gives their lives meaning?
  - What are their hopes and dreams?
  - Toward what higher purpose are they aspiring?
6. Clarifying Your Vision of the Future
INSPIRE A SHARED VISION SUMMARY

- Envision the future by imagining exciting and ennobling possibilities.

- Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.
To help everyone in the organization see clearly what’s ahead, leaders must:

- Have, and clearly convey, a vision.
- Give everyone a sense of what the future will look like.
- Breath life into their visions and enlist others by showing how those visions serve their own values and interests.
The journey of becoming a better leader starts with development of yourself

It requires you to be clear on your values and beliefs

To *Inspire a Shared Vision* you must give voice to your beliefs and make them public
CHALLENGE THE PROCESS

Inspire a Shared Vision and Model the Way
provide the context for our next practice, Challenge the Process. The vision and values give us the reasons why we need to change “business as usual.”