



**LEADING** *with*  
**IMPACT**

**VISION - by Bo Short**

*"A rock pile ceases to be a rock pile  
the moment a single man contemplates it,  
bearing within him the image of  
a cathedral."*

***Saint-Exupery, Flight to Arras (1942)***



Having a vision is imperative to success. **Vision** is an essential ingredient in living to win. In fact, you can trace the importance of having a vision all the way back to the Bible. In Proverbs, chapter 29 it reads, ***“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”*** It has also been said that even a child building a sand castle has some kind of picture in his or her head telling them what to do next. It’s vision. If you want to become a leader in business, government, entertainment or athletics – *if you want to be successful in any significant endeavor* – you first need to have vision.

In order to understand the power of **Vision** it is as important to understand how, throughout history, great people succeeded because they dared to dream, sometimes despite huge obstacles. I also want to encourage you to develop your own ambitious vision for what you want to accomplish in your life. Understand that there are no constraints on the human mind...no walls around the human spirit...and absolutely no barriers to our vision except those we build ourselves.

Every enterprise, whether it’s beginning a business, starting a family, running for elected office, teaching a class, or serving as a leader in the military, to name just a few, is based upon a vision. The significance of vision goes to the core of leadership. **Vision** is inseparable from leadership. **Vision** links the present to the future through the person of the leader. The philosopher and educator Alfred North Whitehead said, ***“Great dreamer’s dreams are never fulfilled, but they are always transcended.”***

Study the lives of people who have achieved great things. If you want to be an entrepreneur, you should study great entrepreneurs... if you want to be successful in business, study the lives of great businesspeople... if you want to be a great composer or an attorney, then study the lives of great composers and great attorneys. Don't study failure. Study success –only then will you understand how to emulate it and achieve it yourself.

It was Sir Isaac Newton, the father of science, who said, ***"I have seen so far because I have stood on the shoulders of giants."*** Newton was describing how his vision was extended by studying the vision and the work of the great scientists who came before him. It worked for Newton and it is vitally important in our own lives.

Often times when I speak in schools, businesses, and civic groups I am amazed by the number of people that tell me that they were taught, ***"It's a tough world out there, do the best you can do, but if things don't work out it's ok."*** What a devastating thing to impart on your children. It raises my spirits when people tell me that they were told, ***"If it's been done before, you can do it."*** Well, my parents took it one step further. They said, ***"Even if it's never been done before, you can do it."*** What a powerful statement for a child to carry into their adult life. Even if it has not been dreamt of – you can do it. This unleashes unlimited possibilities in a child's mind.

This is one of the most important points about vision. If you can think it, you can do it. Great thinking leads to great results. Conversely, mediocre thinking leads to mediocre results. We can accomplish anything as long as we dare ourselves to reach for it.

The author and well-known business consultant Peter Drucker wrote that the number one difference between Nobel Prize winning scientists and all other scientists was that they asked bigger questions. The Nobel prize-winning scientists did not have higher IQs. They were smart, but not necessarily smarter than other scientists. They did not work any harder. But the key was they thought bigger... they dreamed bigger... they asked bigger questions. They reached higher with their minds.

## VISION MOTIVATES ACTION

Having a vision stimulates passion and raises our energy level. We may have hundreds of goals that we want to achieve, and which we do achieve as we go along. Our vision keeps us looking and moving forward.

Research shows that children with what is called **“future-focused role images”** perform far better in school and are significantly more competent in handling the challenges of life. Teams, businesses and other organizations with a strong collective vision outperform those without the strength of vision. According to the Dutch sociologist Fred Polak, a primary factor influencing the success of entire civilizations is the **“collective vision”** people have of their future.

**Vision** is the best manifestation of our creative imagination. **Vision** is also the primary motivation behind human action. The opposite is also true; if we don't have a compelling vision for the future, we are, by definition, not as motivated as we can or should be. **Vision** is the ability to see beyond our present reality... to imagine what does not yet exist... to become someone new... to achieve at a higher level. **Vision** gives us the capacity to look forward and live out of our imagination rather than look backward and live out of our memory.

**Vision** provides an overall context for our lives. Without a vision, we are basically reactive; we react to what other people value and want from us. We fall into the trap of trying to become all things to all people... trying to meet everybody else's expectations... and we end up meeting nobody's expectations, especially our own. But with a clear sense of vision, all the advice that we solicit, all the feedback we get, makes sense in the context of our vision. We can process the information in a way that is useful. We can build on it. We can move closer to actually achieving our vision.

Having a vision and achieving it is like the process of repentance and forgiveness. Repentance is not an event. Forgiveness is not a moment. It's a process. We don't say, **“I'm sorry”** and it's over. It's a process. We repent and then we work toward forgiveness. The same is true of **Vision**. We develop a vision, we shape it and refine it and work toward it. It's a process that moves us forward as we live to win.

We all have some vision of our future and ourselves. That **Vision** opens doors of opportunity and it also creates consequences. Perhaps more than any other factor except our character, vision affects the choices we make and the way we spend our time.

If our vision is limited, we tend to make choices that are based on what is in front of us. If our vision only extends to what's on TV tonight or what we hope to do during the upcoming weekend, then obviously, our vision will not take us very far. If our vision is limited then we tend not to think very far ahead. We react to whatever seems urgent on a specific day or at a particular moment. We get sidetracked by other people's priorities. We vacillate and fluctuate based on the day. We don't go forward, we end up going sideways. It's as though we drift.

If our vision is based on illusion, then we tend to get discouraged when we are confronted with challenges and adversity. If our vision is only partial, if it focuses on just one aspect of our lives, like our jobs, then we tend to get out of balance. If our vision is based on someone's expectations, then sooner or later we will actually get alienated by the vision rather than motivated by it.

Your vision must be built on what you are passionate about achieving in your life. It has to be focused on something you know you want. It could be starting a business... it could be growing the business you are already in... it could be running for office and getting elected... it could be writing a great novel. Your vision can and will lead you to accomplish anything and go anywhere if it clarifies your purpose in life, gives you direction and meaning, and empowers you to perform beyond your resources.

The Olympic motto is the Latin phrase, "**Citius, Altius, Fortius.**" It means, swifter, higher, stronger. In a sense, this is the vision for the Olympic Games. It is the ideal that guides all of the competition. You will know deep inside your soul that your vision is right for you if it makes you move swifter, reach higher, and become stronger.

**Vision** can and should become the DNA of our lives. It should become so ingrained and so integrated into every aspect of our being that it becomes the compelling impetus behind every decision we make. It is the fire in our belly. It is the energy within us that makes our life a dynamic, exciting adventure. Our vision can literally enable us to

transcend fear, doubt, frustration, discouragement, rejection and many other events or factors that keep us from living our dreams. Vision will help overcome our own perceived weaknesses. It will help us grow and develop our strengths.

The best advice I can give you is to dare to dream. You have every right to. In a way, vision is like Mozart's melodies. The music exists on paper but it means nothing until it is both performed and heard. Much of the music's effect depends on the ability of who is playing it. **Vision** is like the music. It must be played to become reality.

Remember, a compelling vision is the foundation of leadership. It is absolutely essential. Nonetheless, a vision is only the foundation. It is a beginning, a starting point. It is not a destination itself.

What's important to remember about vision is that you can always do better. You can always reach higher. You can always improve. You can always innovate. Having a vision for your life is not a one-time, sudden event. It is an ongoing process.

You can do great things. Moliere said, ***"All men are alike in their dreams, and all men are alike in the promises they make, but the difference is in what they do."*** It's not what you say, it's what you do with your life that makes the difference. Dream really big – *bigger than you've ever dreamed in your life* – because you can do it.

What I have observed in my life is that people usually don't want too much. What holds them back is that they want too little. They think too small. So dream big because you can live your dreams. You don't have to follow a trail that anyone else has laid out for you. Blaze your own trail so that people will follow you.

How you live your life will determine whether you transform your vision into reality. Your life is not the sum total of what you have been. Your life will be determined by what you yearn to become.

Always Lead,  
Bo Short