

Writing a Personal Mission Statement

“A personal mission statement becomes the DNA for every other decision we make.” - Stephen Covey

A personal mission statement is a concise expression of your vision and values that serves as the basis for making daily decisions in the midst of the circumstances and emotions that affect our lives. It can help you navigate through the small day-to-day things and provide perspective. A glance at your personal mission statement can help you decide whether to say “yes” or “no” to opportunities that come your way. It’s a way of distilling your ambitions and aspirations, focusing your intentions, and manifesting an ideal future. A personal mission statement articulates what success looks like to you.

Creating a personal mission statement takes time. It requires introspection and often many rewrites. Allow your mind to wander around questions like these and write down anything that comes to mind. Do not attempt to censor yourself.

- I am at my best when... I am at my worst when...
- What do I really love to do at work? What do I really love to do in my personal life?
- My natural talents and gifts are...
- If I had unlimited time and resources, what would I choose to do?
- My life’s journey is...
- What would I like people to say about me on my 80th birthday?
- Imagine you could invite to dinner three people who have influenced you the most. Write their names and the one quality or attribute you admire most in these people.
- What kind of image do you hope to project? Is it similar or dissimilar to the image you’re projecting right now?
- Are there things I feel I should change or alter, even though I’ve dismissed these thoughts many times? What are they?
- What are your roles in life? Are you happy with them?
- What are your values? What is most important to you?
- What are some goals you’d like to achieve this year?

Try to identify a common theme or themes and write them down. Here are some sentence templates to get you started. As you write, you may feel more comfortable with a different style or format. Just as each person is unique, so is their personal mission statement.

- "To ... [what you want to achieve, do or become] ... so that ... [reasons why it is important]. I will do this by ... [specific behaviors or actions you can use to get there]."
- "I value ... [choose one to three values] ... because ... [reasons why these values are important to you]. Accordingly, I will ... [what you can do to live by these values]."
- "To live each day with ... [choose one to three values or principles] ... so that ... [what living by these values will give you]. I will do this by ... [specific behaviors you will use to live by these values]."
- "To appreciate and enjoy ... [things you want to appreciate and enjoy more] by ... [what you can do to appreciate/enjoy these things]."

Example:

“To remember where I have been and where I will go through maintaining positive relationships with family and friends. To choose the ethical way by making a personal commitment to honesty and integrity. To find peacefulness within myself by looking inward while using my heart to guide my dreams and desires, and my mind to pursue knowledge, creating balance among all of my obligations. To content myself in my surroundings so I will always know where security lies within my life. To build a reputation of being dedicated to every goal I choose to pursue while having successes in both my personal and professional life. To enjoy every moment along this journey finding laughter, love, and happiness with each day that passes.” - Emilee C. Sieverkropp, Pacific Lutheran University (http://www.missionstatements.com/personal_mission_statements.html)