

What Kind of Parent Do You Want to Be – Creating a Vision & Mission Statement

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Often as parents we find ourselves making things up as we go along – we think about what we want our kids to do *right now*, then take actions that give us quick results in the moment. Those actions may or may not be in alignment with our long term goals or visions of ourself as a parent – I'm sure we've all had moments of thinking "I can't believe I just said/did that!!"

One step you can take toward becoming the parent you want to be is to define – in writing – what that means. This can begin with a process of brainstorming your goals and values, then writing a vision and a mission statement, and then putting those into action, with periodic reviews to see whether you are moving more into alignment with your ideals.

Brainstorming the Basics

Here are some questions to ask yourself to discover what's important to you.

- What are your family's strengths? What do you do best?
- What are the most important values you want to pass on?
 - What is the place of education in your family? What value do you place on work?
 - What are your family's attitudes toward money?
 - How do you view religion/spirituality, and what part does that play in your daily life?
 - How important is it to you to help other people or participate in your community?
- How would you like to relate to one another?
- When do you feel most connected to one another?
- What makes you happy?
- What makes you fulfilled –brings you satisfaction, leaves you with a sense of completeness?

Another approach is "Beginning at the end" – think ahead 15 years. What is your vision for:

- What is your child like as a person?
 - What skills have you nurtured in them: Curiosity? Confidence? Compassion? Determination?
 - What are your child's core values? (see above)
 - If your child is "successful", what does that look like?
- What are the relationships amongst members of your family like?
- How would you like your child to describe what it was like to grow up with you as a parent?

Creating a Vision

What is a vision statement?

- Describes what your ideal family life would look like and what you want your family to be someday.
- Provides inspiration for what you hope to achieve in five, ten, or more years;
- Functions as the "north star" – helps you understand how your work every day ultimately contributes towards accomplishing over the long term; and,
- Is inspiring, yet short and simple enough that you could repeat it out loud from memory

Some sample visions from organizations are: "To improve the well-being of all we come in contact with." "To inspire students to create a better world." "We believe that strong families begin at home and building strong families creates thriving, healthy communities." "To create communities in which: no new parent feels isolated, ill-equipped, or unsupported. All parents develop the confidence to build strong, healthy families. All children grow up in a social environment that allows them to thrive."

Write your parenting vision statement. (Try several approaches until you find the one that sings to you.)

Creating a Mission Statement

What is a Mission Statement?

A Mission statement focuses on a shorter time frame (1 – 3 years). There are lots of possible formats. One format answers three questions

- **WHAT** you will do – what specific actions will you take?
- **HOW** you will do it – what will be the quality of your actions (this is where you can articulate your values for how you want to interact with your family)
- **WHY** – what results or benefits you will see when you look at your kids / your family in a few years?

Here are some sample missions, from the web... I don't endorse any in particular, they're just examples.

We are a family who believes that relationships matter most! We value spending time together and we endeavor to be the primary caregivers of our children. We hold each member of our family accountable for responsible behaviour. We support each other in our individual pursuits of personal and professional interests. We cheer each other on. We laugh whenever possible. We hold our marital relationship as a top priority because this relationship serves as the foundation of our family.
www.everythingmom.com/dynamics/the-family-vision-statement-a-solution-for-challenging-decisions.html

May our first word be adventure and our last word be love. We live lives of passion. We dream undreamable dreams. We are travelers not tourists. We help others to fly. We love to learn. We don't like dilemmas, we like solutions. We push through. We believe! We know it's okay to make mistakes. We bring people together. We are joy, rapture, yay!
www.artofmanliness.com/2013/08/21/creating-a-family-culture-how-and-why-to-create-a-family-mission-statement/

Our home will be a place where are family, friends, and guests find joy, comfort, peace and happiness. We will seek to create a clean and orderly environment that is livable and comfortable. We will exercise wisdom in what we choose to eat, read, see, and do at home. We want to teach our children to love learn, laugh, and to work and develop their unique talents.
www.happyfamilyhappywife.com/examples-of-a-family-mission-statement/

Our family mission: To always be kind, respectful, and supportive of each other, To be honest and open with each other, To keep a spiritual feeling in the home, To love each other unconditionally, To be responsible to live a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life, To make this house a place we want to come home to. [also from happyfamily... cited above]

There's some lovely (but long ones) here [agagin, I have not read the full blogs these are a part of, only these entries... these are not meant to represent my opinions, but those of the author]

- <http://lusaorganics.typepad.com/clean/2011/12/a-peaceful-parenting-mission-statement.html>
- [www.cafemom.com/journals/read/689706/My Parenting Mission Statement](http://www.cafemom.com/journals/read/689706/My_Parenting_Mission_Statement)
- www.infantmassageusa.org/vimala/example-parenting-mission-statement/

Implementing Your Vision & Mission

Write your Vision & Mission down, and post it where you can see it.

Review it on a regular basis (once a week?) and see how you're doing.

Narrowing the Vision – Action Gap: when the theory of what kind of parent we wish we were meets the reality of how we respond to our child when we're tired and they're challenging, it can be easy to get discouraged. Be gentle with yourself – don't beat yourself up for your mistakes, just use it to help you remember your goals. Ask yourself what you could do differently the next day to move in that direction.

Revise your vision and mission as needed to to reflect new values, hopes, and dreams.

Sources:

- [Becoming the Parent You Want to Be](#) by Davis & Keyser.
- Creating a Vision and Write a Family Mission Statement: www.familieswithpurpose.com/family-mission-statement.html and www.familieswithpurpose.com/creating-family-vision.html
- How to Write a Family Mission Statement. http://singleparents.about.com/od/familyrelationships/qt/mission_state.htm
- Creating a Family Mission Statement: <http://theparentingpassageway.com/2009/05/08/creating-a-family-mission-statement/>
- Create a Family Purpose Statement: <http://theartofsimple.net/back-to-the-basics-create-a-family-mission-statement/>
- Visionary Parenting... Begin at the End by Ramirez www.parenting-child-development.com/parenting-vision.html
- www.psychologytoday.com/blog/smartwork/201004/vision-and-mission-whats-the-difference-and-why-does-it-matter