

VISION CASTING

A T R U S T W O R T H Y S A Y I N G

NO. 13

After David had secured his throne, stabilized his kingdom, and defeated his enemies, he dreamt of building a temple to honor the Lord. He shared his idea with Nathan the prophet who affirmed David's vision. That night God intervened and changed his plans. (2 Samuel 7:1-17)

This brief story captures three legitimate ways visions emerge. There are times when a leader casts a vision all on his or her own. Other times, a leader collaborates with wise counselors to refine and clarify a vision. And sometimes God intervenes and directly commands His plans.

CASTING VISION

Leaders often develop plans in what appears to be a vacuum. They process input and dream dreams in isolation. But that's not surprising; leaders are expected to make decisions that will impact the future. They think of ways that life could be better and consider what it might take to accomplish their dreams.

COLLABORATIVE VISION

Leaders don't always develop dreams in isolation. A wise leader may share his or her vision with others to refine and clarify the dream. Interaction, dialogue and discussion with a trusted friend, wise counselor, or group of colleagues can complete and clarify the vision. David used Nathan as a sounding board to affirm his vision.

COMMANDED VISION

Individuals, or even cadres of planners, never have the final say. At times God intervenes into the planning process and gives specific instructions. Sometimes He introduces an entirely new idea; but often, as in the case of David's temple plans, He reshapes and reconstitutes an existing vision.

God can and will accomplish His purpose, but part of His grand plan is to grow leaders who will cast vision and initiate change.

So, where does vision come from?
What is the source of our hopes and plans?

Vision generally emerges at the intersection of: 1) our personal strength, 2) the needs that we encounter, and 3) the available resources.

INTERESTS AND STRENGTHS

All of us have strengths, interests, skills, giftedness, experiences and desires. Some of us are comfortable in large groups; others in small intimate situations. Some of us like cello and others like trombone. Some of us have learned in formal settings and others in the school of hard-knocks. Some people possess a constellation of gifts and abilities that is very different from the way God has designed others. Leaders use their God-given Interests and Strengths to lead and cast vision in a very personal style. Vision usually emerges from an area of aptitude or strength that a leader enjoys or easily employs.

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The world is full of external Needs and Opportunities. Needs that should be addressed are all around us: homelessness, illiteracy, violence, joblessness, disease, famine and a host of other maladies call for a leader's attention. Likewise, Opportunities to enhance and enrich our world attract leaders' interests. art, science, leadership development, life-skills training, business growth, sports and recreation, and many other external prospects. The more that we become aware of the world around us, the more we identify Needs and Opportunities that become the fertile soil in which our visions grow.

LIMITED RESOURCES

Good leaders have a growing awareness of their limits. As finite beings we are created with limits, and we live in a world of Limited Resources. When developing a vision, wise leaders learn to work within their limits. Resources include money, staff, volunteers, facilities, equipment, creativity, goodwill, credit, patents, copyrights, time, and a host of others. Wise leaders also develop an awareness of which resources are unchangeable and which can grow. Then they work hard to expand their resources whenever possible.

The following diagram describes the relationship between the three areas: 1) The Interests and Strengths that reside within each of us, 2) The Needs and Opportunities that exist in the world around each of us, 3) The Limited Resources that impact every leader.



Vision grows in the “sweet spot” where a leader’s personal Interests and Strengths overlaps with the Needs and Opportunities of the world around them, and these two intersect with Limited Resources.

Lack of Resources - Frustration grows where Interests and Strengths combine with Needs and Opportunity but lack Resources. To accomplish a well-articulated vision, a leader needs Resources.

Strong leaders do not wallow in frustration (at least not for long) but relentlessly pursues the resources needed to achieve their vision. Leaders demonstrate trustworthiness when they use their Limited Resources responsibly which often opens the door to receive additional resources.

Lack of Interests and Strengths - Leadership opportunities emerge where Needs and Opportunity align with Limited Resources but lacks a person with Interests or Strengths. Situations like these call for passionate, gifted leaders to emerge who can utilize the available Resources to meet a Need or Opportunity for the good of all concerned.

Lack of Needs and Opportunities - Limited Resources expended on areas of Interests and Strengths but without connecting to a real Need or Opportunity is self-serving consumption. Leisure is not a bad thing when people are honest and upfront about their purpose. We were designed to take time-off every seventh day (Gen 2:2) and to step away from our responsibilities for a week three times a year (Deut 16:16). We need time to relax and enjoy life. However, when Limited Resources are expended so that leaders can enjoy their interests and use their strengths to benefit no one but themselves, we see the ultimate squandering of assets and a blatant lack of responsibility.

Growing leaders continually discover more and more about themselves. They become more self-aware of their Interests and Strengths. They explore their world to determine what Needs should be met and what Opportunities should be addressed. They also take stock of and strive to increase the Limited Resources at their disposal.

At the intersection of these three, Vision emerges. Whether cast, collaborated, or commanded, Vision resides in this “sweet spot” of these three critical factors.

This lesson written by Dan Bolin is a part of a larger series on leadership called "A Trustworthy Saying." Find more teaching/lessons available for download for free at: www.refuelinginflight.com/trustworthysaying