

## INTRODUCTION

# The Power of Mission

*Choose a job you love and you will never  
have to work a day in your life.*

—Confucius

**T**his book is about being extraordinarily successful in work and life. We all dream of happiness and success. We all have ideas about what we will do when we have “made it.” We all want to feel as though we make a difference and that our lives are important.

For many of us, these ideals have been taken over by circumstance. We are often surprised to find ourselves in careers and situations that have never been that great. We tell ourselves that someday we will get back on track. Some of us secretly hope that we will be downsized so we can finally get on with our lives in the way in which we imagined. Each day we put off the decision to begin living our lives. Worse still, many of us silently hope that each Monday is a Friday and wish most of our lives away. We tell ourselves that one day we will do what we love. But often that day comes too late.

My aim for this book is to inspire you to do what you love and provide you with the practical tools to do so. My only hope is that you begin to better see who you are and to align your uniqueness with your life and work. I want you to learn from me and those whom I have helped that if you focus on your unique genius, you will transform your life and work.

Everyone knows someone who loves what they do. These individuals are energized and excited about going to work. They continually come up with new ideas, attract good things and seem to have boundless energy. Yet they also have a confidence surrounding them that exudes a sense of peace. They are busy but not rushed, strategic but not overly competitive. They have a deeper sense that what they are doing is useful and therefore tend to work in a purposeful way. Best of all, their energy is contagious and they seem to be surrounded by supportive people. For them, resources and money appear to come easily. This can be you.

### **My story**

I have had four careers and about twenty jobs. Although I am a lawyer and consultant now, I worked for many years in jobs that were not always right for me. I often started out feeling inspired and motivated, but eventually outgrew each job. Recalling the last corporate law position I held, I wonder why I

stayed so long. I loved my work and enjoyed my colleagues, but I can vividly recall the increasing sense of frustration as I began to outgrow my job. I became less tolerant with people and resented requests that demanded particular effort. It was the slippery slope toward mediocrity.

Luckily I have “low corporate pain threshold.” This means that I am not very good at working at jobs that do not inspire me. When I get bored, I either look for another project or another job. This “problem” has served me very well in my current life as a

***If you are called to be a street sweeper, sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. Sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, “Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.”***

consultant and coach. I understand the human need to grow and contribute and can help individuals break out of mediocrity and create a fuller life.

In 1999, after ten years of law practice, I decided to change my life. I wish I could say it was easy, but that would not be completely accurate.

The good news is that I am now where I was clearly meant to be and that you, by reading this book, can find out where you are meant to be.

As I was working in my office one day, a colleague peeked in and asked how I was. I looked up from my foot-deep files and noticed that she really meant it. She actually cared about me and was interested in how I was doing. Although my usual response was a prompt “Just fine, how about you” for some reason, on that particular day I said, “Not very good.” She quietly shut the door, walked over to me, and placed an arm around my shoulders. I began sobbing. She looked me straight in the eye and said, “Maureen, you must go home now and take some time off.” I packed up my briefcase and never returned.

After that day, I decided that I would never again work in a job that I did not like and would only work with people who brought out the best in me. I began reading everything I could get my hands on that related to careers, entrepreneurs, purpose in life, and well-being. But there was no book that dealt with my particular situation. I needed a quick way to set up a consulting practice but I had no idea about the area. As a lawyer, facilitator, writer and mediator, I could do a million different things. It was not until I created my own personal mission statement that I realized what was missing. *None of the books that I read asked what I considered to be the three most important questions: what is extraordinarily*

***If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.***

**Fulfilling our purpose is key to success in the new economy. Being on purpose . . . allows us to cope with the stressors: heavy loads and long hours, the overlapping of work and personal lives, and the need to perform at our peak in order to compete. But in addition, purpose is a deep desire that each of us longs to fill.**

—Leslie Bendaly,

*unique about you? what do you care deeply about? and how do you align this with your life and work?*

I created a workshop and began coaching entrepreneurs, consultants and executives about how to align their uniqueness with their work. The feedback from the participants and my clients was amazing. The following are some of the comments: “Thank you, Maureen, for giving me permission to do what I love.” “I realized that I always knew what my mission was, but for some reason did not see it.” “I am now so clear about where I

am going and I am so excited.” “I no longer feel like I am on a conveyor belt of endless tasks and projects; I know where I am going and how I will get there.” I was touched by their comments, and their feedback inspired me to write this book.

I now have a successful practice helping organizations prevent workplace problems from becoming legal issues and also pursuing a doctorate. I feel blessed to have been given the gift of writing so that I can share my learning with others. I truly hope that your journey is smoother as a result.

From a very young age I have believed that each of us is like a piece in an ever-evolving jigsaw puzzle. We can expand and contract. Each of us has a role to play or an impact to make in this world. And we each touch others. Our lives, therefore, consist of being the best we can be given our circumstances and making the best of what we have.

## You have only two choices

About twenty years ago research was conducted on how people got rich. The researchers asked 1500 people what they planned to do in their career. The vast majority of participants (about 80%) said that they intended to go out and make enough money so that they could someday quit their jobs and then do what they really wanted to do. The remainder of the participants planned to work at what they loved and worry about the money later. After twenty years, 101 of the 1500 participants had become millionaires. All but one came from the group who had decided to pursue their passion.

Many people work at jobs and run businesses that they do not like. They do not believe that they can make money doing what they love and therefore simply put in hour after hour at work without interest or energy. Some people believe that they must struggle in life by doing hard work. They work in order to earn the money necessary to live on weekends and holidays.

Many people move through life without much reflection. Some let events and circumstances control what they do. These people tend to believe that what happens to them is beyond their control and often blame unfortunate circumstances on chance or bad luck. A lot of these people

***There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that . . . imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better or worse as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and nor but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. . . . Trust thyself: every heart***

wonder late in life whether they might have been able to live their lives differently.

Others believe that life should be lived with zest. They do not think that work is necessarily hard or distasteful. These people believe that they are fundamentally valuable and that they have a contribution to make. They believe that they only have one life to live and tend to live that life with a sense of meaning, believing that the world is full of opportunities and that what they do is important. Taking responsibility for the good and bad that happens in their lives, these people realize that they are unique and believe they have an important role to play. They tend to be at peace when they approach death, knowing that they did their best and lived a full life.

No matter what you think now, your life is of great consequence. What you do or don't do contributes in many significant ways—to you, to those you come in contact with, and even to the entire world. You really only have two choices: to live your life in a conscious and directed way with purpose and meaning, or to live your life as a victim of circumstance.

**Joe Matas** came to see me last October. He had decided to set up a shoe shop in a very expensive district in a major city. He excitedly told me that he had secured a loca-

***Finding a mission and then fulfilling it is perhaps the most vital activity in which a person can engage.***

—Richard Leider and  
David A. Shapiro,

tion through his uncle who was a real estate agent and had got a deal on the monthly rental fee. Joe had been a sales manager in a number of retail outlets and was tired of others profiting from his retail expertise. He was not experienced in the shoe industry, but was a quick learner.

I asked him why he wanted to sell shoes. He told me that the markup on shoes was about 100% and it was a quick way to make a lot of money. When I asked if he liked shoes, he said, “No.” When I asked if he had an interest in the fashion industry, he said, “No.” When I asked if he had any interest in feet or women, he said, “No.” So I said to him: “Let’s say for a moment that the location next to your shoe shop becomes vacant and a new shoe shop opens up. Let’s say that the owner is an entrepreneur from a family of Italian shoe manufacturers. Let’s say the owner has a passion for fashion, loves women, loves feet, loves leather, and loves people. What might be the difference between you and her? I suspect that her passion for her job will be reflected in all aspects of her business, from her hours of work to her conversations with her clients. Although I have no idea who will be the more profitable in a monetary sense, I would venture that if you chose a business that inspired you, you would be successful in ways that you had not yet contemplated.”

***Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor***

Each and every person is unique. We each have particular skills, abilities and interests. In our lives we each have a particular role to play, journey to take and contribution to make. We have unique opportunities at particular times in our lives that no one else has. If we focus on what is best about ourselves and put it to proper use, we will excel and also be happy. At the same time we will rise up to our highest purpose and receive

**When people are united with their real power—the power to create what they want to create—they always choose what is highest in humanity. They choose good health, exceptional relationships and love and relevant life purpose, and peace, and challenges worthy of the human spirit.**

—Robert Fritz, *The Path of*

the greatest joy. We were not put on earth to suffer. Although life can be hard, there is no point in making it harder by doing something that is inconsistent with our fundamental nature.

Every one of us has been given a capacity to succeed and is confronted with a host of opportunities in our lives. If you are able to identify your unique gifts and put them to best use, you will not only be happy, but you can use them in a way that is most appropriate.

Sometimes the best path for us is also the easiest path. Those who find

what they love may continue working hard but will not feel as though they are working.

So how do you begin to work and live in a conscious way that is truly consistent with who you are? The answer is through the development of a vision, a mission and goals. In doing so you will find the path that you were born to follow and will be more able to take advantage of opportunities and face challenges on your journey.

## **What is a vision? What is a mission?**

Victor Frankl, an Austrian psychologist who survived the death camps of Nazi Germany, discovered that the single most significant factor impacting survival in the camps was a sense of future vision—the impelling conviction of those who were to survive that they had a mission to perform.

A vision and a mission are not the same. A vision is an

ultimate and ideal destiny. It is your ideal future state. A vision is a dream that can really only be measured at the end of your life, when it has been achieved.

A mission describes what you must do to reach this vision. A mission identifies what you wish to achieve, who you intend to focus on, and how you will accomplish your vision. A mission is often used to measure personal and professional success.

Together, a vision and a mission provide a beacon or direction to keep you on course and give you focus. Both your vision and your mission reflect a uniqueness that is not shared by any two individuals or groups.

***Everyone has his own specific vocation or mission in life; everyone must carry out a concrete assignment that demands fulfillment. Therein, he cannot be replaced, nor can his life be repeated. Thus everyone's task is [as] unique as his specific opportunity to implement it.***

## **Why visions and missions are important now**

Missions are particularly important at this point in history. Because of the changes in the workplace and the way in which work is being done, individuals and businesses need to have a sense of direction and be able to manage their lives and work more than ever.

Here are some trends that reflect changes in the population, the market and in workplaces.

### ***Trend 1: Baby boomers hit midlife***

The main group impacting the workplace and society is the baby boomers, who now have an average age of about forty-seven. This means that most are well established in their careers, their children will soon be leaving home, and they are

increasingly aware of their health and mortality. They have a general awareness that good physical and mental health can lead to longevity.

Psychologists call this midlife and recognize that many adults at this point in their development will begin to question why they are doing what they are doing. At the same time, baby boomers feel there is an increasing need to make a difference or leave a legacy.

***Everybody's favorite question is "How did cancer change you?" The real question is, how didn't it change me? I left my house on October 2, 1996 as one person and came home as another. I was a world class athlete with a mansion on a river bank, keys to a Porsche, and a self-made future in the bank. I was one of the top riders in the world and my career was moving along a perfect arc of success. I returned a different person, literally. In a way, the old me died, and I was given a second life.***

—Lance Armstrong,  
*It's Not About the Bike*—

Many autobiographies have been written about people who, confronted with death, shift their careers and redirect their entire lives. One such book was written by Lance Armstrong, a famous American cyclist who, at the peak of his career, was diagnosed with cancer. He faced extraordinary adversity, but rose above it to win another Tour de France.

Many people in this age group are increasingly dissatisfied with their work and will begin to consider other options. Many will quit their regular jobs and set up their own businesses or become consultants.

This is the age of increasing self-actualization. Boomers will no longer tolerate mediocre jobs and will become more involved in things that they feel will have

an impact. Fewer people seem able to cope with corporate pain. This generation is becoming less tolerant of workplaces that are not consistent with their internal values.

### **Trend 2: The cultural creatives**

The baby boomers form part of a larger trend that has been labeled as the renaissance age or the age of the “cultural creatives.” In 2000, Paul Ray and Sherry Anderson pulled together thirteen years of research and identified this subculture. About fifty million people in North America care about ecology and social justice, relationships and spirituality.

This generation is searching for meaning at work and in life. Barbara Moses, a career expert, believes that people are no longer willing to work in ways that are inconsistent with who they really are and that they require more authenticity at work.

### **Trend 3: Increasing self-employment**

This is the generation of self-employment. Recent statistics indicate that the largest growth area in business is in small business. More and more people are recognizing the value of consulting and realizing that there is no such thing as job security. At the same time, corporations are contracting out services as never before to enable them to remain flexible in global markets. Companies no longer hire employees in jobs for life, and they expect internal employees to view themselves as contractors or consultants.

***If there is any phrase that captures the new thinking about work, it's take it personally. Work is no longer experienced as an impersonal force of nature over which one has no control. Instead people are asking, indeed demanding, that work meet their personal needs.***

—Barbara Moses, *The Good*

**Wretchedly soulless work is rampant, and, thanks to an increase in spiritual awareness and personal development, people no longer want to be part of an organization that is not responsible socially and environmentally. Many more people want to make a difference, not just a living.**

—Jack Canfield and  
Jacqueline Miller,

The age of long-term jobs has disappeared. In his book *Creating You & Co.*, William Bridges, described the difference between old jobs and new jobs in the following way:

*Jobs minimized the differences between individual workers. What you or I wanted was irrelevant. We each had talents we'd never used, but that didn't matter because no one really believed that the average job gave you a chance to express yourself. The fact that you were really temperamentally better suited to a kind of work other*

*than what we did was . . . well, one of those unfortunate things that happen in the world of work. . . . In the dejobbed world, the truth that each of us has an inherent lifework is suddenly rich with meaning. Nothing less than finding what you were meant to be and do will give you the motivation and the capability that today's work world demands. Identifying your lifework is no longer an escapist fantasy. It is a condition for being successful. You now have to discover your lifework if you are to have a chance of creating a satisfactory and satisfying work life.*

In the past, if employees possessed the required qualifications, not much attention was paid to whether they were working in a way that was consistent with who they were.

As the old hierarchies give way, individuals gain more influ-

ence and control over what they do and work under less supervision. Because more employees work as consultants, they need, more than ever, to be aware of their particular skills and abilities. They must have a sense of career direction and a “portfolio” or bundle of attributes that they can offer to each of the projects, jobs or businesses in which they become engaged.

At the same time, the role of managers has changed substantially. They are taking on roles as mentors, coaches and mediators and require entirely different skills than their predecessors. These managers empower employees to be their best by aligning individual and corporate goals and getting out of the way. They expect individuals to know their own abilities and goals and trust them to understand their role and the skills they each bring to a project. The way in which employees are measured is in terms of outcomes or results. The trends impacting workplaces look something like this:

**Old workplace**  
Top down  
Employees

**New workplace**  
Bottom up  
Internal consultants

***The reason so many people from the baby-boom generation are suffering from midlife crisis is because they never pursued a job or career that was their passion. During the 1980s, most of these people pursued careers or jobs that paid the most money, so they could live the yuppie lifestyle of excess materialism. They may have achieved career success as they defined the term. They got to the top of the corporate ladder and acquired their material possessions. However, their marriages may be in the shambles, their children are all messed up, and they themselves are suffering from***

Teamwork	Collaboration
Managing	Leading and motivating
Job descriptions	Competencies
Departments	Floating project teams
Fear	Trust and relationships
Structure	Feedback systems and outcomes
Stability	Living organisms
No change	Constant change

These changes place pressure on individuals to manage themselves in ways they have not had to in the past. They must have a sense of direction and understand how their goals align with their clients. They must possess a clear vision and mission with associated goals and strategies.

## The benefits of a mission statement

A mission statement is important in many ways and can be used for a variety of purposes. At its best, a mission statement forces

***If you don't care about where you are going, any direction will do.***

—Anonymous

you to ask the questions: what do you want to do? and who do you want to be? It will help you identify what is best about you and enable you to align what you love with your work.

Even if you already have a mission statement, it may not be working well for you. *The ultimate goal in creating a mission is to design one that is useful to you.* It is only relevant to the extent to which you can use it in a constructive manner. There are, however, four specific benefits of a mission statement: to provide direction, to describe you and your work, to measure your success and to increase your sense of well-being.

### **Benefit 1: A mission statement provides direction**

A mission statement will provide you with a direction and a beacon. It will act as both an end-point and a compass. This means that it will help you stay on track.

It will assist you in making life and career decisions. For example, it will help you decide whether to accept a new job or to take on a new contract or project. It will help you in deciding what you should do, but also, perhaps more importantly, it will help you decide what you should not do. If you are aware of your mission you will be less likely to take on projects that are inconsistent with your values or direction.

When you are in the midst of confusion and chaos you will be able to refocus with the help of your mission statement. It can be your guiding light. It will help you set your goals and priorities.

### **Benefit 2: A mission statement describes what you do**

A mission statement describes what you do and who you are. It will provide clarity about who you are—for yourself, your clients, your supporters, your employees and all those who come in contact with you. It can also describe your particular approach and values.

It will help you in describing your

***The idea of a permanent job is obsolete. Your job today is never safe! The work world is in constant turmoil. . . . You must be prepared to go job hunting for the rest of your life. No one owes you a job—not your present employer, not your union, not even if you work for Mom and Dad. It's up to you to create your future. In the 21st century, almost everyone up through the highest ranks of professionals will feel increased pressure to package themselves as a marketable "portfolio" of talents.***

—Richard Leider and

**Whether you are naturally level headed, spontaneously enthusiastic, artlessly charming or born to pressure, we take our behaviors with us into everything we do. If what you do is at the core of who you are, your stress level will go**

services and marketing yourself. Although you might think that you are competing against others, niche marketing demands that you focus on those things that make you unique. In doing so you will create a place where you are not competing directly with anyone.

You will also be able to identify those situations when you are the best person to do the job, or when it might be better for someone else to do the work.

### **Benefit 3: A mission statement measures your success**

A mission statement provides a tool to assess the extent to which you are successful. It describes where you are going and thus can be used to measure when you have arrived. When you feel overwhelmed, a mission statement can give you a sense of perspective and remind you of your ultimate objectives. It is a source of inspiration and motivation.

If you work with others or have employees, it will give them a sense of their contribution. At the end of the day you will have a better sense of accomplishment and increased motivation to continuously improve.

### **Benefit 4: A mission statement increases well-being**

A mission statement can help reduce stress and enhance well-being. It helps you identify your personal values and interests so that you can ultimately align your work with your passion. But it does much more. It also gives you a sense of pur-

pose and a sense of control.

David Whyte, in his book *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, tells us that finding meaning or purpose to work is crucial to an overall sense of well-being. Organizations that excel often encourage their workers to question what they are doing.

It is a proven fact that dedicated employees have reduced absenteeism, improved morale, less stress and less heart disease.

Victor Frankl discovered that personal pleasure or happiness did not motivate human beings. Rather it was the “will to meaning,” or working toward finding meaning in life. He found that happiness was a by-product of the search for meaning, not the end product. There is no shortcut to happiness. For Frankl, meaningful work and meaningful love were more important than self-interest.

Research shows that people who feel that their abilities are not being utilized on the job or who feel that their work is boring have a higher risk of heart disease than those who feel their skills are being put to best use.

## When to create a mission

It is never too early or too late to begin thinking about your mission—and there is no best time to create a mission statement. If you are a particularly reflective person, you may have contemplated your mission in your teens. Many people begin to think about their direction in life when they enter the work

**People are becoming self-employed because their self-esteem is in good order and they want to learn more about what they can be as human beings. For a lot of them, that's connected to a vision of a different kind of world they'd like to build. I see this as the most powerful force in entrepreneurship and a tremendous source of commitment.**

***It is the denial of death that is particularly responsible for people living empty purposeless lives; for when you live as if you will live forever, it becomes too easy to postpone things you know that you must do. You live your life in preparation for tomorrow or in remembrance of yesterday, and***

world—often upon graduation from university. This is because the exercise of finding employment involves looking at your particular interests and abilities and matching these to an appropriate job or career. In their desperation to find jobs, many graduates do not spend sufficient time identifying their uniqueness and finding the “ideal” job.

Many people do not actually think about the purpose of their lives until they are in the midst of a transition or crisis. Although transitions can occur at various times in life, they are often linked to significant life events such

as marriage, changes in jobs, divorce or childbirth. At these times people are more receptive to asking the bigger questions about life. It is quite common for people between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-five to begin to think about their life direction. Many people in this age group have built a career foundation, but may have outgrown their particular career. They are often looking for a way to make a difference.

The process of creating your mission can be enormously powerful when you are in the midst of a transition. During a transition you are able to step off the treadmill of life and reflect, open up spaces, and free up your mind to question what you have been doing so far and why—without feeling compelled to rationalize.

Thinking about a mission statement is critical when contemplating a career change. Those who spend time reflecting on who they are and what they want to achieve will be better

able to align their work with their uniqueness. Indeed, it would be odd for someone to start a new job or business without some clarity about where they wanted to go, both personally and professionally.

Many people do not discover what they want to do until later in life. Regardless of how old or young you are, or what you have done so far, it is never too late to discover your mission and pursue it. Barbara Sher, an expert in career and life transitions, gave the following title to her most recent book: *It's only too late if you don't start now*. So, do it now.

## How to create a mission statement

The process of creating your vision and mission involves identifying what you want in life and focussing on what is unique about you. It is about aligning your uniqueness with your life and work by creating a mission statement that is specific to you and your circumstances. In this book I introduce the following five strategies:

1. Create your vision
2. Identify your unique vessel
3. Develop your mission statement
4. Select your goals and strategies
5. Take action

Each of these strategies is covered in the following chapters.

***If corporations truly want their employees to be entrepreneurial—to be passionate, creative, innovative and excited about their work—they must meet the challenge of encouraging employees to express their passion. Entrepreneur—leaders must recognize the need to look at their workers as individuals with hearts, talents and ideas and must find ways to encourage workers to bring their personal passions to bear on their work.***

***There is vitality, a life force, a quickening that is translated through you into action—and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost. The world will not have it. It is not your business to determine how good it is, nor how valuable it is, nor how it compares with other expressions. It is your business to keep it yours clearly and directly, to keep the channel open. You do not even have to believe in yourself or your work. You have to keep yourself aware directly to the urges that***

## **A word about the process**

Although the book asks that you proceed through each strategy in sequence, feel free to jump around. That said, your first step must involve defining your vision. You must have a vision, even if not fully developed, before you can create a mission, and you must have some understanding about your uniqueness before you can develop your mission statement.

However, the process becomes unique for each person who engages in it. As you begin to work through each stage you may feel compelled to either move ahead or go back. This is fine because your patterns of thinking and self-discovery have a journey of their own. Also, the process of discovery is somewhat like a spiral curving upward. You will revisit aspects with increased understanding and insight.

In addition to creating a mission, you will gain significant value from going through the process of developing it. The formal statement written on paper is just as important as the process of self-exploration. As

stated by Plato: *The life which is unexamined is not worth living.*

In creating your mission statement you will engage in a process that involves asking questions about who you are and what difference you can make. If you have asked yourself

these questions before, the answers should come more quickly this time around.

This process will guarantee two things. It will ensure that you stay on track and not duplicate steps, and it will prevent you from having to redo steps later. If for some reason you do not complete the whole book, you can return to it later and begin the process again without losing your initial learning. Indeed, each piece will fall into place over a period of time; it will not always come together at once. Do not become discouraged—this is a natural outcome of the process. As you read this book you may feel that you are on a roller coaster. You are actually on a spiral upwards as you revisit aspects of your mission from a newly enlightened perspective. Never feel as though you are repeating each time you reflect—you are looking at it differently each time.

## The end product

Once you have completed the stages you should have in your hand four cards that you will review regularly. Blank cards for this purpose can be found at the back of this book. At the top of each card will be the words:

VISION	VESSEL	MISSION	GOALS
Your ideal life	What makes you unique	What you wish to accomplish	How you will achieve your mission

The content of each card will be filled in by you as you work through the chapters. At any time you can run through the stages again and refine each of the parts until your own unique picture emerges.

## Synopsis

We all have dreams of being happy, but for many of us our ideals have been taken over by circumstance. This book is designed to inspire you to do what you love and provide you with the practical tools to do so. By creating a mission, you will be able to align your uniqueness with your life and work—and live your dreams.

A mission is essentially a reason for being. In its simplest form it provides direction, describes what you do, measures your success and increases a sense of well-being.

Missions are particularly important at this point in time. Baby boomers are in their middle years and beginning to ask how they can make a difference. A growing number of aging workers are seeking more heart and spirit in their lives and work, and self-employment is on the rise. These trends indicate that we are searching for our mission.

There is no best time to create a mission. Read on to find out how you can create your personal vision and bring this to fruition.