

# Do you have a personal mission statement?

BY STEVEN B. WILEY

**S**o, you've made your New Year's resolutions. Maybe you're even still keeping them! But there's one more thing you should do — develop a personal mission statement. After all, your organization has a mission statement; why shouldn't you? This can be one of the most empowering experiences of your life.

A personal mission statement represents the deepest and best qualities and aspirations that you possess. You should memorize it and write it deep in your heart and mind. Imagine you are at your 80th birthday celebration where your friends

and family are there to honor you. Visualize what your friends and colleagues will say about you and your life. What will they say about the differences you have made in the lives of others, your accomplishments, and your successes?

This exercise embraces the fundamental power and passion of having a life mission. In his remarkable book *First Things First*, Steven R. Covey shows us that we each lead three distinct lives: our public life, our private life with family and close friends, and our deep inner life. It is at this private, inner level that you craft your personal mission statement.

Here are the keys to a useful mission statement:

- It is written.
- It is in the present tense, not the

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future tense. Describe yourself and your qualities as they are now. Any activities should be specifically described, providing a vivid link to reality.

■ It should be written in inspiring, exciting, clear, and engaging language specific to you, your talents, enthusiasm, work, and personal life.

This process requires work and thought.

Remember that your mission statement is not written to impress anyone. It is written to inspire you, to help you follow your innermost beliefs, drives, and desires for your life. I am a professional speaker. My mission statement is “to have a profound impact on each and every individual in each and every audience — to make heroes of people who decide to have me speak to their organizations.”

As soon as I began concentrating on this and working to make heroes out of the people who asked me to speak to their organizations, things began to



## “The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

—MALCOLM X



click for me. You can get equal or better results by having a mission statement that is focused on how your work can be a benefit to other people.

Finally, as you work on a personal mission statement, avoid the following false assumptions that often trap people.

**False Assumption #1:** “My job is my mission.” Nope. Your mission statement is far more than your current job. It is the direction you wish to take in your life. It is always larger than your job. For example, my job is a vehicle to help me *achieve* my mission, but my mission extends well beyond what I do for a living.

**False Assumption #2:** “I’m not important enough to have or need a personal mission statement.” Absolutely wrong. Each and every one of us has an impact on our community, our society, and our universe. Setting a primary direction for energies in life is not a function of how “important” we feel.

So give it some thought, write it down, and live by it.

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