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# SmartBusiness

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## Fulfilling your vision

What are you prepared to do?

**D**o you know the difference between a fantasy and a vision? Most people don't. Both fantasy and vision involve imagining who we want to be and what we want to do. But the difference is profound — a vision is real and a fantasy is not. What separates them is the answer to a single life-changing question: What are you prepared to do?

Many people believe they have a vision for their career, their marriage, or their role as a parent or a friend, but because they never follow through on the actions required to fulfill their vision, they reduce it to nothing more than a fantasy. And a fantasy is worth nothing. At the end of your life, you will find no joy in all that you meant to do.

The people who lead great lives, who challenge and inspire us to be like them, are the people who actually do something to make their vision a reality.

There are three key distinctions between a fantasy and a vision that can move you from imagining the life you want to live to actually living it.

The first distinction is clarity. Do you really know what you want? Have you taken the time to thoughtfully define what you want from life? If not, remember this: fantasies hide in the mind, visions pour out onto paper. If you want it to be real, write it down. When I took the time to write all that I would want my children to say in a eulogy for me, I went from hoping to be a great dad someday to actually being one.

### Jim Huling The Business of Life

The second distinction is progression. Almost nothing of significance can be completed in a single step. In business, we're familiar with breaking large projects into smaller goals or milestones, but we seldom apply this to our lives.

My vision of being a great dad includes spending time one-on-one with my kids, and this year, I've set the goal of planning a one-week wilderness adventure with each of them.

Last year, my goals were different, as they will be next year. But over the course of a lifetime, the cumulative completion of these goals has enabled me to become the dad I wanted to be.

I like to express my goals as newspaper headlines because of the extra energy I get when I read them. Headlines such as "Scott and Dad complete week-long rafting trip in 2005" not only give me a clear goal, but one that I can't wait to accomplish. Setting at least one goal for the year in each major area of your life will give you the focus and the clarity to take action toward achieving it.

The third distinction is regular investment. Even if you've set a goal for the year, you still must take the time to plan what to do each week.

Every Sunday for the past 22 years, I've spent a few minutes choosing actions that will take me toward my vision in the coming week. In the world of invest-

ments, this is known as the drip method. Alone, each weekly action might seem insignificant, but cumulatively, they add up to something great.

So, if part of my vision to be a great dad is to take a long rafting trip with my son, then my investment this week might be simply to research various rivers out west or to buy a map. By reducing this big goal to small, weekly investments, I can make steady progress while still balancing all my other responsibilities.

What are your fantasies? Do you want to be a great leader? A loving, engaged spouse or parent? A trusted and dependable friend? Fit and healthy?

Whatever it is you want from your life, it will not happen until you determine what you are prepared to do and then do it. Your fantasy can be transformed into a vision-filled life by simply deciding today to take action. Will you do it? Just think of the possibilities.



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