

WRITING THE MISSION STATEMENT USING STRENGTHS

From Robert Biswas-Diener (*Practicing Positive Psychology Coaching*)

Step 1. Identify your core values. [the “Being” aspect]

Take about a minute to reflect, then a couple of minutes to write down your top 3 to 5 core values. These can be from the VIA Strengths list or whatever words/phrases have meaning for you. Since these are so central for you, you won't need a lot of time to remember what they are. Just jot them down, even in fragments; do not get caught up on making them perfect. If you can, use dynamic verbs. (Zappos: deliver, embrace, pursue, build, do, engagement, action to client: challenge, build, support, overcome), but don't worry about getting it perfect.

[Gayle: Live each day as a passionate adventure. Live with integrity. Learn from the world and others. Foster growth. Savor beauty. Create meaningful connections. Create peace.]

Step 2. Now name your key strengths. [the Doing aspect]

Write down 3 to five of your core strengths. These also might come from the VIA survey or any other assessment, or your own personal knowledge of your strengths or “natural abilities.” Perhaps something that others have complimented you on, or something you are passionate about, e.g., storytelling, narrator. Should be a gift, talent, strength, or ability that you enjoy using.

Step 3. Now write the first paragraph of a two-paragraph mission statement

Paragraph 1) What do I want to accomplish in life? Mention your core values here.

If you live these every day, you will have a meaningful life...a life well lived!

This is essentially taking your values and writing that you plan to accomplish them.

Turn what you wrote above into sentences. Try to be as specific as possible, be dynamic, but don't worry about getting in perfect. Later you can polish it.

Caveat about coach giving her/his mission statement: can constrain, yet can help offer structure/language...but beware constraining content...

Gayle: I want to live a life of depth, breadth and fullness while fostering the development in others so that they too will flourish. I want to nurture the interconnected web of life.

Step 4: Now for the final touch....If the above was old hat, hopefully this will add a new and empowering element.

In paragraph 2, how are you going to accomplish what you put in paragraph 1?

P1 is about the **WHAT**; this second paragraph is about the **HOW**.

- It involves your strengths.
- Your strengths are the vehicles by which you deliver your values.
- RBD: “Think of your strengths like a freight train that chugs along, taking your values to deliver them where you want them to arrive.” It’s about delivering what you cherish.
- Avoid getting hung up on getting perfect wording, language....go for good enough.

What are we doing here? We are saying that we already have what it takes to put our values into action. So beyond the usual mission statement process, this invites you to become clearly aware of the tools you have for realizing your mission.

With this PMS, you don’t just stand for something; you show that you have what it takes to put your values into action!

Gayle’s Mission Statement [final; printed out and put where I see it daily]

Today I commit myself to connect, care, and communicate to foster flourishing in the interdependent web.

Now take a step back and look at the page in front of you.
How does it look to you? What feelings does it arouse?

Now take this mission statement and for maximum impact, do three things.

1) Revise your draft...polish your rough draft....take it to higher level, to where you are proud of it. Make it frameable. Get a kitchen timer/stopwatch...take no more than 15 minutes. No need for perfection....even write it out...be proud of it! Add any artistic touches then print it out.

2) Refer to it daily. Post it publicly, somewhere visible to you Your bathroom mirror, your front door, your desk. Let others hold you accountable. Let spouse or close friends see it! Reflect on it....at least once a day.

3) Revise it annually. Recommended practice for day after your birthday. You are a work in progress....Update it.