The Power of Purpose

Does Your Team Have a Vision?

I'll often start with a teaching team by asking them to tell me about their vision for the classroom. Then, I'll ask how their classroom vision ties into the organization's vision. And I can't begin to tell you how often teams have no idea. The program vision might be in a handbook or program manual but usually not front and present or viewed as relevant on a day-to-day basis. Well, there's a great saying that goes like this… "If you don't know where you're going, how do you know when you get there?"

So, here is my question for you. **How often do you get pulled into or distracted by people or situations that are non-value added? Meaning… they don't support your vision or goals?**

Highly effective teams have a clearly defined direction or vision. Like a road map, they are clear about the destination and what it looks like when they arrive. For example, most of our programs have a vision for the organization. While good teams are familiar with the vision and can talk about it, highly effective teams go even further and create a vision for their classrooms, home care settings, etc., and understand how their day-to-day actions tie into the organization's vision.

Why is having a shared vision or purpose important?

A strong and compelling vision is powerful because it gives us a picture of what we're looking for. For example, how many of us have planned a trip and pulled up photos and information about our destination? Think about how excited we got. Doing this for our classrooms and home care settings also creates this sense of excitement.

Many people understand their organization's vision and mission well and what is needed/expected to accomplish it. But when asked about their personal vision, they're not sure. Or their vision needs to be more specific and defined.

Or it's the opposite, meaning many will have a strong personal vision (e.g., experiencing the world) with strong goals and strategies for accomplishing them (e.g., traveling). Yet, they need to learn about the organization's vision or, again, how that vision relates to their day-to-day job responsibilities.

When there is a disconnect between work and home, it's typically due to a lack of relevancy. We simply don't see how our vision at home applies to work or vice versa.

But… what if I don't know what my vision is?

It's hard to co-create a shared vision when you don't have a personal or professional vision to start with. So, when working with clients, I often ask them what they want. Several times. Followed by my next question, which is "Why?".

Try it. Take a few minutes and brainstorm a list of 8-10 "wants". Then, go back and ask yourself why you want each item.

When you're finished, what do you notice? Were there any trends or common themes? If not, continue to brainstorm. If so, great! You've found your vision!

That's right, **Your Vision**! Not what comes once your vision is in place. But the actual vision itself.

This exercise is critical as **having a clear vision helps to set your direction**. And once you know where you're going, it's a lot easier to figure out how to get there.

How can I create a shared vision with my team?

Start with the question of what a perfect day in my classroom or family care setting would look like. What would I see or hear that would make it perfect? What would the environment look like? What would the children be doing? What would I and my team members be doing?

Brainstorm a list; don't worry about being "right" or "good." Have fun with it!

We've co-created a team vision, now what's next?

There's a term used in corporate America called "casting a vision." And it's usually a process for getting employees passionate about the organization's vision. However, as strong leaders, it's also an excellent way for us to get on board and be passionate about our own visions. Here's how it works…

There are three parts to casting a vision:

- Knowing your vision
- Seeing the vision
- Sharing the vision

In the paragraphs above, we talked about creating or knowing your vision. Part two is seeing the vision or understanding the relevancy and making connections to our everyday lives. So, once you have that vision or clear direction, ask yourself this question, **"How does this (task, activity, etc.) support my vision today?".**

If you're able to answer clearly, well done! Your vision is clear and you're moving toward it.

If you're struggling to answer, no worries! Revisit your vision or go back and try the previous exercise again. Or rethink the task you're doing. Is there a way to tweak it or maybe let it go?

This will help you to stay on track while moving steadily forward.

Part three is about sharing your vision with others, which can be both fun and daunting. It's fun to share your dreams and vision with others. To have them cheerleading you along the way or offering you different types of support. It can also be daunting if those around you don't agree with your vision or see it as valuable.

Sometimes, our vision may be apparent to us but not so clear to others. If this is the case, as a team, go back and ensure your team vision aligns with your organization's vision. Ask yourself, "If someone were to walk into my classroom, what would they see or hear that would demonstrate our vision?"

We're ready to share our vision, do you have any suggestions on how to do that?

Enter vision or collage boards! Some of us know and have done one, but this might be new for others. It can be done in many different ways: dig into those old magazines or go online and grab photos or clipart. Add words or quotes.

Again, have fun with it!

**Actual vision board created by a classroom team.
Used with Permission**

You and your teammates have done the work, now you get to bring your vision "alive".

Turning your team vision into a goal takes action and strong personal and professional leadership. That's where your personal and professional leadership comes in.

Leadership does not come from having a title. Leadership comes from having a certain state of mind, including but not limited to:

- Having a vision; maintaining that vision; and setting goals to bring the vision alive
- Being accountable (to others **and** self) and holding others accountable (to others **and** themselves)
- Striving for creativity and innovation especially as it relates to solving problems and leading the way
- Building thriving communities, where skills, knowledge and dispositions are nurtured
- Communicating effectively, reducing biases as much as possible thru constant reflection and awareness
- Having courage, knowing that leadership means sometimes making tough decisions

Reminder –
Stay "plugged in" to your team vision. The more you do, the more effective your team becomes!

Need Support with Developing Leadership within Your Teams?

Highly Effective Teams

Circle of Control
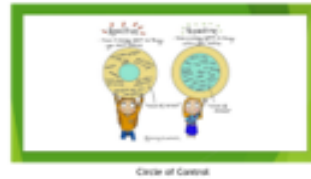
Options for virtual training:

- 90-minute overview of the **8 characteristics of Effective Teams**
- 90-minute overview of **8 Mindsets of Leadership**
- 90-minute overview of the **Team Agreement Process**
- 90-minute overview for **Managing Mindsets**
- 3-hour training on having influence and the **Circle of Control**

Options for on-site training:

- 1-day deep dive of the 8 characteristics of effective teams with reflective exercises
- 1-day deep dive of the 8 mindsets of leadership with reflective exercises
- 3-day deep dive of the 8 mindsets of leadership, plus challenges and strategies for "living into your leadership" daily, followed by a full day of effective teaming training.
- 8-month Leadership Academy which includes:
  - 3-day on-site deep dive of the 8 mindsets of leadership, plus challenges and strategies for "living into your leadership" daily, followed by a full day of effective teaming training.
  - Monthly 1-hour group coaching to reinforce training concepts while giving opportunities for practice with feedback
  - 1-day on-site "showcase" where participants can reflect on and share their outcomes from the past year

What is the cost? Reach out to me at deidre.harris@teamagreements.com and we can discuss the training that would best suit the outcomes you're looking for.