

# Creating a Vision, Purpose, and Mission

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Three of the components of developing a firm philosophy are vision, purpose, and mission. All three are closely related; in fact, they are parts of each other, but they are also individual components that have special meaning in the grand scope of a program.

Vision is simply how you see your organization, or the mental picture generated from your program. When you break down and research your program, what picture do you see? Team purpose is linked to vision and puts the vision into action. The relentless pursuit of excellence is our program's defining statement. We will work tirelessly and constantly strive to be excellent at what we do. With confidence in our priorities, we will not waver in the pursuit of being the best we can be. The mission statement puts a personal touch on vision and purpose. The mission statement gives vision and purpose internal value and creates passion for the job ahead. Knowing that your mission is part of you gives you confidence and assurance that you are pursuing your calling in life.

At Jenks, we want to mentor young men to achieve their highest potential in all areas of their lives. Our vision for the program is this: The Jenks Trojan football program will be respected as the very best high school program in the nation in helping young men achieve their highest potential. I want young men to leave our program better people than they were when they joined the team.

Many coaches are surprised when I present the vision of our program at clinics and seminars. They expect me to knock them over with a vision of robotic muscle heads who can function only on the football field. I believe in educating the whole athlete in all areas of life.

When developing a vision for your program, look deep into your heart at your core principles and values. If you write down a vision that sounds good but you don't believe in it or can't relate to it, the vision will be useless. If your vision is one of heartfelt belief and is part of you, it will empower you and your program because all decisions and thoughts will be developed with this vision in mind.

All actions, decisions, and planning are based on the purpose of the program. At Jenks, our purpose is "The relentless pursuit of excellence in high school football." Although only nine words, our purpose statement is the lighthouse of our program. It keeps us on course and brings our program's compass back on track when we stray.

We are careful not to confuse excellence with perfection. Excellence and perfection are miles apart. A team striving for excellence has hope and faith that they will accomplish great things; their goals are achievable. A team striving for perfection will eventually find frustration and dead ends. No organization is perfect or ever will be perfect. Make sure that goals are accomplished along the journey.

Our program operates with our purpose constantly in mind. Actions and decisions are made with our purpose as the flagship. Operating under this format diminishes trivial issues that can take away from truly important, program-developing actions. Purpose places everyone on the same page and helps everyone involved with the program make decisions based on a common worthy cause. Are our actions building our program or tearing it down?

A mission statement is a compilation of personal core values and principles. It expresses what you are all about. It meshes your conscience with what you truly believe. Once you are comfortable with why you are who you are and do what you do, you can accomplish amazing things and maintain a positive, fulfilling attitude about life.

Before each season begins I meet with my staff in a relaxed setting, and we discuss our

personal mission, that internal fire that drives us to be football coaches. Every person is a unique being, and every member of my staff has a different reason for working with young people, but that drive and mission are essential for fulfillment and satisfaction. We close the meeting with thoughts about our staff mission statement. Each year the exact wording of the mission statement varies a little, but always it states the principles and ideas that we live by.

An individual mission statement developed by each member of the staff is empowering. It allows each member of the staff equal footing and a feeling of ownership in the football program. Our common mission statement creates a bond that will not be broken easily.

Our recent staff mission statement was *excellence through teamwork*. From this general statement, we developed four key areas to work on to achieve our mission:

1. Build confidence, self-esteem, and a feeling of contribution within each person in our program.
2. Encourage open and honest communication from all team members.
3. Respect the dignity and diversity of each person on the team.
4. Commit to team unity through strong leadership principles and trust in each other.

The mission statement is very simple in scope, but it's our way of life. It's not superficial. It is who we are and what we believe.

My mission in life is to influence people in a positive way. I constantly strive to improve ways of motivating and assisting players, coaches, and others around me. I feel that this type of work is my calling in life. I receive a great deal of praise and accolades from the media and people in my profession, but I would trade all of it to see a young man from the inner city overcome his environmental adversity, graduate from high school, and go on to become a successful citizen.

Remember, mission statements evolve, they change, and they grow. Take great pride and care when developing your mission. Once you find what you love to do, you never have to go to work again.