



Leadership Topics

About the Commitment Contract Concept

Creating a Common Vision

In the pursuit of performance excellence a key question for leaders to ask is how can we ensure common meaning and understanding within our organisation, stakeholder group or team? *Achieving common vision is perhaps the critical starting point.* How can we increase our reciprocal commitment with others by creating a common vision?

Human beings are 'meaningful' creatures. They act on and commit to what makes sense to them. A core part of creating reciprocal commitment with others, therefore, is creating common vision plus, agreeing objectives that make sense to all parties.

Accepting Change

As we negotiate for the commitment of others, much of the time we are asking people to change or to commit to something that is different from what currently exists. People resist commitment to change unless they can visualise the possibility of something different and see themselves in that visual picture as both successful and satisfied.

Whenever people cannot imagine the possibility of something different they will hold onto what currently exists. Whenever they cannot see themselves as successful and satisfied in the new scenario they will clearly not commit to it.

In addition to committing when the vision of success and satisfaction is possible, people will also commit when the vision they have of the future offers the possibility of important results. It can be argued that people 'grow up' and become generous and appropriately self-sacrificing when they can see a bigger picture and confirm in their minds that the cause is 'important.' In short, people generally want to contribute to and commit to building a better world.

Commitment to Future Relationships

When we have had a history of conflict with someone the tendency of both parties may well be to focus on the past. In focusing on the past, we tend to want to pass ownership for whatever did not work to the other person. In short, we get into the '*Blame Game.*'



Create A Common Vision (cont)

We argue about who did what first or last or who did what more – or who did not do it at all.....We tend to want to repeat ourselves ... frustration then sets in because the other person is not willing to admit it is all 'their fault.' This pattern repeats itself in both our personal lives our professional lives. In both settings we dig a grave for ourselves!

The way to get out of our rut is to focus the conversation and our relationship 'out of the past and into the present and future.' We need to ask both ourselves and other parties in the frame whether we collectively perceive any value or benefit in building and sustaining an ongoing relationship. If the answer is 'no', then we should cut our losses and figure out the least costly way to disengage. if the answer is 'yes' - we are COMMITTED to a future ongoing relationship – we need to decide what we want that relationship to look like and then commit to what we need to do to make that vision our shared reality. The critical word here is 'shared.'

Unless we get a commitment to the future we waste enormous time and resources arguing about the past .This is holds true in both personal and business relationships.

- *The couple that keeps punishing each other for something that happened in the past needs to decide whether the parties are really committed to the relationship.*
- *The company and customer engaged in a blame game around responsibility for products that failed to meet specifications, need to decide whether they want to do business together in the future.*
- *The union representatives and management team that keep telling war stories about what they did to each other in the past need to decide whether they want to build the business together or simply destroy it.*
- *The two employees who keep gossiping about each other in order to get people 'on side' need to be confronted about 'growing up' and resolving their issues with each other – either find a way to be committed to each others' success or get out of each others' way.*

In each of the above examples if we do not get some commitment around how we want to be together differently in the future we will remain stuck in the past.



Create A Common Vision (cont)

Another dimension of creating a shared vision is having a statement within your group about who you are, what you do, who you do it for, and why you are doing it. To answer these questions is to define your mission together.

One of the reasons for lack of commitment in groups is because they are not clear about their mission. They are not clear about what their business is, what they are supposed to do, who they are supposed to do it for, or why it is important that they do it at all. When people have differing understandings of their mission they tend to work at cross purposes with each other - often unintentionally.

It is also important to realize that the mission of a work group or indeed, a total organization will continually evolve as the external environment changes. When the world changes around us different responses are required. How we produce and deliver our products and services one year may not be adequate or effective for the following year. It is not only how we do things but the products and services we provide and for whom we provide them may need to change. As a result, our fundamental mission will change. A reality of a constantly changing world is a constantly evolving mission. To stay abreast or ahead of the change – to know when we need to redefine our mission and to know how we need to revise our operating systems thus ensuring quality and customer satisfaction in the future – requires the ability to both understand the present and to envision the future.

Creating Your Personal Vision

At the core of this leadership challenge is your personal vision. Your understanding and acceptance of yourself in the world fundamentally determines the results you are able to deliver over time.

Your vision of yourself is both the result of and the key influence on your level of thinking ability. It determines whether you behave like a child and produce the results of a child or operate as an adult and produce 'grown-up' results.

Your vision of yourself grows out of your beliefs and determines whether you experience yourself 'living out of scarcity or living out of abundance.' Your vision of what is possible for you with others determines the quality of relationships you are able to create and enjoy with others. It ultimately determines the degree of leadership you can achieve.

Your understanding and acceptance of yourself determine your ability to listen to the meaning behind the behaviour of others. It determines your ability to understand and accept others and to make it safe for them to understand and ultimately accept you.



Create A Common Vision (4)

Your trust in yourself empowers you to not be self-protective and reactive. It empowers you to step back and to pay attention to what is going on within you and around you. It is this trust that allows you to address the blocks that arise in the form of relationship conflicts, ineffective processes and disagreements about criteria for reconciliation and settlement.

Your personal vision of yourself – what you understand about yourself; what you accept about yourself; what rights and obligations you believe you have; what value you give to yourself and what you believe is possible for you – your personal vision determines your success. It determines what you are able to do on your own and it determines what you are able to do with others. If you don't know who you are and what you want, how can anyone else know and support you? In short, how can you lead effectively?

There is only one way to get the results you want – you have to believe it is possible and that you have a right to take a lead. There is only one way to get others committed to your vision – it has to integrate with their personal vision.

At any given time in life we have two choices.

1. We can *hold on*
2. We can *move on*.

It is important to know when to hold and when to move. Vision will inform our choice. OUR VISION CREATES OUR FUTURE.

For information on Equilearn's, 4 hour Conversation on Creating a Common Vision

Email: [info @equilearn.org](mailto:info@equilearn.org)

