



NAPOLEON HILL

Principle 14: Cultivate Creative Vision

Creative Vision Is Needed Today

Creative vision requires you to stimulate your imagination to work toward your definite major purpose and to put the results of that imagination to work. Expressed by people unafraid of criticism, creative vision is responsible for the shape of civilization today. It has brought every advancement in thought, science, and mechanics that allows our current standard of living. It inspires you to pioneer and experiment with new ideas in every field. It is always on the lookout for better ways of doing things. Creative vision belongs only to people who have the habit of going the extra mile, for it recognizes no nine-to-five working hours and it isn't concerned with monetary rewards. Its aim is doing the impossible.

This chapter will give you great examples of creative vision and show you how to understand the process by which it works so that you can apply it in your own life.

Synthetic Imagination

Imagination, like reasoning, takes two forms: synthetic and creative imagination. Each can contribute to the betterment of your own life and the world around you through creative vision. Synthetic imagination combines previously recognized ideas, concepts, plans, or facts in a new way or puts them to new use. An excellent example of synthetic imagination is Edison's invention of the light bulb. He began with one recognized fact that other people had discovered: A wire could be heated by electricity until it produced light. The problem was that the intense heat quickly burned the wire out. The light never lasted more than a few minutes.

Edison failed more than ten thousand times in his attempt to control this heat. When he found the method, it was by applying another common fact which had simply eluded everyone else. He realized that charcoal is produced by setting wood on fire, covering it with soil, and allowing the fire to smolder until the wood is charred. The soil permits only enough air to reach the fire to keep it burning without blazing. When Edison recognized this fact, his imagination immediately associated it with the idea of heating the wire. He placed the wire inside a bottle, pumped out most of the air, and produced the first incandescent light. It burned for eight and a half hours. Edison's creative vision depended on several important principles of the science of personal achievement. He applied the habit of going the extra mile because he labored without immediate pay. He worked with definiteness of purpose and was inspired by applied faith to carry on with his work through an incredible number of failures that would have broken most people.

Finally he applied the mastermind principle by assembling a team of skilled chemists and mechanics to perfect his invention, finding the right kind and thickness of wire, the right quantity of air to leave in the bulb, the best way to construct the bulb, so that his invention took on the most efficient form possible. Synthetic imagination does not depend on having tremendous personal advantages. Edison had spent only three months in grade school, had supported himself for many years as a telegrapher, and was fired from almost every job he held. He began to lose his hearing early on and eventually became almost completely deaf. But he turned his life around through definiteness of purpose, the habit of going the extra mile, and applied faith.

Thomas Stemberg was a successful executive in the grocery business. Working with a Connecticut-based chain, he opened a string of high-volume mega supermarkets that offered consumers huge selections at low prices. The stores were very successful, and Stemberg was building a sterling reputation in his business. But he wasn't

satisfied. He saw the prosperous grocery megastores and wondered if the megastore concept couldn't be applied to something else. He wanted to start a large business in a big market underserved by modern distribution methods, offering customers a good value. He formed a mastermind alliance with Leo Kahn, the man who had pioneered the grocery megastores, and in 1986 he opened Staples, the first mega-business-supply store.

Stemberg's idea was so smart, so right that it immediately inspired competitors like Office Depot and OfficeMax, to revolutionize the business supply industry. Despite the competition, Staples surpassed even Stemberg's ambitious expectations. In just seven years sales exceeded one billion dollars. Thomas Stemberg didn't invent the superstore idea, but he applied it to a market that had been quiet and humdrum for decades. He developed a definite plan for attaining his goal; he formed a mastermind alliance with Kahn, the man who understood the concept best; he put his plan into action with applied faith; and he went the extra mile by offering customers more and better service than they could get anywhere else. Synthetic imagination puts the entire sum of human knowledge at your disposal, but like any other part of the science of success, it requires your dedication to making your vision into reality.

Creative Imagination

Creative imagination has its base in the subconscious. It is the medium through which you recognize new ideas and newly learned facts. All your efforts to impress your definite major purpose on your subconscious work to stimulate your creative imagination. F. W. Woolworth was working as a clerk in a hardware store. He was, at that point, simply determined to be a good and valuable employee. When his boss complained about piles of out-of-date goods that weren't selling, Woolworth's imagination went to work. "I can sell those items," he told his boss, and with his employer's permission, he set up a table in the store, laid out all of the dud merchandise, and priced everything at ten cents. The stock sold remarkably fast, and soon the owner was searching for anything he could lay his hands on to put on that table, which became the most profitable spot in the store. Woolworth had the faith to apply his new idea to an entire store; his boss didn't. The Woolworth chain of five-and-dimes quickly spread across the nation, earning him a fortune. His former boss once commented, "Every word I used in turning that man's offer down has cost me about a million dollars I might have earned." Woolworth was so committed to his then-modest purpose of being a valuable employee that his imagination was ready to back up his commitment with powerful ideas. He certainly went the extra mile for his boss, but because that man didn't have the vision that Woolworth had, other investors formed Woolworth's mastermind alliance and profited from it.

Creative Vision Goes Beyond Imagination

Creative vision is more than an interest in material things; it is a commitment to a better future. Synthetic imagination springs from experience and reason; creative imagination springs from your commitment to your definite purpose. Creative vision depends heavily upon creative imagination, but it is also more than that. Imagination recognizes limitations, handicaps, and opposition; creative vision rides over these as if they did not exist, for it has its base in Infinite Intelligence.

One of the purest examples I know of creative vision is illustrated by the story of Dr. Elmer Gates. Gates was an inventor who worked at the same time as Edison, but his methods and background were very different. He was a highly trained scientist, and his patents actually outnumbered Edison's two to one. Gates applied creative vision in a remarkably simple process. He would enter a soundproof room, sit down at a table with pencil and paper, and turn off the lights. He then concentrated his thoughts on a particular problem and waited for the ideas that he needed for its solution.

Sometimes ideas flowed to Gates immediately; sometimes he had to wait for as much as an hour before they came. Occasionally nothing happened. At other times he perceived solutions to other problems that he hadn't even been thinking about.

Dr. Gates's creative vision transcended imagination because he had developed it into a faculty he could call upon at will. Creative vision produces results, not alibis.

Creative Vision Is Needed Today

There are countless calls for creative vision in the world today.

- We need forms of energy that do not pollute or drain our environment.
- We need schools that capture the attention of our young people and teach them to better themselves.
- We need cures and vaccines for terrible diseases that threaten the earth's people.
- We need people who can show small business how to use and profit from rapidly changing technology.
- We need plans for controlling the cost of health care and making it affordable for every honest worker without destroying the incentive of the professionals who provide it.

There is both challenge and opportunity in these needs, and I raise them only to start you thinking about the scope of the possibilities for creative vision. There is a place in America for every person who can render any type of useful service and is willing to render it with the right mental attitude. If you have creative vision, you will recognize this and profit from it. You will never complain of a lack of opportunity. Great leaders of every generation in this country began their careers in humble occupations. Andrew Carnegie was a bobbin boy in a textile mill. W. Clement Stone was a newsboy. Harry Truman was a haberdasher. Ruth Bader Ginsburg had to become a law secretary when she graduated from law school because judges couldn't imagine hiring a woman clerk, yet now she sits on the Supreme Court. It makes little difference where you begin. The important thing to ask is: Where are you going? What motive inspires you to give your best? Are you willing to go the extra mile? Are you a clock-watcher, eager for the day to end? Or do you look for the opportunity to make yourself indispensable to others?

These are the questions you must ask yourself. If you have creative vision, you can answer them. You know where you are going, you know what you desire, and you know that life never lets you get something for nothing without eventually forcing you to pay more for it than it is worth.

When you have creative vision, you know that you can succeed only by helping others to succeed, and you know that it isn't necessary for anyone to fail in the process.

Creative vision lets you make decisions quickly. And it lets you change those decisions as soon as you realize a mistake has been made. It frees you from fear of others, for it makes you feel at peace with yourself in your knowledge that you are fair and honest. It's a common human trait to envy people who have attained success, looking at them only in the moments of their triumph and forgetting the prices they had to pay. Often we suspect that they owe their success to some sort of pull, luck, or dishonesty.

But creative vision makes you keenly aware of the price of personal achievement because you yourself know its labors. You understand the benefits of sharing your blessings, experiences, and opportunities with others; you know that your success actually depends on it. If you feel the need for a creative vision in your life, you can begin to develop it by getting on better terms with your own conscience, inspiring yourself with greater self-reliance, providing yourself with a definite major purpose, and keeping your mind so busy with that purpose that you have no time left for fear and doubt. Nothing will happen in your life that you do not inspire by your own initiative.

Creative vision is the power which inspires the development of that personal initiative.