

AGREEMENT ONE

I agree to live my mission.

Cherish your visions. Cherish your ideals. Cherish the music that stirs in your heart, the beauty that forms in your mind, the loveliness that drapes your purest thoughts, for out of them will grow all delightful conditions, all heavenly environment; of these, if you but remain true to them, your world will at last be built.

— James Allen

Have you ever heard yourself say, “Some day, when I have the time (energy, money, emotional strength), I’ll . . .”? How would you finish that sentence? For some people, it might be: “. . . I’ll take up painting.” Or, “. . . go on a cross-country trip . . . read great books just for pleasure . . . take my kids camping . . . study to be an architect . . . move to a location I truly love.” Whatever it is, it’s something you really want to do.

But when? When you retire? When you have the money? When the kids grow up? When you have some “free time”? For most people, the sad truth is, “some day” never comes.

Now, here’s the really good news: if “some day” seems impossibly far off, we always have *today*. Everyone does. In fact, today is the *only* day we have.

What if you could feel fulfilled today, rather than waiting

for tomorrow? In a very real sense, you can. How? By identifying what it is that you love, what is truly important to you, then letting that guide your daily actions.

This Agreement completely frees us from the “some day . . .” trap. It asks us to identify our mission, then live it—right now, *today*. This Agreement asks us to live our truth—to make our everyday choices and activities an expression of our authentic selves.

Does this mean we can have anything we want? No, of course not. But it does mean we can incorporate the *essence* of what we want into our lives in some way, every day, and be that much closer to living the life of our dreams.

When Alice asked the Cheshire Cat which road she should take, he replied, “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.” “I don’t care much where—” she began to say, and he cheerfully replied, “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go!”

What road are you taking? Where does it lead? Asking and answering this question is the first step in creating a life of great fulfillment, its rewards the fruit not of lofty and far-away goals, but of the actions of everyday life.

What Is My Mission?

Mission is a magnificent word; it can also be very practical and immediate. Your *mission* is simply your answer to the question, “What would I most love to do?”

For some, “mission” is a calling, what you might call a “life purpose.” For others, being “on a mission” has to do with accomplishing a specific goal, which may take years to achieve, or months, or days. For some, this Agreement means “connecting into the mission of the organization I’ve chosen to work with.”

Your mission may be any of these, or all of these, or something else entirely. There’s no “right way” to define your

mission. Our mission is whatever we choose it to be. The only thing that's important is that it is *your* answer to the question, "What would I most love to do?" What you do speaks clearly about who you are.

Much has been written about the importance of identifying our mission. In *The Co-Creator's Handbook: An Experiential Guide for Discovering Your Life's Purpose*, Carolyn Anderson and Katharine Roske talk about "being attracted to your chosen work."¹³ In *What Should I Do With My Life?*, Po Bronson describes his discovery that our true life mission often comes to us not in a blindingly clear epiphany but, as Bronson puts it, "in a whisper."¹⁴ Learning to follow that whisper may be the most important thing we ever do. In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and again in *First Things First*, Stephen Covey beautifully explains how easily our mission—those things that are most important to us—can be crowded out of our lives if we let the trivia and minutiae of everyday life take precedence.^{15,16}

However you choose to explore, examine and define your mission, the critical thing is to do it, then ask yourself this all-important question: "Is this something I am living every day?"

Your mission needn't be something carved in stone. My own mission has changed many times, and it continues to evolve as I do. As I grow older, I find that my personal purpose has become less task-oriented and more focused on how I live in the present. Today, my mission is:

To enjoy life and experience love in every moment.

Here are some examples of mission statements that have guided me over the years. Some are rather lofty (and make me chuckle as I review them now); some were simple, practical and profoundly life-changing:

- To facilitate the alignment of leaders.
- To foster an environment of genuine collaboration in which everyone feels empowered to express their individual and

collective potential.

- To raise a child who is able to make wise decisions about his health and safety and who is capable of giving and receiving love.
- To be a supportive, loving partner.
- To liberate myself and all humanity to realize our full potential.
- To make a positive difference in the life of each person I meet.
- To foster a growing network of people who choose to be physically, emotionally, spiritually and financially healthy.

Feel free to use one of these mission statements if it feels right for you, or adapt one of them to fit you better, or create one that speaks from your own heart. And don't get hung up on the word "mission." Simply consider what gives you great joy and fulfillment.

Take some time to wander through your fondest dreams, visions, goals and purpose. Write down the words that come to you.

Please do this before you continue reading this chapter. If you feel stuck, you may want to get step-by-step help online at either of these web sites: www.truthzone.com/htdocs/planner.html, or www.franklincovey.com/missionbuilder/index.html. If you are not ready to write your mission statement, move on to another Agreement that may be more helpful to you at this time.

What I Would Most Love To Do

So, I might say my mission in life is:

Living Courageously

Simply *identifying* your mission can have revolutionary results all by itself. Your mission may make itself felt and start working in your life right away.

You may find, once you’ve really taken the time to sit down and write out a statement of your mission, vision or purpose, that what you’ve written doesn’t jive with your everyday life. You may want to make some changes . . . possibly even big changes.

This can take courage. Indeed, as I mentioned in the introduction, it takes courage to live a positive life—and I encourage you to do it. Both *courage* and *encourage* come from the same root word, *cor*, which means “heart.” Having the courage to find and live your mission means following your heart—“putting your heart into it.”

Sometimes people discover that the mission of the organization they belong to is not consistent with their personal values; in other words, they may be in the wrong place. If you are unhappy in your workplace, could it be that you are uncomfortable trying to live your company’s mission?

As organizational development consultants, my husband Glenn and I would often warn company executives that when we were finished with our team vision and values work, some of their employees (or even the executives themselves) might choose to leave the organization.

We once offered this cautionary observation to the CEO of a company with about 40 employees. She replied that she understood, and that it was all right: she would rather have

only those people who were dedicated to her mission. After we had completed our work with her company, several employees did indeed choose to leave. One of these was a woman who said, “I’m going to sell my house, get an RV and write my book.” She had discovered that she didn’t connect to the mission of the organization with which she was working. She felt she was wasting her life by not living her own mission.

This woman was no longer willing to settle for “some day” By identifying what she wanted to be doing *today*, she also left the CEO’s company in a stronger position, with greater solidarity of purpose among the remaining employees. This woman’s brave decision and her commitment to follow Agreement One resulted in a win for her *and* a win for the company.

Putting My Mission to the Test

In 1985, at the age of 34, I identified my first personal mission: *to facilitate the alignment of leaders*. This clarified desire soon proved to play a defining role in an important life decision. Indeed, it turned out to have a major impact on the rest of my life.

Glenn and I had just finished a two-year business consulting contract and I was ready to make my next major work commitment. Just then, two situations came my way. I was offered a well-paying contract with a major company to help develop its computer-user documentation. At the same time, a good friend asked if I would help her complete preparations for a forthcoming Soviet-American Citizens’ Summit to be held in Washington, DC.

The first offer promised all the benefits of a great professional contract: it would engage me in work that would use my technical writing skills, would be nearby my home, and would pay me well. If I accepted the second offer instead, I would have to leave my home for three months of long days on a project that was behind schedule—and for which I would

need to raise funds. At the same time, there was also a certain nobility of purpose and historic dimension to this second option, which was attractive to me.

As I wrestled with this decision, Glenn asked me: “Which situation more closely matches your personal mission? Which is more likely to help you *facilitate the alignment of leaders?*” In other words, Glenn held up the yardstick of Agreement One.

It was no contest.

Little did I know where this short-term commitment would lead. During those three months, President Reagan and President Gorbachev met to move the Cold War toward its end. Our bringing together former “enemies” launched collaborative efforts that subtly reshaped history. During that auspicious week in 1988 in Washington, DC, relationships between Soviets and Americans were begun that deepened over the course of more than 300 projects, including annual multinational conferences on education; shared computer technology for environmentally-sound practices; a joint study on the treatment of war trauma; projects promoting the new Soviet entrepreneurships, from handcraft businesses to quick-print shops; collaborative films to expose and eliminate stereotypes; peaceful exchanges among military personnel from different nations; telecommunications projects and space education.

And it didn’t stop there. I could not have predicted it at the time, but my decision also opened the door to many more years of fulfilling my mission in other situations—situations I likely would never have discovered otherwise.

Because of our work on the Soviet-American Citizens’ Summit, our team was invited to help design the first Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival in Oxford, England, and then the second Global Forum on the Environment in Moscow. These Summits were to bring together some of the greatest minds and hearts of our generation—people who were typically kept apart—to collaborate on the future of our world.

During these events, I had the privilege of working alongside such leaders as Mother Teresa, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Hopi Elder Thomas Banyanca, Iroquois Chief Oren Lyons, the Very Reverend Dean Morton of St. John’s Cathedral in New York, US Senator Al Gore, cabinet members from countries all over the world, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who hosted our closing event of the 1990 Global Forum at the Kremlin in Moscow.

Would any of these opportunities have come into my life if I hadn’t clearly defined and followed my personal mission? It’s highly doubtful. I am an ordinary person who simply took the time to consider what makes me feel really good, wrote this down as a personal mission statement, and then used it to guide my actions.

Your Mission Lives in the Present

The focus of Agreement One is not on accomplishing a specific mission or goal, but rather on the impact our missions have on our everyday lives. In other words, the importance of your mission is not to *achieve* it, but to *live* it; not to *wish for* it, but to *personify* it.

There is a huge distinction between the two—and recognizing that distinction can make all the difference in the world. This happened, in fact, when I first arrived at the site of preparations for the first Soviet-American Citizens’ Summit.

The Summit’s stated mission was: “To deepen relationships between Soviet and American citizens by creating and collaborating on joint projects serving their nations and the world.” When I first walked into that office (just blocks from the Hart Senate Office Building where I’d worked a few years earlier) with only three months left before the event, I was stunned by the contrast between mission and current reality.

Despite having so mighty and life-changing a mission, the Summit’s office environment looked like so many others I had

encountered. Chaos reigned; tensions were high; communication was strained. All eyes were on the clock as it ticked away, the three-month deadline looming ominously. There was more work to be done than these intelligent, dedicated and caring people could possibly complete in time. Everyone was getting burned out.

When we arrived, we asked everyone to take a breath. Glenn and I took the staff away for a day of remembering—remembering what they had hoped this mission would accomplish, remembering how they had felt when they first began working together for this noble cause. They reconnected to their chosen mission: *To deepen relationships by creating and collaborating on joint projects.*

If the staff were living that mission every day, they would be deepening relationships among *themselves* as they collaborated on creating the forthcoming Summit—and in so doing, would be serving their goal as well. But without a process to illuminate this connection, this powerful mission was lost in the hustle and bustle of daily preparations and relegated to a hope for the future, rather than serving as a guide for today.

Glenn and I introduced the Revolutionary Agreements to the staff. The group modified them to serve the special needs of this extraordinary project. Everyone agreed to take time each morning to gather together and listen as each member of the team read one Agreement aloud. We began by reading the mission of the Summit and re-committing ourselves to live our chosen mission.

Due to the brilliant inspiration and historic efforts of Rama Vernon, Director of the Center for Soviet-American Dialogue, and Barbara Marx Hubbard, the Summit’s visionary Program Chairperson, the result was magnificent. Hundreds of projects were born or fostered that February; many achieved a life of their own over the ensuing years. The Summit staff “walked their talk” by living their mission; as a result, they changed the world.

Mission in the Workplace

Think for a moment about your place of work. Do you know your work mission?

Let's suppose you work for a company whose mission includes these words: "to surprise and delight our customers." How would you live this mission every day?

What would you observe in a workplace where *everyone* lived the mission, "to surprise and delight our customers"? Which would you be more likely to hear: "Sorry, that's not my job," or, "Sure, I'll be glad to help!"? Would you expect to see people meeting the minimum required of them, or striving to do their very best? Would you see people plodding dully through their tasks, or would you see the sparkle of creativity flowing? Might you see spontaneous celebrations when the customers *were* surprised and delighted? (And wouldn't that delight *you*?)

In his wonderful book, *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, Michael Gerber describes his experience of staff embodying their mission at a resort hotel where he happened to stay one night.¹⁷

The hotel's objective was to give their customers a sense that this was a special place, created by special people, doing what they do in the best possible way. How did that manifest? During the brief check-in process, the clerk made a reservation for Gerber in their restaurant. After his meal, he enjoyed a brandy. Returning to his room eager to light a fire in the fireplace on this chilly night, he found the fire already burning, his bed turned down, and in addition to the usual mints, there was another glass of brandy by his bedside. A card welcomed him for his first stay and invited him to call day or night with any needs. In the morning, he awoke to the smell of coffee and discovered another note: "Your brand of coffee. Enjoy!" A polite knock on the door led him to discover a newspaper. But not just any newspaper—*his favorite* newspaper.

These actions and others like them not only surprised and

delighted Gerber—they also turned him into a customer for life. The employees at that hotel knew the hotel’s mission, and they lived it.

What if you and your work team were to spend a few hours together in a relaxed setting to explore the question, “How could we live our mission today?” How might this approach enhance your work life? And how might this strategy positively affect the people who are the beneficiaries of your organization’s mission?

Mission in the Schools

What would happen if the people who ran our schools and classrooms were guided by an official mission? My son’s elementary school, Eagle Crest, had such a mission, fashioned around an anagram for “Eagle”:

- Expect nothing less than success.
- Always think before we act.
- Grow and learn in new and different ways.
- Learn to accept responsibility for our actions.
- Everyone practices kindness and consideration.

What if our schools’ staff members—principals, teachers, administrative staff, janitors—lived such a mission as a model for our children and our communities? If school administrators were to truly “expect nothing less than success,” they would hold their teachers and our children in the highest esteem, expecting all of them to reach the height of their potential.

What if practicing “kindness and consideration” were regularly noticed and rewarded? How might this affect the choices our children make? Indeed, Michael’s school *did* practice this. As a result, the children were often rewarded by the principal when caught doing something that exceeded their daily pledge

of this mission statement. In other words, as Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson put it in their classic *The One-Minute Manager*, they were routinely “caught doing something right.”¹⁸

Mission in the Family

What kind of impact would it have if you and your family created a *family mission*? What would you like to accomplish together? What kind of interactions would you like to have?

What if once a week, or once a month (or even once a year) you sat down together to review your mission statement and consider how well you were all doing in living your family’s mission?

Regardless of our backgrounds, we share one thing in common: at the core of our being is a desire to love and be loved. What if each of us consciously chose to include “loving” as a part of our individual mission? And what if we let this mission guide our daily actions? Surely our lives would never be the same. Indeed, we would have changed our world in the blink of an eye.

On the next page is a mission statement that Glenn and I and our son Michael co-created for our family. After we had finished writing it, we laminated it and now display it prominently in our home.

“I agree to live my mission” is the first of these twelve pathways for living a positive life. Take the time to consider how to embody this agreement so that rather than working *towards* fulfilling your mission, your mission gives you the fulfillment you deserve *today*.

TO LOVE AND RESPECT - A 15 YEAR PACT -

We, Michael Justin Head, Marian Linda Head and Glenn Eugene Head, enter into this agreement on July 4, 1999 with gladness and joy. We choose to treat each other with respect, honoring each other as the unique individuals we are. Although there are times when we may disagree, we will refrain from being nasty and mean, endeavoring to always be loving and respectful.

We understand that there may be times that we forget this agreement, and we ask of each other that we be gently reminded, and allowed 24 hours to fully remember and begin once again to treat each other with respect. We will always forgive each other these short lapses, and remember that we are family, forever bonded in love through God our Creator.

By signing below, we show our agreement to treat each other with love and respect for 15 years, at which time this agreement is renewable.

Michael Justin Head
Michael Justin Head

Marian Linda Head
Marian Linda Head

Glenn Eugene Head
Glenn Eugene Head



Words of Wisdom

"I agree to live my mission."

*Destiny is no matter of chance; it is a matter of choice.
It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved.*

—William Jennings Bryan

Man's ideal state is realized when he has fulfilled the purpose for which he is born. And what is it that reason demands of him? Something very easy—that he live in accordance with his own nature.

—Seneca

*When you are making a success of something,
it's not work. It's a way of life.*

—Andrew Granatelli

*I dream my painting,
and then I paint my dream.*

—Vincent Van Gogh

*It's not enough to have lived.
We should be determined to live for something.
May I suggest that it be creating joy for others,
sharing what we have for the betterment of personkind,
bringing hope to the lost and love to the lonely.*

—Leo Buscaglia

*First say to yourself what you would be;
and then do what you have to do.*

—Epictetus

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment
before starting to improve the world.*

—Anne Frank

*All know the way;
few actually walk it.*

—Bodhidharma

*The single most important thing
you can do in business is to be yourself.*

—Sherry Lansing

*Concentrate all your thoughts on the task at hand.
The sun's rays do not burn until brought to a focus.*

—Alexander Graham Bell

*Here is a test to find whether
your mission on earth is finished:
If you're alive, it isn't.*

—Richard Bach

When you discover your mission, you will feel its demand.

*It will fill you with enthusiasm
and a burning desire to get to work on it.*

—W. Clement Stone

*Don't ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself
what makes you come alive. And then go do that.*

—Harold Whitman

To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest.

—Mahatma Gandhi

Focus on Today

I agree to live my mission—TODAY!

Here are a few simple steps you can take to more fully live the truth of who you are, today and every day. Write your answers in your journal—then follow your heart's desire.

1. My mission (passion, purpose, vision, or dream) is to:

Example: Have the financial freedom to follow my heart every day.

2. What are three ways I can experience the essence of my mission every day?

Example: Make walking with a different friend every day a priority. This is following my heart and also helps my pursuit of financial freedom: my friends are wise counselors and advisors, and we inspire each other.

3. What is one small change I can make *today* to live the essence of my mission?

Example: Enjoy fun, relaxing time after dinner each evening playing with my family, rather than returning to my home office to work.