**Personal Strategy (STRATEGY)**

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Now, let’s move from destiny to STRATEGY. Remember, that the primary question of strategy is, “*How do I get there?”*

Knowing your destiny and having a functional mission statement can be helpful in several ways:

1. It gives you a sense of meaningful purpose;
2. It gives you direction for the future;
3. It helps you evaluate yourself in terms of our priorities and schedule;
4. It helps you gain perspective;
5. It helps you to become more focused; and
6. It helps you in decision making.

All of this is true in a general sense, but knowing your destiny and having a functional mission statement is only the beginning. Without a realistic plan of action and appropriate accountability you probably will not realize (at least to the fullest extent) your destiny. We need a STRATEGY to help us move toward destiny.

Remember that there needs to be a balance of being and doing in our development as leaders. We need a plan that takes into consideration both personal transformation and leadership success. Before you start developing your action plan, let’s review our three steps to discovering focus through developing an effect mission statement and strategic plan.

**Steps for developing an effective mission statement (DESTINY) and Strategic Plan (STRATEGY)**

*Step 1: What has God taught me from his Word and/or life experience? (Purpose – “being”)*

* Biblical core values – personal values from the Word that help form our worldview and lifestyle
* Core values – personal values that motivate life and leadership behavior

*Step 2: What is God calling me to accomplish? (Mission – “doing”)*

* Gift mix – combined cluster of spiritual gifts, natural abilities, and acquired skills
* Vision – best sense of God’s future

***Step 3: How do you plan to accomplish your mission? (Strategy – “intentionality”)***

* **Strategic Plan – a plan to accomplish God’s vision (mission)**
* **Accountability – standard and structure for evaluation, encouragement, and intentionality**

Now, let’s take a look at the characteristics of an effective strategic plan of action. Setting goals is a critical beginning. Question: “How do you eat an elephant?” Answer: “One bite at a time over a very long period of time.” You may be a little intimidated by the size of the vision that God is beginning (or already has) revealed to you. It is exciting, but how in the world are you going to realize it? You need a prayerful and careful plan to “take the next bite.”

**SMART Goal**

A basic set of guidelines for establishing effective goals is the SMART approach:

1. **S**pecific
2. **M**easurable
3. **A**chievable
4. **R**elevant (or related to vision)
5. **T**imeframe

Once goals have been established and action plans formulated, “reality checks”need to be addressed so that you do not set unrealistic goals that will lead to undue frustration and even failure. To assist in this, you may want to talk your plan through with a mentor/coach or wise friend. You may want to talk through some questions like:

1. What important steps are missing?
2. How could your plan be more effective?
3. How and when will you evaluate your progress?
4. How can I help you?
5. In what ways do you need me to hold you accountable to your plan?

Follow through is critical for any strategic plan of action to come to completion. Being teachable and faithful in follow through are critical here (see II Timothy 2: 2). Great goals and good intentions are not enough! Follow through involves doing the work of real and substantive change, growth, development, and maturing over the long haul.

Issues of support, resources, accountability, evaluation, modification, and celebration of progress are critical, especially if the action plan involves major personal and lifestyle changes. Prayer is another powerful tool in the emerging leader’s tool box. Never underestimate the power of prayer. It can be a difference maker at critical times of distraction, discouragement, and/or dying to one’s self.