

# How to Articulate a Vision for Your School

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A Practical Step-by-Step Guide for School Leaders

# Why Vision Matters

A clear vision:

- Guides decisions and actions
- Unites your team
- Inspires long-term purpose
- Differentiates your school or organisation



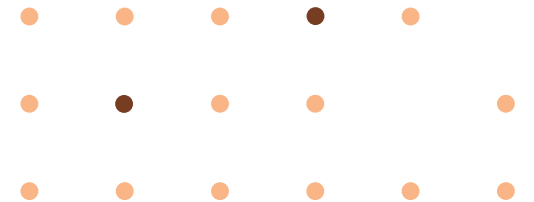
“Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare.” — Japanese Proverb

# Step 1: Understand What Vision Is

A vision is a mental image of a possible and desirable future.

It combines:

- Core values
- Core purpose
- A vivid picture of the future



"There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?" - Robert F. Kennedy

# Step 2: Explore Key Contributors to Vision

Vision is made up of:

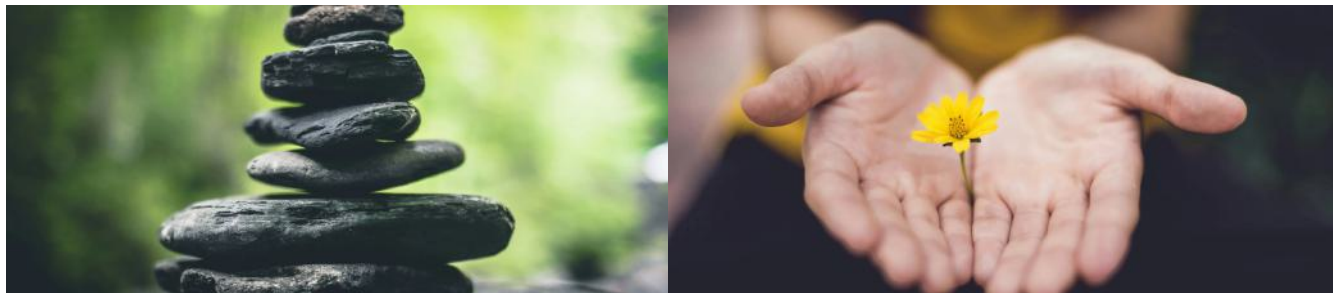
- **Core Values** – The 3–5 guiding beliefs that define who you are.
- **Core Purpose** – Why your organisation exists.
- **Mission (Desired Future)** – A compelling and enduring future state that motivates and unifies.



"The trouble with the future is, that it usually arrives when you least expect it." - Arnold H. Glasgow,



# Step 3: Identify Your Core Values



Ask your team:

- If we started again in a new field, what values would we keep?
- If you retired tomorrow, which organisational values would you still live by?
- What work values would you pass on to your children?

Choose only values that are deeply held, non-negotiable, and meaningful across the school.

"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world." Joel A. Barker



# Step 4: Define Your Core Purpose

Your purpose never changes—but it inspires change.

Try this exercise with team members:

1. What do we do?
2. Why?
3. Why?
4. Why?
5. Why?

By the fifth “why,” you’re close to the soul of your school.

Examples:

- Disney: “To make people happy”
- 3M: “To solve unsolved problems innovatively”

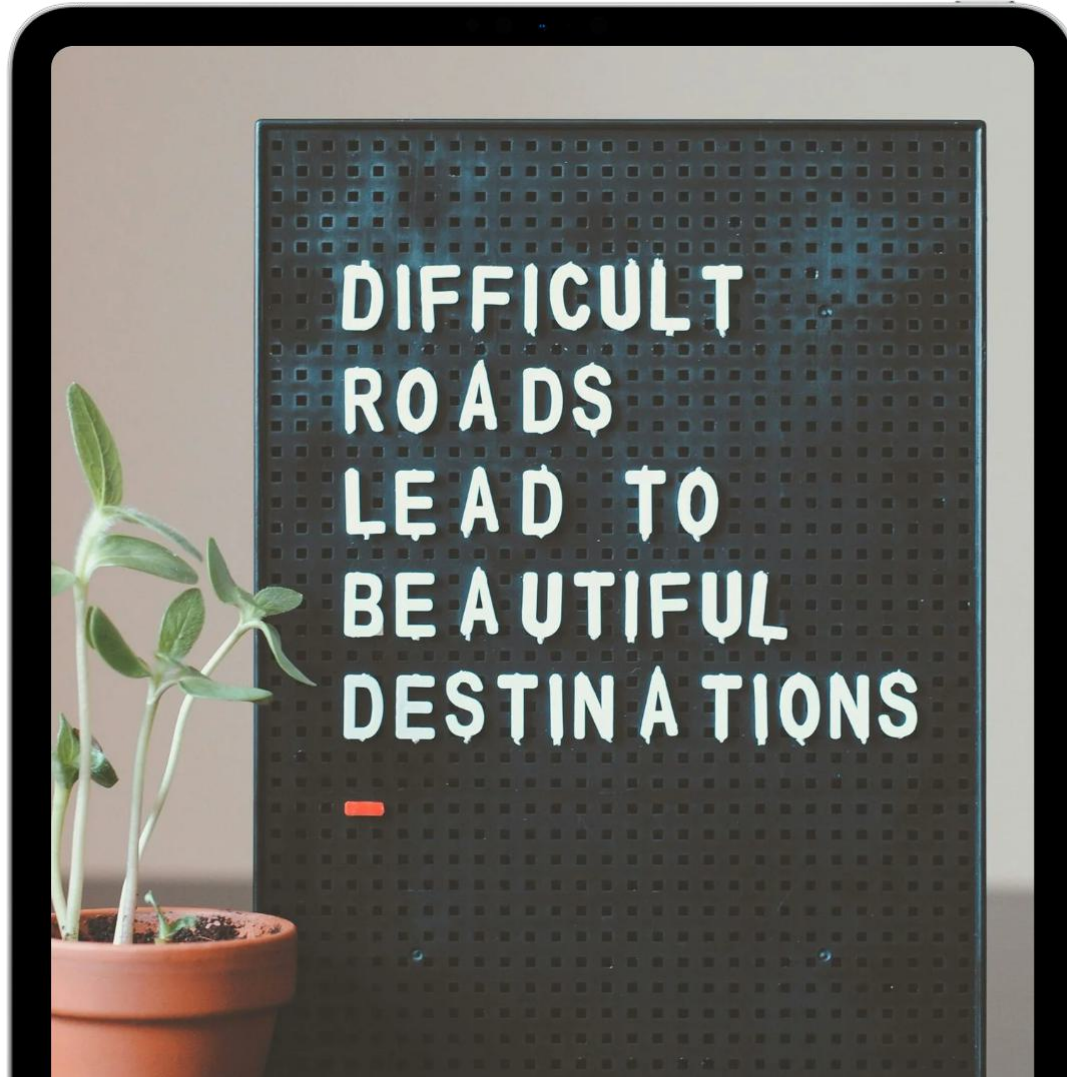
"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes." Carl Jung

# Step 5: Picture Your Desired Future (Your Mission)

Ask your team:

- “In 20 years, what do we want to see?”
- “If a magazine featured us, what would it say?”
- “What would make us proud?”

Create a vivid, emotional, and compelling picture—something that gives your team goosebumps.





# Step 6: Write Your Vision Statement

Bring together:

- Core values
- Core purpose
- Desired future

Your vision statement should be:

- Inspiring and specific
- Realistic yet ambitious
- Simple and energising

Example (Sony, 1950s):

"Fifty years from now, our brand name will be as well known as any in the world...  
'Made in Japan' will mean something fine."



"Directions are instructions given to explain how. Direction is a vision offered to explain why." Simon Sinek





# Step 7: Keep It Honest

Avoid overpromising or exaggerating.

A vision should guide, not mislead.

Ask:

- Is this achievable?
- Is it grounded in truth?
- Will this inspire long-term commitment?

"The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stare up the steps - we must step up the stairs." Vance Havner

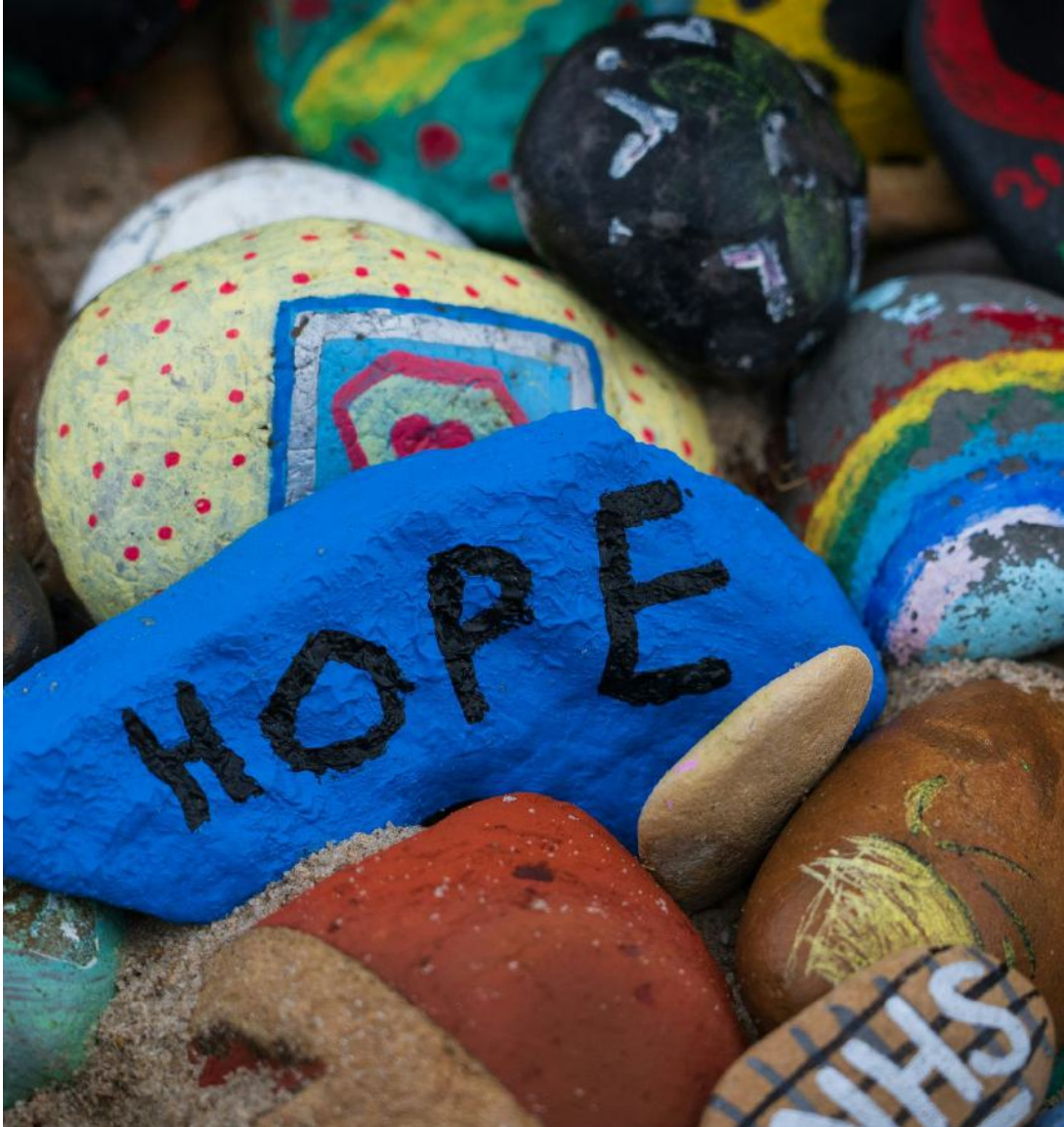
# Step 8: Consider the Bigger Picture

Before drafting your vision, understand:

- Your economic, legal, and social environment
- Your school's unique contribution to its community
- Future trends and needs
- How your strengths align with long-term opportunities



"Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn't mean he lacks vision." Stevie Wonder



# Step 9: Link Vision to Mission and Values

Vision = What we aspire to become

Mission = What we aim to do

Values = What we stand for

Keep them:

- Consistent
- Clear
- Free of jargon

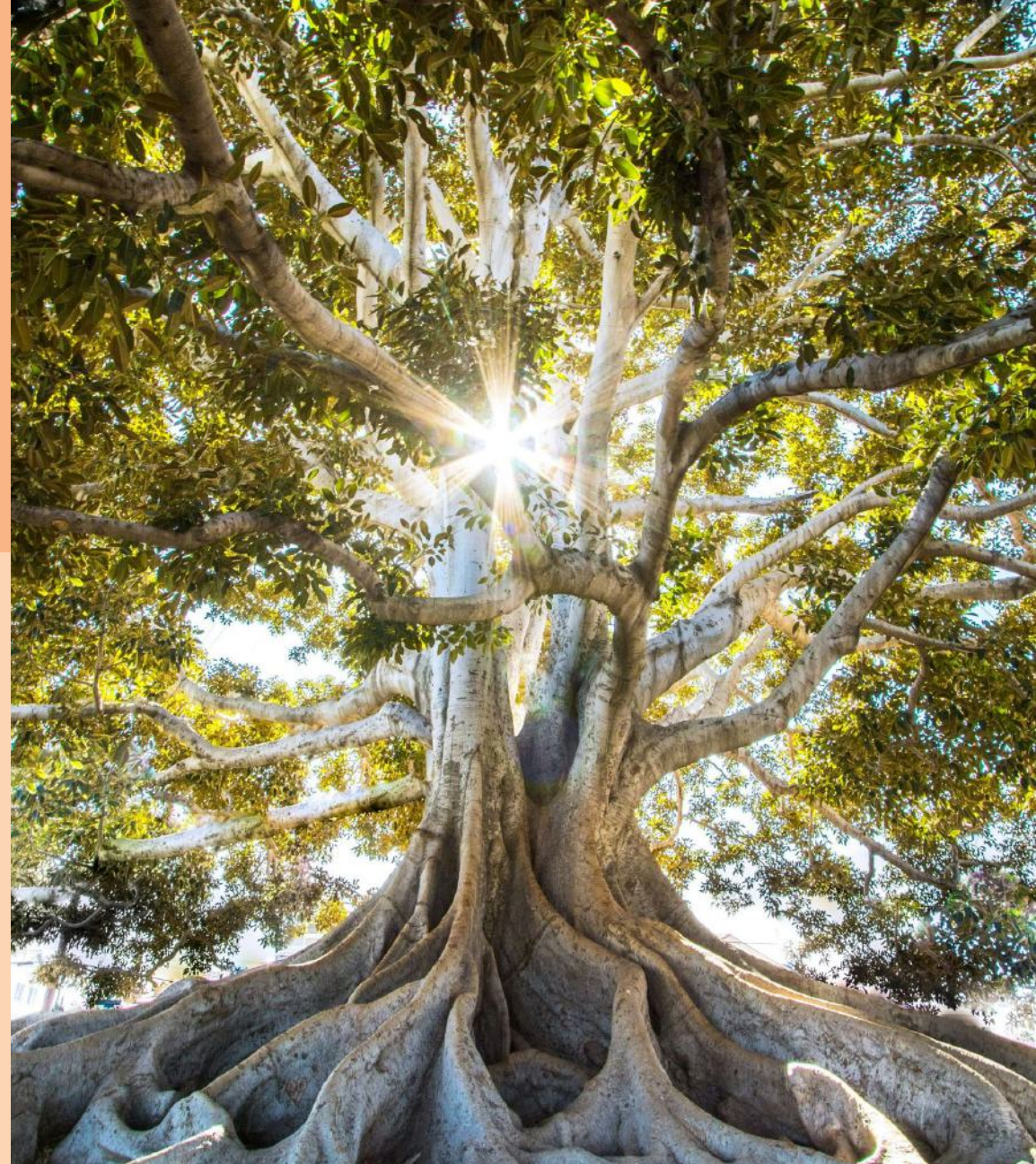
"The very essence of leadership is that you have to have vision. You can't blow an uncertain trumpet." Theodore Hesburgh



# Step 10: Bring the Vision to Life

Make your vision visible by:

- Speaking about it often
- Embedding it in decisions and behaviours
- Celebrating achievements toward it
- Using symbols, mottos, and ceremonies to reinforce it



"Leadership is having a compelling vision, a comprehensive plan, relentless implementation, and talented people working together." Alan Mulally



# Final Word

**ONE DAY YOU WILL  
WAKE UP AND THERE  
WON'T BE ANY MORE TIME  
TO DO THE THINGS YOU'VE  
ALWAYS WANTED.  
DO IT NOW.**

Paulo Coelho

Everything worthwhile starts with a vision.  
Not a dream—but a dream put into action.

“The best way to predict your future is to create it” — Peter Drucker



# Want More?



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