

What's Your Personal "Big Picture?"

By: Pat Lynch, Ph.D., President

In an earlier article, *Creating Balance in Your Personal Life: What's in Your Personal Scorecard?* I suggested using a scorecard approach to help develop and maintain balance in all four aspects of one's personal life: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. In order for that tool to be most effective, however, we need to have a clear sense of the outcome we are trying to achieve – i.e., our personal "big picture." It is impossible to align these four components without first understanding our own value and the contributions we wish to make in our lives.

When I ask people what they would like to achieve in life, they generally answer by talking about the "how" (i.e., tasks or activities) rather than the "what" (i.e., the big picture). Though the "how" is important, making it the focus of attention is a mistake many people make. They don't realize that by directing their attention to tasks and activities, they easily can get so caught up in the details that they lose sight of the big picture.

Have you ever had the experience of undertaking a pleasurable hobby, only to find that it becomes a chore or a burden – or even an obsession? That happens when we lose sight of the big picture. Similarly, when married couples end up fighting all the time, it's often because they've gotten so caught up in the minutiae of sharing life with another person that they forget the big picture – **why** they got married in the first place (which surely wasn't about finances or housework or the many other issues over which people argue).

There are many ways to define, or recapture, our personal big picture. For an example of one technique, please see my article *Goals and the Wisdom of a Two-Year Old Child* on the Business Alignment Strategies web site. Regardless of the method you choose, the critical point is that you focus on the **outcome** rather than on the activities required to achieve it. I guarantee that focusing consistently on your own big picture and using it daily to keep yourself aligned with its achievement will have a dramatic impact on the quality of your life. ➔

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