



“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.”

- Hellen Keller

The Importance of Vision

by: Tony Mayo

When he launched the USA Today national newspaper 25 years ago, Allen Neuharth, the CEO of Gannett Company from 1973-1986, was derided by both Wall Street analysts and the newspaper establishment. Having built a very successful chain of regional newspapers and having been named the newspaper publishing Chief Executive of the Year by the Wall Street Transcript in 1979, why would Neuharth want to take such a bold and seemingly foolish risk? Who would buy “bite-size” news?

The answer today is clear — millions would buy it and continue to buy it, but that was certainly not the case in 1982 when the paper was launched. Neuharth saw a future for his family’s newspaper empire that others could not see. He also saw a time-starved consumer base that was thirsty for news in manageable chunks. Capitalizing on his regional network of newspaper organizations, Neuharth created an elaborate logistical process to produce and deliver a national newspaper to supplement, not replace, regional carriers.

What was it about Neuharth that enabled him to see the vast possibilities of a national newspaper? He clearly possessed a vision of what could be and more importantly, the ability to make it a reality.

The ability to visualize and articulate a possible future state for an organization or company has always been a vital component of successful leadership. In fact, when initially describing someone as a “great business leader,” the knee-jerk reaction is often to cite something about his or her strategic ability or vision. We often hear stories of exalted CEOs and their strategic prowess. The downfall of many a failed CEO has also been attributed to his or her lack of vision. And in many cases, with 20-20 hindsight, it is easy to understand and sympathize with a leader’s vision. In the heat of the moment, however, it is not so easy. Neuharth’s vision of a national newspaper seems very plausible today, but that was far from the reality of 1982.

Letters to President Clinton

by: Rabbi Menachem Genack

My relationship with President Clinton dates to his first presidential campaign. In addition to my professional work at the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, I serve as a congregational rabbi in Englewood, New Jersey. In June, 1992 I was asked to introduce then-Governor Clinton as a presidential candidate at a local fund-raising function. In my presentation, I alluded to President George H.W. Bush’s difficulty with the “**vision thing**” and quoted a verse from the Book of Proverbs: “**where there is no vision, the people perish.**” Governor Clinton enjoyed the remarks, and told me that he would refer to the verse in his speech accepting the nomination – which he did.

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Lecha Dodi - Rebbe Nachman Likkutei Moharan #18:	סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה
<p>You should know – Everything has a purpose. Additionally, each purpose you pursue has a higher purpose as well. For instance, the purpose of building a house is in order to have a comfortable place of living. Yet, having a comfortable place of living, as well, serves a higher purpose (namely, that it should give you the strength to pursue self-actualization).</p> <p>When trying to achieve a certain purpose or goal, the final purpose is always the first in thought. The initial vision is where all subsequent actions begin.</p> <p>When you decide to build a house, of course the house will not be completed all at once. Rather you need to gather supplies and make a structural plan and only afterwards will the building be able to be finished. However, the first thought that motivates the project is always the final vision of having a completed house. The initial vision even more crucial than the first action.</p>	<p>דע, כי לכל דבר יש תכלית ולתכלית יש עוד תכלית אחר גבה מעל גבה למשל: תכלית בגן הבית כדי שיהא לאדם מקום לנוח ותכלית המנוחה כדי שיוכל בפנח הזה לעבד את השם ותכלית העבודה וכו' ותכלית של כל דבר הוא מחבר להמחשבה והשכל יותר מהדבר, שזה התכלית [מושג באמצעותו] בא ממנו וקרוב התכלית להמחשבה בקרוב יותר מהדבר כי סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה נמצא שהסוף והתכלית הוא תחילה במחשבה וקרוב לה ומהתכלית נשתלשל המעשה למשל: כשעולה במחשבה לבנות לו בית בודאי הבית אינו נבנה בבת אחת אלא צריך להקיץ עצים ולסתת ולבנות כל יץ ועץ לפי צרכו ואחר כך נבנה ונשלם הבית נמצא שלמות הבית שהיא תכלית הבנין וסופו היה במחשבה תחילה נמצא שהתכלית הוא קרוב למחשבה ביותר מהתחלת המעשה</p>

The Gemara is Sanhedrin 104b explains that the sin of the spies and the people was that they put their mouths before their eyes. They spoke and acted without seeing and having vision. This is reflected in Megillas Eicha which is written alphabetical stanzas and the פ is written before the א which is not the correct order. See the Mahral below to understand why speech before vision is so problematic.

Maharal Netzach Yisrael	נצח ישראל
<p>And you should know that the eye is first, for first you see and then you do. And just as the eye is the beginning, so too the mouth completes, for it carries out the speech to action. And inasmuch as the eye precedes the mouth, it is drawn after the beginning, which is the eye. And the eye, which sees, clings to the intellect. And the intellectual cling to Hashem. And because of this we were not exiled from the land when we clung to Hashem. But they put the mouth before the eye, and the end does not follow from the beginning, which is the eye, and this end, which is the mouth, is not connected at the beginning to the intellect. And with this they are removed from Hashem, and this causes exile, which is distancing from Hashem.</p>	<p>ודע כי העין היא תחילה, כי מתחילה הוא רואה ואחר כך עושה. וכמו שהעין הוא התחילה, כך הפה גומר, שהוא מוציא הדיבור לפעל. וכאשר מוקדים העין לפה, נמשך אחר התחילה שהוא העין. והעין שהוא הראיה, הוא דבק אל השכל... והשכלי יש לו דביקות בו יתברך. ומפני כך לא היו גולים מן הארץ כאשר היו דביקים בו יתברך. אבל הם הקדימו פה לעין, ולא היה הגמר נמשך אל התחילה שהוא העין, ולש היה לגמר הזה- שהוא הפה – דביקות בתחילה השכלית. ובוהו היו מסולקים מן השם יתברך, ודבר זה גורם הגלות, שהוא ההרחקה ממנו.</p>

