

Creating Your Mission Statement - A Movie and More

By Julie Jordan Scott

The opening scenes of "Jerry Maguire" are forever imprinted in my mind's eye. As the audience, we are shown a brief synopsis of Jerry's life as a high powered Sports Agent who manages the careers of a multitude of big money athletes. He is at a convention of some kind with all of his fellow Sports Agents.

We enter a dream sequence. Jerry is jarred awake while dreaming with an epiphany of sorts as he raises this question in an internal dialogue. "Who had I become? A shark in a suit? I hated myself. I hated my place in this world." Like a man possessed, he rose out of his bed and sat down at the laptop he had set up in his hotel room. Jerry continued to speak inside his head, "One page became twenty five, I became my father's son again."

He continued, saying he remembered the wise words of his mentor who said, "The key to this business is personal relationships."

Feverishly, Jerry crafted his Personal Manifesto. "I had lost the ability to B.S.," he wrote, "It (the Mission Statement) was the me I had always wanted to be."

He entitled his declaration "The Things We Think and Do Not Say." He took his work to a 24-hour copy store so that he could distribute his wisdom to the other Sports Agents. The longhaired clerk at the store looked into his eyes and said, surferesque, "That's how you become great, man!" Jerry put a copy in each mailbox of his peers and blissfully went to sleep.

Temporarily, anyway. We soon learn that for Jerry, proclaiming what he believed through his Mission Statement was indeed a risky business. He called the hotel desk clerk when he once again awoke with a start to see if the copies of his Mission Statement had been picked up by his peers. To his horror, it was reported that many copies of his work had been distributed.

Jerry soon found his life seriously altered by what he believed. He quickly lost his high-powered job and found himself living out his Mission Statement, but it was far from comfortable. Sure, his mentor had said "The key to this business is personal relationships "but did his only client have to be so obnoxious, arrogant, loud and forever adding insult to injury, by continually spouting the now trademark "Show me the money!" phrase over and over and over?

We live alongside Jerry for two hours, cheering him through personal financial ruin, romance, marriage, separation, reunion, and finally the rebuilding of his career. But it is a career on HIS terms, in HIS way, following HIS manifesto and HIS alone!

Do all Mission statements need to be written at times of such personal awakening a la Jerry Maguire? Not at all! Mission statements can be mulled over, rewritten, revised, reduced and reiterated. They can be written alone, which would be a Personal Mission statement, or they can be written collaboratively with a team work approach. A Mission Statement can be written for a family or Organization. They can be one sentence, they can be pages upon pages upon pages. There is no set formula in a format for Mission Statements, however the basics are the same regardless of structure or length.

Well, for Jerry Maguire its one thing, but for me?
Why Write a Mission Statement?

Why should I take time out from my busy schedule trying to get my venture up and running to write a Mission Statement? The answer to this is simple. Some people may choose to travel to an unknown destination without a roadmap, but most will get to their destination more quickly if a map is carefully drawn out prior to putting the key into ignition putting the foot on the gas.

Carefully crafting your Mission Statement could be paramount in mapping out your future. Think for a moment.

- * Why did you start your endeavor?
- * What were you hoping to do that had not been done before?
- * Simply stated, what is the purpose for your project?
- * How will you do things differently?

Jerry Maguire had multiple reasons for striking out as he did, for being a Sports Agent in a different way. What are your reasons? Why is your heart calling out to you to step out and see this project to fruition?

Secondly, your Mission Statement can bring focus to your exact priorities. You may believe in your mind what your priorities are but when you actually sit down with a pen to paper or fingers to the keyboard you may be surprised with what you discover.

Hit a roadblock in creating your Mission Statement? Maybe you are saying to yourself, I have NO IDEA know what either my purpose or priorities are at this point! Do not be discouraged! I have found that the easiest thing to do at this point is to take a deep breath, relax and brainstorm for ten or fifteen minute.

Take out a blank sheet of paper or bring up a blank document on your computer. Ask yourself the questions that were brought up about your purpose for starting this project. What were you personally looking for, yearning for, hoping for? Where are the Passions within you for this particular project?

Chances are you would not start something you did not enjoy a lot, because your success would be highly unlikely in that case! So don't even consciously think! Don't worry about making sense: just let the words flow. One word, phrase or sentence at a time.

This will help unblock your mind as well as remind you what your project is all about. If you had fallen out of love with your project, this will be a great tool to re-ignite the Passion that you once had for it!

Discovering your purpose should then remind you of your

priorities. Your Purpose uncovers the why, while the priorities uncover which of your smaller tasks comes first. Look at each task in small, manageable chunks, breaking each one down as far as you need to and date when each task should be completed.

Creating my website makes a perfect example! First, I set a date for "completion" (although it will always be a work in progress). Actually, this is the date when I want all components to be functioning efficiently: all the Passion Pages with an active article Ezines for each Passion, Bulletin Boards in place and with dialogue taking place, the Passion Surveys being easily accessible and regularly utilized by the Guests at my Site.

So, in addition to prioritizing, I had to map out my plan. A few months prior to completion, I had quite a few of these aspects in place. One of the first tasks I chose to complete was crafting a brief Mission Statement which would be a herald atop all my main pages. I knew the next step would be building the skeleton of the site, deciding what format to use and that sort of thing. This was a big challenge since I am not a technical person. For practice, I built a personal website, with the assistance of a dear friend who knows a lot more about computers than I do!

With my 5Passions page, there was a lot of teamwork in its creation, including requesting people from other sites to come visit mine and give me constructive criticism.

With my friend and "partner in building my site" I found some free bulletin boards, as well as finding a list host to use for my ezine, Both for free. I mapped out a very "do-able" schedule for the creation of my e-zines. So on a rigorous yet not overwhelming schedule, all the pieces were crafted into place.

Finally, you want your Mission Statement to be an evolving document that can take your project from here into perpetuity. Once you have written it, it can be revisited and revised as need be. Sections can be added and deleted over time.

Most importantly, you want your overall Mission Statement to have that feeling of "YES! This is My (Our) Mission!" It should evoke a sense of Joy, a sense of the good old-fashioned marching orders we were given by our childhood coaches.

So what's stopping you? Get out your favorite writing tool and start crafting your Mission Statement. Jerry found love and a new life when he wrote his! What are you going to find? I think you will find something near and dear to your heart. Chances are, you will find You!