

Discussion Questions: Character and Leadership Development

Use the questions to guide in-class discussion, or post them to the Collaboration Corner.

Unit 1: Mission, Vision, Purpose

Vision

The Guiding Image

1. What is your definition of a life vision? How can it help to motivate and encourage you?
2. What kinds of things energize you? Are these things included in your vision? If not, how could you incorporate them?
3. Do you have a vision or end goal in mind for your life? What are they? If not, how will you know if the decisions and actions you make are ultimately leading you to something positive or negative?

Map Out Your Future

1. Where will you be in 5 years if you don't map out a plan and stretch yourself to meet challenging goals? What will you be doing? Will you be happy?
2. What motivates you in life right now? What does "Plan A" look like for your life? What do "Plans B & C" look like? How can you make sure you stay on track to reach "Plan A"?
3. Is having a vision and doing the hard work to reach it worth the cost to get there? Why or why not?

How to Find Your North Star

1. Where do you get your inspiration from? Have you ever made a vision board or a personal mission or vision statement?
2. What is vision? How do you find vision?
3. What is your mission or vision statement? Why does it matter?

Creating a Vision Board

1. What are some things you could add to your vision board?
2. How could you create a vision board? Where would be a good place to keep your vision board?
3. Why is having a vision board important?

Why is Vision Important

1. If you don't have a vision, where can you find one or how can you create one?
2. Is having vision enough? What else do you need in order to accomplish your vision or mission?
3. How will having a vision impact your life?

Mission

Be Guided by Your Values

1. Your mission is defined by the daily actions you take and the values that guide you. How is a person's *mission* different from his or her *vision*?
2. How did you first learn your values? Were they passed down from your parents, learned from your friends or community, or have you made a personal effort to craft your own? What value is the strongest in your life?
3. Our values prevent us from straying away from our vision. What is one thing you focus on that prevents you from getting sidetracked by negative friends or environments? How have you learned to say 'no' to things that will bring you down?

Proven Principles

1. Have you chosen the principles in your life or are you just following them because other people are telling you to? Why?
2. In what way can a principle be thought of as a rule? How can you make sure to follow your principles without being bound by them?

3. When you are with different people, do you change who you are and the principles you express? What can you do to stay true to your principles no matter who you're with?

Why Are You Here?

1. What would you like your mission in life to be?
2. Do you believe each person on earth is significant? Do you believe you are significant?
3. Why do you think you're here?

Starting from the Bottom

1. Think about a future career path that you may be interested in. What interests you about this path? Why would you want to follow it?
2. What is something that you are passionate about and love doing? Why are you passionate about it?
3. Do you understand why you're doing most of the things you do? Do you have a "destination" you would like to arrive at one day? What does that look like?

Circumstance and Situations

1. What are you willing to do differently to make a certain situation better?
2. Are you responsible for everyone? Who are you responsible for?
3. Have you ever felt like when you were helping someone it was actually hurting you more than helping the person? What are some boundaries you could set in place to still be a good friend but also protect yourself?

Purpose

Inspire the Journey

1. What does purpose mean to you? Is your definition of purpose the same as everyone else's?
2. We've already learned about having a vision and mission. How does your purpose help drive your vision and mission?
3. Do you define yourself by your circumstances or do you find meaning in your failures and experiences? How can you make sure that you remain open to learning from your failures and mistakes?

The Future is Now

1. Do you have a clear picture of what's important and unimportant in your life? Have you thought about which things are more or less important?
2. Purpose is not a feeling or place that you arrive at. It's the effect of doing what you love and having a clear plan and goals for your life. Do you feel purposeful? In what ways?
3. How can identifying your purpose help drive and energize you? Think of someone you know that has no passion or energy in their life; how could they benefit from focusing on their purpose?

Why Does Purpose Matter?

1. What are some of the core values you live by?
2. What does having purpose do for you and for others?
3. Why does purpose matter?

Evolving Your Purpose

1. Does your purpose have to be one thing? Can it change? How?
2. In 10 years from now how old will you be? What do you think will be important to you then?
3. What is important to you? What matters most to you?

Derailed from Purpose

1. When life happens and things don't go as planned are you flexible? Do you adapt quickly or do you let things take you down and stop you?
2. How do you stay focused on your purpose?
3. Is "what" you do more or less important than "who" you are? Would you still be you if everything you did was taken away?

Impact Your Community

Love It, Learn It, Live It & Lead It

1. What is the difference between a culture that you create and a culture that you are born into? What does it mean to “build your culture”?
2. Talk is cheap and actions speak louder than words. How can you LIVE OUT the values you say you have?
3. In order to build your culture, you must first learn from others what you want your culture to look like. Who is someone you pattern your life after? Why? What have you learned from them?

Prepare Yourself to Lead

1. How do you know if you're ready to start helping others grow? Was there a time in your life when you helped a friend or family member through something? How did that feel? Does that mean that you have all of life figured out?
2. How can you balance your life if you find yourself in a culture that is unhealthy? Is it possible for you to have a positive impact on the unhealthy people around you, or should you try to remove yourself from that culture? How can you know what to do?
3. When was the last time you “uprooted” something or someone from your life that was unhealthy? Did you replace it with something good? What led you to that difficult choice?

The Importance of Community

1. What is the difference between culture and community? Which one is it more important to build?
2. Give an example of a community that is built around a person. If that person leaves the community, will the community continue to have the same values? How can you make sure your community is built on a common purpose and set of beliefs?
3. How can creating a healthy culture impact your community?

Practice What You've Learned

1. What is the most stressful relationship you have? How can you set a new tone for that relationship?
2. What are some cultural blueprint topics that your community lives by? How can you ensure that people are living these out?
3. Do the groups you associate with have a healthy set of values? How can you make a more peaceful and productive environment?

Getting Involved

1. How does being involved in your community not only benefit others, but also yourself? What do you think you might learn from helping out?
2. What are three things that could use some help in your community? How can you help?
3. Why is it important to be involved in your community?

Unit 2: Personal Experience

Adventure

Take Up the Challenge

1. What are three things you're going to do to challenge or push yourself out of your normal routine?
2. What can you do to be more adventurous?
3. How can you start to become more lost in the moment?

See the World

1. Who do you know that went on an overseas adventure? Where did they go and what did they do? What are some of the top places you would like to visit?
2. What are some creative ideas to start planning for an adventure today? Do you want to go by yourself or with a group? How can you make that adventure happen?
3. Does going on an adventure mean having to go far away? Where or what can you go explore that is nearby?

Do Something Out of the Ordinary

1. How can you expect to live an extraordinary life if you don't first learn to think extraordinarily? Share with your friends or classmates a difficult-to-achieve goal that you'd like to accomplish in the next five years.
2. What does the following principle mean to you: "do something different and you'll get a different result"? How can you apply this principle to your daily routine?
3. What does your schedule usually look like between 6:00PM - 11:00PM? What can you do differently during this timeframe to work towards your goals or dreams?

Uncharted Territories

1. What are some adventurous things you would like to add to your bucket list? How can you begin to work towards making those things a reality?
2. Fear likes to keep us safe, but sometimes the cost of safety is much greater than the cost of missing out on life. What is one thing you are fearful of, and how can you overcome that fear?
3. Have you ever held yourself back from doing something fun, adventurous, or different because you were scared? Looking back now, do you wish you would have taken the risk?

Be Spontaneous

1. What is one thing you would like to do for someone else this week?
2. How and in what ways can you change your routine?
3. What does spontaneity mean to you?

Memories

Moments = Memories = Meaning

1. Do you agree with the following quote: "we don't remember days, we remember moments"? Share an example of how this applies or doesn't apply to you.
2. How often do you make a conscious decision to invest your time and energy into someone else? How do you feel when you realize that someone is investing the same into you?
3. Do you have a personal story that can inspire other people? Take a few moments to write down this story, and then tell the story to someone you trust. How does sharing the story make you feel?

The Power of Reflection

1. How often do you take time to reflect on your life and your favorite memories?
2. How can you grow and improve if you don't look at what's worked and not worked in the past? How can reflection help bring about self-awareness?
3. What can you do to make sure you spend more time reflecting positively? (Some examples might be: closing your eyes, sitting outside, or going for a walk.)

Family, Friends & Loved Ones

1. Who is an important person in your life that you would like to reconnect with? How are you going to do that?
2. How can you start building more positive relationships in your life? Are you the most positive person in the room? If not, what can you do to change that?
3. Who is a person in your life that you need to forgive? What can you do to forgive them? Do you think it's possible to forgive them completely?

Be Present

1. What are three ways you are going to practice being present?
2. How can you practice being present? Why is this important?
3. What does being present mean to you?

Overcoming Bad Memories

1. Some things are hard to let go of. How can you make new, positive memories to help let go of the old ones?
2. What are some bad memories from the past that you need to let go of to enjoy the now? What positive lessons or viewpoints can you find to replace the bad memory?
3. How do you overcome bad memories?

Your Story

Look into the Past & Write Your Future

1. When you look at your past, how does it make you feel? What are some of the ways you can make your past part of your purpose?
2. Have you allowed your past to give you a reason to rise above or is your past used as an excuse that keeps you from your full potential?
3. Who can you trust to share some of your past difficulties or pains? Do you feel that sharing some of your past with someone you trust will help you move forward in areas where you've stalled?

Experiences & Stories Enable You to Connect with Others

1. What are some unique things about your past that others can relate to? How do you feel when you find some common ground with someone else?
2. Do your existing relationships allow for openness and acceptance? How can you be more open with others and yourself?
3. How can you create more of a connection with friends and family in your existing relationships?

The Importance of Authenticity

1. Do you feel others would be able to relate to something you've felt sad, guilty, ashamed, or embarrassed about?
2. Is there something in your life that you feel ashamed or guilty about? Do you think if you shared it with someone else it would help to make you feel better? Consider sharing it with someone and see how it makes you feel.
3. What does being authentic mean to you?

Overcoming Peer Pressure

1. Have you ever felt peer pressure? How did it make you feel?
2. How can you overcome peer pressure?
3. Why is overcoming peer pressure so important?

Teen Pregnancy

1. Each day you wake up you have a new opportunity to write your story and make it what you want it to be. What are you going to do different tomorrow?
2. How can you make the most of your mistakes?
3. Do your mistakes define you? Have you let mistakes define you and stop you from living your best life?

Have a Little Fun

Don't Take Everything So Seriously

1. Do you tend to be more serious or easy going? How can you bring more fun into your life?
2. Have you ever gotten together with your friends and tried to re-create an amazing experience? Did you succeed or did your expectations fall short? How can you embrace every fun activity in the moment?
3. Do you often worry what other people will think if you try and be yourself or "put yourself out there?" Do you ever feel like you have to plan to have fun? What was the last spontaneous thing you did where you had a great time?

Choose to Be Different

1. Do you usually try to fit in or do you stand out? Why do you think people like to fit in?
2. Share an example of a time when you "swam against the current." How were you different? What did it feel like to have independence and to separate yourself from everyone else?
3. Do you feel like you have to suppress your true personality? Why do you think that is? Do you often feel like you're forced to conform to the group? Why or why not?

Hobbies & Dreams

1. Have you used excuses in the past for why you haven't explored new hobbies? What were those excuses?
2. Share an example of how a hobby led to a new friendship. How can teaching your hobby to someone else help strengthen your relationship?
3. How do hobbies help take away your stress? How do they increase your confidence and self-esteem?

It Doesn't Cost to Have Fun

1. What are some new things you can do in your area for fun that you haven't done yet?
2. What are some things you can do for fun that don't cost money?
3. What do you like to do for fun? Why is having fun important?

Learn to Date Yourself

1. How can you "date" yourself? Take the challenge, and try to do something fun alone.
2. Do you have a hard time being alone? If yes, why do you think that is?
3. What does it mean to date yourself? Why is this important?

Unit 3: Identity

Discover Your Identity

The Assignment

1. How do you separate what others say about you from what is really true about you? How can you overcome negative things that people say about you?
2. What are some of your passions, gifts, and talents? How can you combine these into a future life "assignment?"
3. Do you find that you're able to grow more by researching on your own, or by getting out and learning through experience? When was the last time you made a specific effort to go out and try something new? What did you learn?

Uncover Who You Are

1. What are some of your weaknesses? How can you turn these weaknesses into strengths?
2. Have you ever lied about who you are? Did you do it for personal reasons, or to appease someone else? How did it make you feel?
3. Are you honest with yourself? Are you honest with others about who you are? Explain your answer.

Recover What You Used to Have

1. Who determines your value? Are you valuable even if you are not "visible?" Are you significant because of what you do, or because of who you are?
2. How can you recognize when you start believing something that's untrue about yourself? Do you have that kind of self-awareness, or do you have people you trust that will tell you the truth? Why is it important to remove unhealthy thoughts?
3. What is one action you can take to start taking back control of who you really are? How can you be more mindful of your true self vs. the lies that creep in?

Discover New Things About Yourself

1. If you asked a friend or classmate what your gifts, skills, or talents are, what would they say?
2. What are some "ordinary" things that you can begin to give a greater effort toward? Name some gifts that you're talented in already.
3. Are you willing to try new things? What are a few things you've never done that you want to discover? Which one will be the easiest to do? Which one will be the hardest?

Identity Leads to Purpose

1. How does identity lead to purpose?
2. If someone asked you "Who are you?" what would you say?
3. How would you describe yourself?

Emotional Audit

An Emotional Audit

1. What does it mean to you to take an "emotional audit?" What are the most common emotions you experience in your life?
2. Do your emotions define you? Do you let them define you? Provide an example of a short-lived emotion and a long-lasting emotion. How would you classify: (1) getting annoyed at your sibling; and (2) breaking up with a longtime boyfriend or girlfriend?
3. What are the purpose of our emotions? How do they compel us to take action and influence the decisions we make?

The Mind Map

1. Our minds are the most powerful thing we have in our body. Do you feel you pay enough attention to what you let inside it? How can you better focus on keeping your mind sharp and healthy?
2. What should you do if you start having unhealthy or unwanted thoughts? What can you replace those thoughts with?

3. Throughout your day, how aware (or unaware) are you of the thoughts that go into your mind? How can you better protect yourself from unhealthy thoughts?

The Three Levels of the Mind

1. Write down three things you do consciously and subconsciously every day.
2. What state of the mind do you think you operate in the most throughout your day?
3. What is an example of a behavior trait that is stored in your unconscious mind? Is it positive or negative? How does it make you feel?

Emotional Differences

1. What are emotions and how can you make sure that your emotions are under control?
2. What is your emotional make-up and how does it impact your life?
3. Identify a healthy emotion. How does it benefit you and others? Identify a negative emotion. How is that affecting you? How can you control those negative emotions?

Mastering Your Emotions

1. Why is mastering our emotions helpful in life?
2. What emotion tries to come against you? What is the opposite of that negative emotion?
3. What can you do to overcome negative emotions?

Inner Engineer

Competing Commitments

1. Are you aware that there are some things you need to change in your life? Do you have a desire to change them? Are you willing to put in the work?
2. What negative label has someone put on you in the past? Have you been able to overcome it? Have you accepted this label as fact or have you pushed against it?
3. What is an example of a competing commitment? What holds you back from becoming your best version? Is it fear based?

Get Specific & Break it Down

1. Give an personal example of a relationship experience that negatively affected you. Did you find it difficult to trust certain kinds of people after that incident?
2. Which of the nine listed competing commitments stuck out to you the most? Why?
3. Have you ever been rejected, betrayed or made fun of? How has this affected your life?

Activities, Time Commitments & Fearing Success

1. What does being free mean to you? How is your definition of freedom different from someone else's? Does the word "freedom" mean something different to your generation compared to your parents' generation?
2. Do you embrace change? How does change make you feel? (Examples: anxious, frightened, adventurous, etc.) Why do you usually feel this way?
3. Most people understand the value of investing in other people, but fail to do so because they lack the motivation. How can you motivate yourself to take action on behalf of someone else?

The Pain of Rejection

1. Have you ever experienced something like in this lesson, where your world feels like it's falling apart? Were you able to find closure with those that hurt you or is that something you still hold onto?
2. Have you ever experienced a healthy breakthrough from something you struggled with for years? Have you ever shared this success with anyone else? Are you in need of a breakthrough? Who can you ask for help?
3. Have you ever made an internal commitment to do something destructive or damaging to others because it had first been done to you? How did you first arrive at this decision? Did you follow through with it? What are your thoughts on it now?

Relationships, Memories & Experiences

1. Have you ever shared feedback with someone and received a negative reaction from them? Did this turn you off from offering feedback to other people?
2. Have you ever remained stubborn when someone confronted you about forgiving someone else? Did you think “they can’t understand what I went through” or “you’d feel the same way if it happened to you”? How can you begin to move past these feelings?
3. How does our failure to be honest with our friends and family prevent us from building strong relationships? What are two reasons why people fail to be honest with others?

Overcome Identity Issues

Defining Identity

1. What is identity?
2. How is identity developed?
3. What does your identity influence?

Different Identity Issues

1. What are some of the identity issues Jonathan talks about in the video? Have you struggled with any of these issues? How so?
2. Where does your identity come from?
3. How can you overcome negative identity issues that may have come from experiences or labels from others?

Redefine Your Identity Foundation

1. What is the foundation of your identity?
2. Where do you find yourself when the world tells you to be something you’re not?
3. Where do you draw your strength and peace from when you need it most?

You Are Not What You Do

1. Take away what you do and what you look like and describe yourself from the inside, out.
2. Does your identity always stay the same? Explain.
3. Is your identity a destination or a journey?

Acknowledge and Embrace All of You

1. How do you embrace and acknowledge all of you?
2. How can you embrace even the parts of yourself that you are not the most proud of?
3. What can others learn from your experiences and your life?

Unit 4: Transformation

Mystery

From Dreams to Destiny

1. What is the major barrier between your dream and it becoming a reality?
2. Do your dreams keep you motivated, or do your dreams seem unattainable? How do you know if you're dreaming too big or too small?
3. How are you embracing your discovery process? Are you finding joy in every phase of your life? Are you content with where you're at today while keeping an eye on where you want to be?

Becoming the Seeker

1. How can you become a better seeker?
2. Would you consider yourself a finder or a seeker? Why?
3. How can you force yourself from drawing conclusions about other people? What are some common ways that you've seen other people draw a conclusion and then realize they were wrong?

Time is Not an Enemy

1. Is time your asset or your enemy? Do you use time wisely?
2. Do you feel like you have enough time in your day to get everything you need and want to get done?
3. How could you better utilize your time?

Process Your Future

1. Name three things in your life that work against making the most of your time.
2. Your purpose unfolds throughout life. The most important component in this transformation is preparation. How can you prepare today for your future?
3. Patience is important. Most things take a lot of time. In what areas do you need to be more patient?

Writing Your Obituary

1. Why is it important to have the end in mind? What does this mean?
2. Name at least three things that you would like people to say about you at the end of your life.
3. Now think about the people closest to you. Do you think they would say those three things about you right now?

Compassion and Stillness

The Secret of Purpose

1. What is a defining moment? Have you experienced a defining moment in your life? Are they rare, or are they common? Are you able to share an example of a defining moment?
2. Do you agree that it doesn't matter "what you do," it matters "who you are in that process"? How is this true (or not true) in your life?
3. Do you feel like knowing your purpose is something you have to FIND? Like a hidden treasure or a needle in a haystack? Take a different approach and just be STILL. Still enough to hear your purpose whisper inside you. Try it tonight.

People Matter

1. What is your definition of *compassion*? Is it the same as *sympathy*, or is it different?
2. How can you discover your passion and stay motivated when your family doesn't support or believe in you?
3. Do you have a passion to help other people overcome challenges in their lives? Does your passion spur you to action, or does it just remind you of what you think you should be doing?

Find Peace Through Stillness

1. Does being still appeal to you? Do you think you could benefit from some alone time thinking, meditating, and becoming more self-aware?

2. When is a good time for you to create alone time each day? Where could you go and how would you do it?
3. What are some common reasons why people hate to be still? Imagine that your friend is really struggling with a problem in their life, what advice can you give them that would hopefully lead to more peace in their life?

Finding Solutions in Stillness

1. Why is it important to slow down and have quiet time?
2. Where do you find peace? What helps you stay calm?
3. What are some ways you can practice being still?

Why Compassion Matters

1. What is compassion, and why is it important to leading a healthy, successful and meaningful life?
2. Where can you show compassion? Where can you help someone and how?
3. Give an example of a time when you showed compassion.

A Reinvented Leader

True Leadership

1. How can you redefine the definition of a leader? What does it mean to be a lifestyle leader?
2. What are the top five characteristics your friends would use to describe your personality? Are they different from how you would define it? Pair up with a partner or small group and test this out.
3. Think about someone of whom you've been jealous in the past. How can you start reprogramming yourself to celebrate their success WITH them instead of wishing you had their success?

Embrace the Paradox

1. In your own words, explain what a "paradigm" is and what a "paradox" is.
2. Do you appreciate other people's opinions? Do you feel you are usually "right" in a conversation? How can you be more understanding of things that are different from what you believe?
3. Are you able to accept criticism from other people? Do you let others be themselves without judgement or criticism?

Logical vs. Emotional Thinking

1. When something unexpected happens, do you usually react or respond? How is responding logically different than responding emotionally? Which way is better?
2. Do you always agree with your emotions? Do you like how you feel when you react instead of respond? What does it mean to think objectively?
3. Are others at the mercy of your emotions? Are you capable of letting others win during a disagreement? Do you make them fight you and prove their point or are you quick to relent and admit when they're right?

Maximize Your Strengths

1. What does "stay in your lane" mean to you?
2. What are your strengths? How can you maximize them?
3. Why is it important for you to maximize your strengths?

It's Not Black and White

1. How can you broaden your perspective and bring more color into your world and your character?
2. What leaders do you have in your life that you can ask questions and learn from?
3. Are you the loudest person in the room? If you are, what adjustments can you make?

Start Again

Completion is the Difference

1. Did you give your best throughout this course? Rate your involvement from 1-10. What did you find most challenging or difficult about the course?

2. What are the three most life-changing principles you learned from this course? Share a concept that you've already applied and found success with.
3. How will you carry on these lessons when the course is over? Do you think you'll be able to share what you've learned with others?

Make the Decision

1. What did you want to get out of this course? Do you feel like you got it?
2. Take a moment and reflect on three things: (1) what defines your character; (2) what defines a leader; and (3) what is your purpose? How many of these questions can you answer for yourself?
3. What did you learn about yourself throughout this course? What did you learn about your level of engagement and involvement?

Until Next Time

1. Do you have the determination it takes to live-out the decisions you want to make?
2. What are you going to do to make sure you stay focused on seeing your decisions through?
3. Have you made a decision to get what you want out of life? If you haven't, are you willing to make that statement right now?

Turning Your Life Around

1. What is your plan "B"?
2. How can you overcome bad situations? How can you make a negative situation turn out for good or for better?
3. Who do you have in your life who believes in you when you don't believe in yourself?

Start Today

1. What is stopping you from starting something?
2. What is something you want to start now for your future?
3. What three things can you start today that will positively affect your future self?