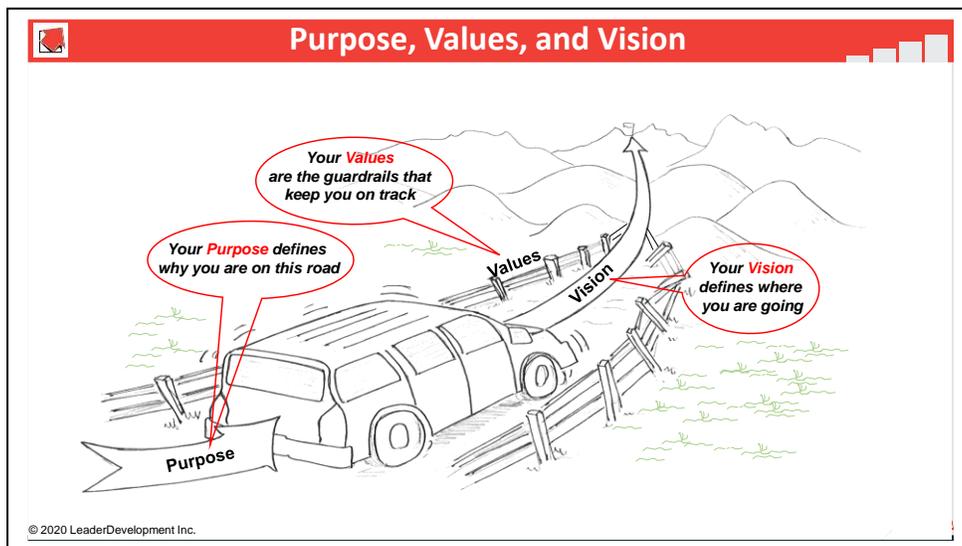


Confused by Purpose, Values, and Vision? Here's an Easy Way to Make Sense of Them.

You hear those terms a great deal ... what do they mean? This diagram explains them.



Purpose ... is why you exist as an organization. It's not about making money. It's about the value you bring and the difference you make. *That* is why you exist. It's the why.

Values ... are about how you will go about fulfilling your purpose. Leaders define not just the why, but also the how—the moral boundaries and imperatives they expect their people to respect, the kind of work environment they want to see, and the organizational values they want decisions to be made by and for. It's the how.

Vision ... is about where you want to end up at some point in the future. It doesn't need to be a finite goal, and it's often better if it isn't—though finite goals are helpful in getting there. It's what the world looks like when you have made the difference you want to make. It's the what.

It all comes together in the diagram above. Your purpose pushes you, your vision pulls you, and your values keep you on track. Your purpose is about why you are on the particular path you are on and not on another one. Your values are the guardrails that keep you from veering off into the field on the right or the field on the left. And the point on the horizon is the place you want your organization (the vehicle) to get to. When you are clear about your purpose, values and vision, you can much more clearly define the vehicle you need for the journey ahead. In the terrain captured in the illustration above, a Corvette isn't going to get you there.

This is important: your purpose, values and vision are the DNA of your organization. If these aren't clear, it doesn't matter what kind of strategic plans you create or goals you set: they will inevitably be compromised. Don't skimp on the work of clarifying them.

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