

**From:** [David Kraemer](#)  
**To:** [Covid Affiliate Archives](#)  
**Subject:** FW: One Person's Response to Communal Fear 5.6.20  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 15, 2020 9:46:01 AM

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**From:** Morris Allen <mojo210al@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 6, 2020 9:20 AM  
**To:** MOJO210AL <mojo210al@aol.com>  
**Subject:** One Person's Response to Communal Fear 5.6.20

WAGON WHEEL CENSUS 2 Trucks 1 Car 1 Dog Walker 1 Walker (would you believe he was wearing a NEBRASKA sweatshirt) 1ISD#197 School Bus going the opposite direction and numbered 1920

I saw that President Obama and Michelle Obama accepted the invitation to give a nationwide High School Commencement address next week. I will always remember one high school graduation from June 1964. As a nine-year old, I sat in (unusual) attention as my brother delivered the Senior Speech for East High School in Denver, Colorado. With his booming voice—even then noticeable, he began by saying “without vision, the people perish.” Quoting this biblical text, he continued. I don't really remember what else he said that night—but my vision was already focused on the fact that his senior party was at Elitch's. (it was the upscale amusement park in Denver, not to be confused with the “people's” amusement park called Lakeside). In truth, that quote has stayed with me for the ensuing 56 years.

We remember moments in life that impacted us for good or for bad. I am not sure I could remember what happened the day before that senior speech or the day after. But that day remains a memory and part of the toolbox which a developing 9-year old was putting together. Without vision, the people perish. It became one of the go-to phrases that I have held onto in working hard to make my life one of purpose and of meaning. While the biblical text was simply an aphorism intended to spark one's imagination—it has a modern rendition made famous by management gurus and strategic planners. Every business and every organization needs a compelling vision in order to communicate its story and to market its product. That is true whether the organization is a church, a shoe store or bowling alley. That truth is even more important today during this previously unthinkable crisis we find ourselves in.

What Proverbs didn't tell us, but management consultants do, is that vision alone is not enough. We now know that in order to achieve our vision, it is necessary to also have a strategy and to understand the tactics aligned with that strategy to achieve your vision. I have always be grateful that as a 9-year-old I heard that phrase from someone who could teach it to me. It served me well in my prior life as a pulpit rabbi. I remember its importance from my interview weekend at a gathering at Nancy and Elliot's(zl) home. God bless Shirley Goldfarb(zl). She asked the very first question at the open question session that evening. “Rabbi, will your wife be active in our sisterhood?” was the question she led with. And here is the answer I gave out of the box—“in our

shul, I don't see a role for a sisterhood. I see opportunity for women and men to be engaged and involved in ways no differently from one another. My wife will read Torah, she will be active inside the shul, she will do what others do—because she is passionate about her Jewish life. She will also be a doctor and a wife and mom and will need to juggle her life no differently than anyone else.” It was a risk, but a necessary risk to take. I could not be a rabbi where the vision I held out for a shul was not on the table from the start. I guess the answer sat ok with those assembled because I had the honor of leading and serving them for 33 years. The latter is not due to simply having a vision, but in understanding the difference between a strategy to achieve that vision and tactics that were necessary to employ in order to make that vision real.

I am blessed to be working for someone now who well understands the importance of having a vision, who developed a strategy and uses the necessary tactics that meld with that strategy in order to achieve her vision. We are also living at a time when we see the use of tactics alone devoid of vision. There are ample examples of the latter which I do not need to share—other than saying that perhaps 75 years from now historians will be laughing at the so-called V-C (victory over covid) Day proclaimed yesterday by our dystopian leader. In my world now, I am no longer responsible for implementing my vision for an organization. In fact, the strategy that flowed from that vision and the tactics at my disposal, might not be the ones that are most effective following this moment of disruption in religious life. Though I am sure I could redesign what is needed, I know that many others around the country are engaged in that process today. (just yesterday Rabbi Jon Spira-Savett wrote one such piece in the Times of Israel. There are many other examples of colleagues doing the same). But what I do know is that this moment is not simply about organizations or businesses or political campaigns. What Covid-19 demands of each of us is simply this: What is the vision we as individuals have in emerging from this pandemic into a very different world upon its re-opening? Indeed, as I was walking [this morning](#), I realized that almost intuitively I had gone through that process upon the shutdown having been confronted by my own reality of being overweight, out of shape and wanting to hang around, God willing, for many more years. That March 8<sup>th</sup> walk around Lake Nokomis was a wake-up call. The March 12<sup>th</sup> office shutdown provided me with a strategy that has allowed me to redefine my day, ensure that my work remains solid, my faith still ever present and my health and fitness equally evident. The world we will return to following its reopening, will not be the world of March 11<sup>th</sup> and for me it will not be the world of March 8<sup>th</sup> when I couldn't make it around Lake Nokomis without Phyllis having to get the car and pick me up. With an average of 13,500 steps a day, with a newfound facility with platforms for videoconferencing(don't laugh fellow staff members who might read this), and with a clearer resolve of how to live in the world when it resumes the “new normal” functioning—I remain grateful that a 9-year old heard those words, internalized them and had them help shape his plan for his life. So I leave you with this: What is the vision you have for emerging from this pandemic into a very different world upon its re-opening? What is your strategy and what are your tactics? Morris

Sent by my iPad