



Connect With Your Mission - Photo by Emma Cowling

5 Steps To Connect With Your Mission



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Helping female leaders in tech be more visible by developing their confidence and...

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When you connect with your mission it's powerful. Knowing what's important to you and how you want to show up in the world makes it easier to speak out, stay true to your bigger purpose and overcome the obstacles and knock-backs that come up.

It helps you to stay focused on the things that really matter, and motivates you to keep going when things get tough.

Here are some of the places where knowing your mission can be useful in your life:

- you can use it to guide you in making decisions
- you can check where you are spending your time against it to make sure you're following what's important to you
- you can find collaborators to work with to make it happen
- you can turn it into a project of its own
- and you can put it to one side and forget about it... and notice that you unconsciously end up guided towards things that bring it into being.

It's easy to get held back by the idea of a perfect mission statement. It sounds like something formal and impressive, but it doesn't need to be. It can be anything from some rough notes to a framed and pretty statement or picture.

What's most important about it is that when you see it, it gives you a nudge and reminds you of what's important to you and your chosen mission in this world.

However you decide to bring it together here are 5 steps that will help you that you can use to connect with your mission:

Step 1 - What Difference Do You Want To See?

A great place to start to connect with your mission is by considering your answers to these three questions:

- How would like the world to be different?
- What could you do to contribute towards that difference?
- What impact could you have on the world?

Notice what comes up when you answer these questions and give yourself permission to explore the answers. It doesn't matter if someone else is already doing it or you're not yet "qualified" enough. Focus on connecting with the things that are important to you where you want to see a change.

When you connect with your mission it needs to come from all of you, and feel bigger than you. It should go beyond you and take your energy out into the world, having an influence on others lives.

If these questions feel hard at first, don't get too caught up in getting it "right". Jot down some notes and ideas, keep on coming back to them, reviewing, revising, updating and allowing it to emerge over time.

Step 2 - What Do You Bring?

What inspires you? What do you love to do? What's the thing that makes your heart sing?

It's so important that your mission is something you feel passionate about and that you love. Write a list of all the things that you enjoy doing and then think about how they could contribute towards making the world a better place.

You may find it useful to reflect on your career journey. This can be a great way to see patterns across your life and give you insights to feed into your mission. Notice the key turning points in your career, how they have influenced where you are today and ask yourself what you could take from them to feed into your mission?

Add whatever comes up for you in your notes... we'll come back and connect it together later.

Step 3 - What Do You Stand For And Against?

When you connect with the things that you really believe in, this gives you more of a clue on where you want to make a difference.

Sometimes it's easier to think about what we stand against in order to figure out what we stand for. For example, think about what annoys and frustrates you.

I get frustrated with time-wasters – particularly in relation to meetings! I get annoyed by people who organise meetings for the sake of it, give no consideration to the agenda, and at the end of the meeting (which inevitably over-runs), there have been no decisions or actions.

I prefer to work with people who take a bit of time to step back and consider what's important and what the next step is before they start bringing others in. If they need to get people together at early stages to generate ideas, then that's fine – but make it clear that that's what they want from you.

And at the core of this, what it comes down to, for me, is respect. I think it's important to have respect for others

time and commitment and use this to guide how to engage them and get the best from them.

This example illustrates is how you can take something which frustrates you and that you stand against (time-wasting) and identified the alternative that you stand for (respect for others).

There are other things that frustrate me. Sometimes when I work through to the alternatives respect comes out again. Others lead to a different answer.

Anytime you get frustrated it's a great opportunity to learn more about what's important to you and what you stand for, which provides more insight to feed into your mission.

Take 5 minutes to reflect on what frustrates you capture it in your notes. Work it through and see what comes out for you.

Step 4 - Who Do You Want To Help?

Who we work with can make such a big difference in our lives – the people around us can be our inspiration, and they can also demotivate us too. When the people we work with linked to our mission it's much easier to take inspiration and find a way to keep on showing up.

Ask yourself – who do you want to help?

- A great place to start is to think of any examples of specific people you love to work with and to notice what it is about them that you like. It might be certain characteristics or the approach they have. It might be their interests.
- You might also like to think about groups of people that you're involved with. Who are you drawn towards? What is it you like about them?
- You could also consider people that are drawn towards you. This can also give you useful information about what people might get from you.

You don't need to answer all of these questions, just use them to approach the question of who you want to help from different perspectives.

Note down these qualities of the people you love to work with and then ask yourself how these people connect with your mission.

Step 5 - Turn It Into A Mission Statement

By now you should have some rough notes which will start to form the background on which to build your mission. Even if you've not got answers to all of the sections yet, whatever you do have will give you a basis.

However, it's possible that what you have feels a bit jumbled. This is expected – because what you've been doing so far has just been about getting ideas out of your head.

The next step is to start creating some structure and turn what you have into a mission statement

Go through and highlight the things that really resonate with you from the notes you've made. Pull out anything that feels really important amongst all those notes and then start creating sentences from it.

There is no set format for a mission statement. The most important thing is that when you read through it, it inspires you and connects you back to your mission. My preferred format is a few short sentences that capture the most important things that come out of the questions above.

- You might want to start with "My mission is..." or "I help..." or "I want to make the world a better place by...". Or you can just play around with things until they start to make sense to you.
- You might want to try to answer the question in each step above to give some structure. But you might just want to write and let it flow.

Don't overthink it. You won't get it "right" first time, but each time you come back and look at it it will get closer.

Write something quickly, put it to one side and sleep on it. Then come back to it tomorrow and tweak it. Then put it aside again... and so on... slowly you'll find that the path

emerges, and you'll start to notice opportunities that help you take the next step.

To give you an example here is my mission statement as of January 2021 – feel free to copy my structure if it helps.

My mission is to help **female leaders in tech** to be more successful by increasing their **impact and influence**. I do this by helping them to reconnect with what they believe is important so they focus on making their difference in the world.

I want them to know that they can **have impact without being busy**, and to see that when they show up as themselves they have a greater influence on the lives of others.

I stand against striving and fighting to make things happen and instead focus on developing **space to listen, connect, collaborate and show up authentically** and to notice what happens when we allow our natural creativity to flow.

As more female tech leaders see their resilience and feel empowered to share their ideas, views and passions, this will bring more **innovation**, create more **meaningful products**, and lead to a more **inclusive, collaborative tech environment**.

Emma Cowling Coaching

Before you judge yours against mine I should say that I've been working on my mission for the last 2 years or so. I come back to it about every 3-6 months and it changes a bit each time. It's not "there" yet – in the sense that it still doesn't feel quite me, but it is getting closer.

Know that whatever comes out this time is ok. The first step is often the hardest to take.

What's Next?

So what should you do with your mission now you have it?

The best thing you can do is review it regularly, update it, and allow it to evolve.

You'll find that when you do this you will connect into it more and more deeply and that it starts to infuse your life. You'll make decisions based on it, you'll talk about it naturally and you'll find opportunities which will help you make further progress.

Sometimes you might come back to it and find your motivations have changed. This is ok. Your mission is not static. It lives and grows with you as you learn more about the world.