

## Finding Your Career and Yourself

### COMMITTEE REPORT



Felicia Boyd (Workshop Leader), Photos © John Livzey, 2015

When experienced workshop leader Felicia Boyd began a workshop titled *How to Write Your Personal Mission Statement* on Wednesday, July 15, her audience of fellow WTS-Los Angeles chapter members likely expected help on furthering their careers. Instead, she asked them to dream.

“I want to give you an opportunity to dream,” Boyd, a division manager for the Federal Aviation Administration and member of the WTS International board of directors, told her audience. “This whole workshop is about dreaming. I want you to dream large.”

#### Focus on the Big Picture

“Start thinking about what matters to you: the big picture,” she advised. “Maybe besides making money, you want to give back to people or work in a beautiful environment. Who do you want to help? What value will you create?”

Her audience consisted of people in various stages of their careers, and she emphasized that a well-considered personal mission statement proves valuable for every stage.

#### Every Career Requires Transitions

“No matter where you are in your career, there are always transitions to make,” she emphasized. Boyd was in her own transition, moving from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles a little more than a year ago. A personal mission statement keeps professionals on track, “especially when things get crazy,” she said.

Her commitment to mentoring professionals grew from noticing that people in mid-career and entering their 30s had to face new transitions.



#### Balancing Careers and Family Require Values

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“People would think that you can have it all,” she summarized. “Well, you can have it all, you just can’t have it all at the same time. Careers and family require you to know your priorities and values.”

Boyd broke the 12 attendees into pairs, one acting as mentor and the other as mentee. The goal was to discover the gifts and talents of the other person in two minutes.

### **Think of What You Love**

“Try to think of things you love to do,” she reminded her audience. “I know most of us are humble, but this is your chance to brag a little.” There was much laughter during the interview stage.



“I do this for high school kids, and they don’t have this hard a time,” Boyd said after the workshop. “Maybe as we get older, we get more reserved.”

### **Began with Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Boyd started mentoring after college when she volunteered for the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America programs. Then she helped girls in science, technology, engineering and math—known as the STEM skills—as part of the work of the White House Council on Women and Girls, begun March 2009. She also serves on the Board of WTS International.

Besides offering the personal mission statement workshop, Boyd offers workshops on business protocol, interviewing skills, and workshops on math readiness.

### **Imagine Your 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday**

For Boyd’s second exercise, she asked her audience to imagine that today was his or her 30<sup>th</sup> or 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. Once again they were paired and would take turns interviewing each other as a journalist might.

“You are being interviewed by a journalist, so you’ve obviously done something notable,” she explained.

“I want you to dream about why this person is interviewing you,” she said. “Where are you? Your condo in New York? Your condo in Spain? What are you doing? Do you have a dog? Do you have a family?”

### **Who Is the Person Beside You?**

“You’ve got to dig, you’ve got to probe,” she reminded audience members acting as journalists. “You want to get a good article. You don’t want to go back to your editor with a lame piece.”

At the back of her nine-page handout was a page of 18 quotes from the famous and thoughtful. Boyd titled the page “Quotes to Inspire Your Personal Mission Statement.” She encouraged her class to pick a quote there or somewhere else that addresses what they want to become.

### **Become Your Best Advisor**

To become that new person, Boyd added, may require becoming your own best advisor.

“If you send up a weather vane or put your thumb up in the air every time you want to do something different—to find out what people are going to think about it—you’re going to limit yourself. That’s a very strange way to live.”

One audience member shared with the workshop that “I hadn’t actually thought where I wanted to be when I was 40. I also hadn’t thought about how I wanted to be remembered.”

### **Consider Where You Are Before Mapping a Future**

“When you get to that level of thought about your future” Boyd replied, “You can think about where you are now. That can help you build your road map.”



The next exercise asked the audience to rank five values that meant the most to them.

### **Where to Concentrate Those 10,000 Hours**

“You have heard that it takes 10,000 hours to become excellent at a skill,” she said. “So, if you spend time learning what your talents are, you will learn where to concentrate those 10,000 hours. That is not a one-year thing—it’s a longer commitment, but no matter how old you are, you can put in the time.”

“I don’t expect you to walk out of here with a complete personal mission statement, but take what you have from today and look at your everyday life,” Boyd advised. “Try to pull together a mission that has those three things: What do you want to do? Who do you want to help? What value will you create?”

### **Many Channels of Inspiration**

“Your inspiration could be a song, something that you listened to when you were younger,” she counseled. “You can search for mission statements, but maybe that doesn’t matter to you. Maybe you’ll find pictures that you like—not all of this has to be expressed in words. You just have to be inspired.”

“This is something you should revisit every few years,” Boyd said. “You tend to forget the big picture and get caught up in the day-to-day. Use this as your beacon to keep you focused.”



“Felicia gave us the opportunity to dream big,” said Mahsa Hematabadi, a construction manager for the Port of Los Angeles. “I realized that I often focus on the details of how to accomplish my dreams, rather than the big picture of what my dreams really are.”

This well-received workshop was planned by WTS Los Angeles Mentorship chair Lilian De Loza-Gutierrez of Los Angeles Metro and Veronica Siranosian of AECOM.

This article was written by Ned Racine.