six word aspirations for 2016

The Learning Café

Six word stories have become a powerful tool to catalyze conversation, spark imagination or simply break the ice. A six word story is a profound and creative way to think about your life, your surroundings, your reality and ultimately yourself. It works because it's so simple.

At work, the technique of a **Six Word Aspiration** can express your brand and focus your growth aspirations. Write about how you see yourself, your work, your life. Or how you'd love to see it.

So give six words a try – and inspire your year with words that count.

These prompts will get you started:

✶ Your goal for personal or professional growth

✶ The person you aspire to be, hope to become

✶ Self-knowledge to guide you in the coming year

✶ Advice to yourself about meaning, happiness and satisfaction

my six word aspiration

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

For ideas about how to make your aspiration a reality, see the next page.

six word stories at work

✶ *Good stories always beat good spreadsheets.*
Chris Sacca, Google

✶ *Get dirty, make difference, have fun.*
Project manager, engineering firm

✶ *Be a doer, not a dreamer.*
Shondra Rhimes, creator Grey's Anatomy & Scandal

✶ *Collaborate more: it doesn't hurt much.*
Strategy director, retail services

learn more

✶ Six Word Memoirs website: www.sixwordmemoirs.com
✶ TED Blog / Larry Smith: http://blog.ted.com/the-evocative-world-of-the-six-word-memoir-a-qa-with-new-ted-ebook-author-larry-smith/
✶ Six Word Memoirs, The Video Story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZOxhHXZW6o

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Achieving Your Aspirations

Looking for ways to put your aspiration into action?

Rock the year with these practical strategies.

Adopt a Growth Mindset

Psychologist Carol Dweck has found if you hold the view that there is always more to learn and embrace the process of wading into unfamiliar waters, you can free your thinking, dissolve your fear of failure, and power your success.

Experiment with New Approaches or Behaviors

To identify new behaviors for testing, reflect on a challenge you're facing and asking yourself questions such as "What's one thing I could do to change the outcome of the situation?" and "What will I do differently in the future?"

Look for Connections Across Seemingly Unrelated Areas

To try this technique, choose a domain you have expertise in but that's unrelated to your work and ask yourself how you might apply that knowledge to your current challenge.

Make Time for Reflection

A growing body of research shows that systematically reflecting on work experiences boosts learning significantly. Get into the habit of asking yourself questions like "What have I learned from this experience?" and "What turned out differently than I expected?"

Dump the Old Baggage

Learn the lessons from failure and unpleasant experiences and move on. Distill the experience into a nugget of wisdom to carry into the future by finding at least one positive to take with you.

Find a New Mentor or Coach Someone

Give a little, get a little. Open yourself up to maverick thinking and new connections. Ask others for their insight, troubleshooting. On the flip side, the best learning often happens when we're serving someone else as a supporter or coach.

Aspiration Without Action is Just Hot Air

In organizations there's an endemic assumption that we must hurry, hurry, hurry at all times as if busyness was a worthwhile goal in and of itself. Still, the moment arrives when action is imperative. Find focus by asking "What will have the most impact?" and "What accountability do I need?"

Sources
The Personal Learning Model by Scheef & Thielfoldt
Do More Great Work by Michael Bungay Stanier
Four Ways to Become a Better Learner by Monique Valcour

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"*Staying within your comfort zone is a good way to prepare for today, but it's a terrible way to prepare for tomorrow.*"

~ David Peterson, Google