

Visions, ideals and goals

By Karen Johne

The word 'vision' originates from Latin and means both, sight and appearance. Through this double meaning both dimension become visible: sight - we look at something, take it into our focus. Or something appears to us, which can be deceptive. Therefore, it is required to have a clear distinction between *vision* and *ideal*.

A vision in our sense is based on the values we introduced in the previous CAT session. If we take the value of health as an example, we can see at which points the value of health is currently being violated in our society and our lives. Where are the weak points of our health care system? Who benefits from illness or the promise of health? At whose expense? What stigma and taboos exist around disease and thus seem to legitimize the exclusion of certain groups of people from our society, etc.?

Based on this analysis, it is possible to develop visions (or paradoxically speaking: a utopia considered feasible) of how exactly it would look like if we had a *real health* care system? How would hospitals look like? Which people who are now partially excluded from the health care system would then have access? Under what conditions do healthy and sick people live together? How are sick people supported so that they can recover in dignity - or even die? Do we understand illness as an individual phenomenon or does it have social, collective, societal references and can also experience healing dimensions in this context? All the images that arise based on the value of health can give us strength and orientation in our reference groups and systems. Visions do not live from the fact that we all develop the same images - they live from diversity and do not need consensus to develop binding power in groups.

From the visions, in further work steps concrete goals can be formulated, which in turn are jointly supported by all and from which tasks and responsibilities also arise. In contrast to visions, goals are concrete, achievable, timed and formulated according to our resources. They can be implemented or adapted and changed during the process. Once we have reached a goal, we can collect and document our learning experiences, plan new goals and - not to forget, celebrate our success. But a vision itself cannot be achieved. It remains a source of orientation and strength for the toils of the plain, i.e. the many small interim goals and steps that often take years or even decades and have to be achieved by a wide range of actors at different levels when a society is actually undergoing fundamental change. This became visible last year in Sudan, where the revolution, which was mainly carried out by women, touched me deeply and gave me hope in view of the many authoritarian developments worldwide.

But when does the imaginary image become an illusion that is deceptive or even an ideal? In processes of idealization, one value is made absolute and the other values are devalued. We can notice this when an (apparent) value no longer gives us strength and orientation in our group relations, but makes us feel separated, deficient and draws strength. We then only perceive our own and other shortcomings and how much we fail compared to our ideal. Our vision then becomes a dystopia, repressive social control happens in the name of the 'good cause'. We do not experience ourselves as free, nor equal or reliable.

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Your individual preparation until the next CAT training session:

Please also listen to the [audio about vision and goal](#)!. Afterwards, based on the currently endangered or already violated values you have described in the poem, I invite you to write a letter from the future to a friend, your child or whoever you have in front of your inner eye. Describe to him/her what has changed since the crisis was overcome.