Introduction and Discussion

Helen Keller said, “The greatest tragedy in life is people who have sight but no vision.” But it’s not enough to have a vision; it is how we act on that vision that matters. Let’s revisit why we joined TOPS and think about our visions for ourselves and how we can reach our goals.

(Discuss the following questions, and allow members time to jot down responses on the next page and share with the chapter before moving on to the next question.)

1. Throughout the TOPS program, we are reminded frequently that we have choices in everything we do: what we eat, how often we exercise, how we think, etc. By focusing and acting on our intentions, we can make positive changes over time.

What do you hope to achieve as a TOPS member, and what are you doing to make that happen?

2. As TOPS members, we aim to follow a healthy lifestyle by eating sensibly and keeping active. We aspire to Take Off Pounds Sensibly, with the ultimate goal of becoming a KOPS and working to Keep Off Pounds Sensibly.

What are your goals?

3. Whether you imagine yourself wearing an outfit in a smaller size, running a race, or fitting comfortably into a single seat on an airplane, visualizing specific achievements can motivate us to stay focused on our goal. Your vision can change as you change. Remember to revisit your vision of yourself to help reach your final destination.

If you picture yourself achieving certain goals, what are they? What is your vision for yourself?

4. We have so many TOPS tools to help us make our visions a reality. Always attend TOPS meetings, loss or gain. Just as we recognize members for their accomplishments, we provide support and encouragement—along with helpful hints and sympathetic ears—for those who gained. Gaining some weeks is just part of the process, and we can’t let a setback derail us.

Many success stories start with keeping a food journal. You can use a spiral notebook or My Real Progress, available at www.tops.org. Write down everything you eat—yes, even bites. Don’t worry about writing food exchanges or calories at first. Once you have gotten into the habit of writing down what you eat, then start adding up food exchanges or calories too. Also, remember to measure your food to maintain portion control. “Guesstimating” is how we end up eating too much!
If you feel like you are losing motivation, be sure to go to other TOPS events, such as workshops, TOPS State Recognition Days, TOPS International Recognition Days, and rallies. And if you are doing well, head to these events to inspire other members!

What will you do to make your vision a reality?

Optional Activity
Keep a reminder of your vision close at hand by adding a picture representing your vision and/or an inspirational quote to a customizable photo key chain. You can find these inexpensive key chains at drugstores or online. Then use a photo of yourself at a healthy weight or an image clipped from a magazine—of a runner, for example—to inspire you and help you focus on your goal. Then, when you’re at a get-together, a restaurant, or the grocery store and feel tempted by unhealthy foods or drinks, your key chain will remind you to make sensible choices. For the next meeting, bring in your key chain and tell us how it relates to your vision.

Did You Know?
For another fun way to visualize your goals, try creating a vision board. For details, see page 163 of Real Life: The Hands-on Pounds-off Guide. Or make designing vision boards your next chapter activity!

What Is Your Vision?

1. What do you hope to achieve as a TOPS member, and what are you doing to make that happen?
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_________________________________________________________________________________________

2. What are your goals?
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_________________________________________________________________________________________

3. If you picture yourself achieving certain goals, what are they? What is your vision for yourself?
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4. What will you do to make your vision a reality?
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For another fun way to visualize your goals, try creating a vision board. For details, see page 163 of Real Life: The Hands-on Pounds-off Guide. Or make designing vision boards your next chapter activity!