# CRAFTING A VISION FOR AN INCLUSIVE LIFE

Bruce Uditsky, M.Ed.
CEO Emeritus
buditsky@inclusionalberta.org

with

Pat Winter, Coordinator
Darrell Cook FMS Resource Centre

Catherine Oakleaf, Regional Director,
Advocacy & Community Development

www.inclusionalberta.org

# A VISION OF AN INCLUSIVE LIFE IS A VALUES BASED STATEMENT THAT INSPIRES

Seeing what is not visible

Imagining what does not yet exist

What should be

Counter cultural

Not part of our normative experience

With thanks to Darcy Elks for a number of slides

# THE SOURCE OF AN INCLUSIVE FAMILY VISION

- seeing the gifts and talents of your son and daughter
- having a vision of how you want others to positively see and know your son or daughter
- holding high expectations
- recognizing and supporting their dreams and aspirations
- understanding that this vision may not be recognized by others and how it might challenge the perceived status quo (e.g., education, government, service providers)

# POWER OF A VISION

“Some men see things as they are and say why—
I dream things that never were and say why not.”
George Bernard Shaw

“Creating begins with vision.” Henri Matisse

“It is the act of seeing things invisible.” Jonathan Swift

A clear mental picture of what could be; fueled by the conviction that it should be

# A VISION IS

An empowering means to a valued future

A guide, a template, a benchmark to measure against

Others will have a vision for your family member – whose vision do you want to be determining your son/daughter/family member's life?

# WHERE DOES AN INCLUSIVE VISION COME FROM?

- Beliefs and values
- Passion, concern and conviction
- Learning from others
- Vision is birthed from our hearts, souls, and minds

# FUNDAMENTALS OF VISIONING

- Encourage yourself and others to dream
- Base an inclusive future vision on what is typical or best for children and adults of similar age in different spheres of life
- Customize the vision based on your family member's gifts, talents, passions, interests

# FUNDAMENTALS OF VISIONING

- Freely brainstorm -- Don't think about obstacles and barriers
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to change the vision
- Once you have a vision, be patient
  The vision can mature in us over time

# THE POWER OF A VISION

- A Vision is a motivating force
- A deep burning yes
- Empowering

# THE POWER OF A VISION

- Our vision affects the choices we make:

- If our vision is limited, we tend to make choices
- based on what is in front of us

- If our vision is based on a social mirror, that is on how we think others see us or our family members, we tend to make choices based on the expectation of others

- If our vision is expansive within a normative inclusive pathway to the good life, and valuing of the individual,
- promising possibilities emerge

# WE NEED A VISION THAT

- Challenges the status quo
- Creates full meaningful inclusive lives with and for our family members: “Without a vision the people perish” (Old Testament)
- Moves life forward
- Stays on track

# ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

"Reach high, for stars lie hidden in the soul. Dream deep, for every dream precedes the goal." Pamela Starr

Vision always stands in contrast to the world as it is. Vision demands change.

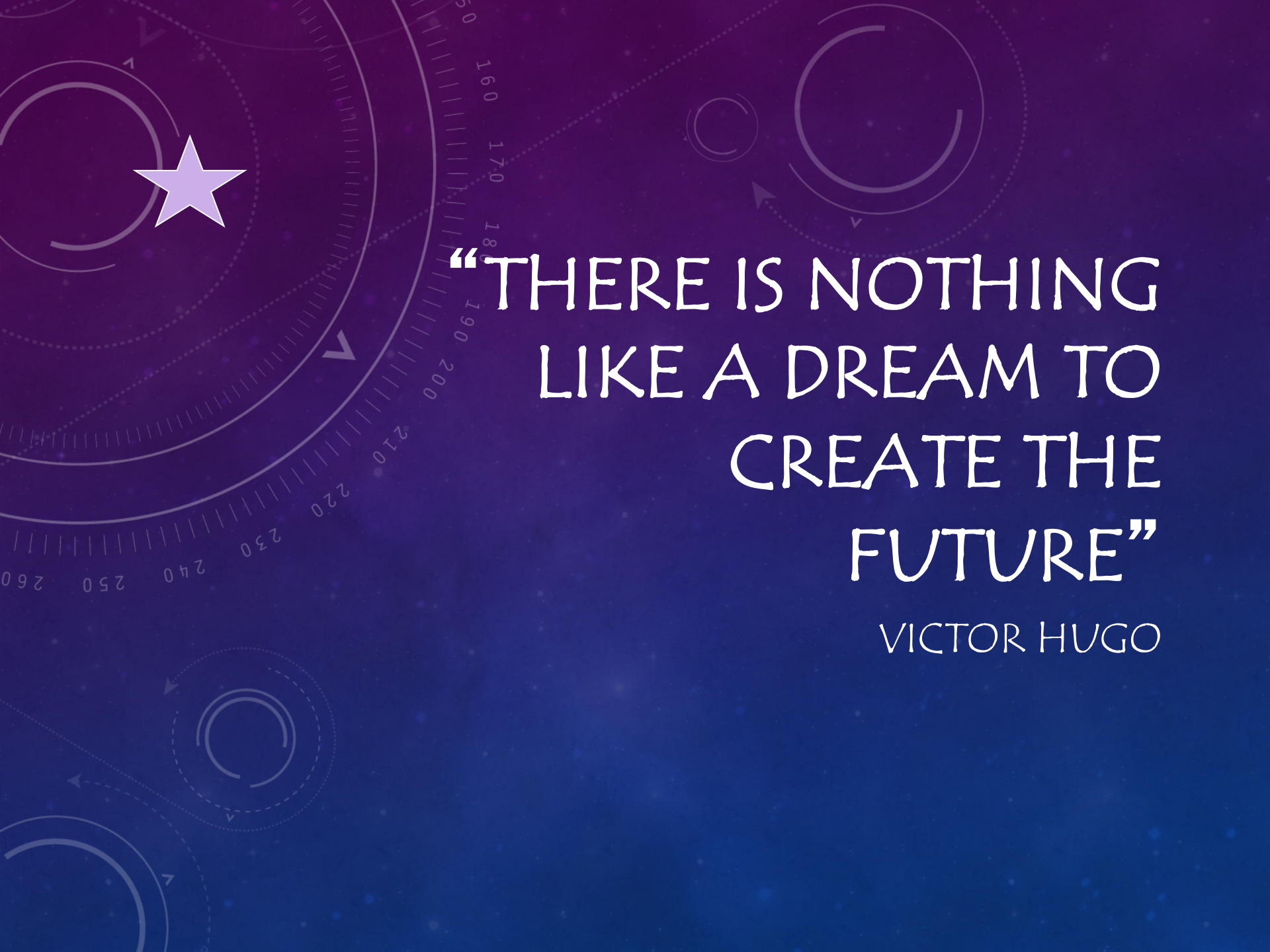
It implies change and visionaries: people who have allowed their minds and hearts to go outside of the artificial boundaries imposed by the world as it is.

"Vision requires courage." Andy Stanley

# ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

“A vision is enlivening, it’s spirit-giving, it’s the guiding force behind all great human endeavors.

“Vision is about shared energy,  a sense of awe, a sense of possibility.”Benjamin Zander


"THERE IS NOTHING LIKE A DREAM TO CREATE THE FUTURE"
VICTOR HUGO

# STARTING POINT – BREAKOUT GROUP

1. Take a moment to write down the talents, interests, gifts, capacities, interests, strengths and/or passions of your son/daughter or family member with disabilities?
2. In your small group describe who your son/daughter is?
3. Other should ask clarifying or elaborating questions in an effort to deepen your description.
4. If you need to modify/add to the description, please do so.

# AN INCLUSIVE LIFE

- The good life, an inclusive life, is fairly common and well understood
- An inclusive life is what people without disabilities live ordinarily, often without much thought or question
- It is what most people aspire to, where their hopes and dreams lie
- Yet the very idea of inclusive life remains controversial and contested for individuals with disabilities

# An inclusive life

- Inclusion is fundamentality a question of values, ethics & leadership
- It is dependent on the perception one holds of the inherent nature of individuals with disabilities
- We know how to create inclusive lives across the life-span but the choice of pursuing an inclusive life is a persistent values–based question requiring continuous recommitment
- Pursuing an inclusive life is a counter-cultural journey requiring a passionate conviction related to how we see and understand each individual with a disability

# AN INCLUSIVE LIFE

AN INCLUSIVE PATHWAY IS THE PRIMARY MEANS TO A LIFE OF MEANING, BELONGING AND POSSIBILITIES

REQUIRING IMMERSION IN THE VALUED, NORMATIVE PATHWAYS OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LIFE OVER THE LIFE-SPAN

- To assume a different desire and/or a different means exists in the pursuit of a meaningful life as a function of disability, is to assume a different humanness

- Often less human, which creates an expectation and acceptance of a less rich life and at times worse -- an opening to harm

Inclusion Alberta

Inclusive life – looks like the lives of people who do not have disabilities unfolding over time with possibilities and meaning over the life-span; it begins with family

Growing up at home, being fully included in regular classrooms and schools, having friends, developing a career identity, being included in community activities, being a teenager, having dreams, playing sports, music/dance/art, going to college/university, traveling, falling in love, getting a job, having a home of your own, having friends over for dinner, pursuing a career, owning a business, looking after your parents

# INCLUSION: 50 YEARS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Improved health

Minimizes vulnerability

Improved learning/skill development

Improved rate of learning

Friendships/relationships/ social networks larger

Culturally literate

Improved communication

Improved behaviour

Greater likelihood of career and employment

More comparable life outcomes to people without disabilities

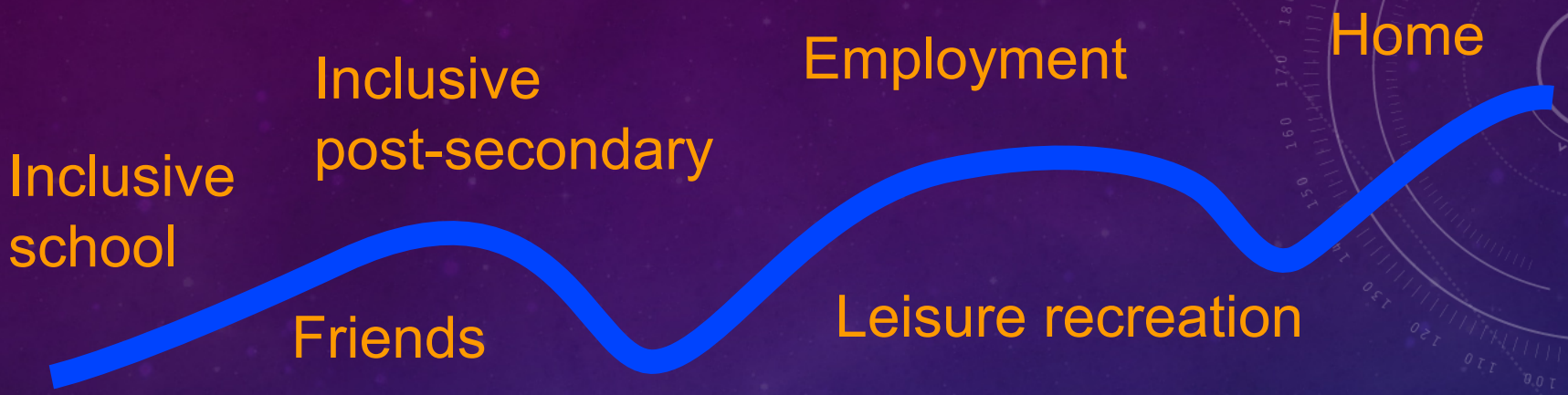
People without disabilities benefit

Segregation is harmful

Teacher quality cannot compensate for the limitations imposed by segregation & congregation

# NORMATIVE AND INCLUSIVE PATHWAYS:

- Immersion within the normative and valued pathways of family and community life is one of the primary means to a life of meaning, belonging and possibilities
- An inclusive life requires immersion in these pathways which are both then means and ends to a good life
- And in those pathways the art of facilitating relationships is honed
- Inclusion is both a means and an end




*as ordinary as possible*

# COMMUNITY CAPACITY & INCLUSION

Community capacity is realized when informal and formal generic organizations and associations:

- invite and welcome individuals with disabilities to become participating members
- create policies and practices to sustain and facilitate inclusion
- recognize the ‘societal good’ achieved by inclusion
- experience and acknowledge the mutual benefits of inclusion
- recognize the individual and societal harm of exclusion
- embrace inclusion

# CREATING/ MODIFYING YOUR VISION – SEE HANDOUT

- Home - where, type of home, décor, with whom, when
- Education - university/college, continuing education
- Employment – career, doing what, where,
- Community – recreation, leisure, what with whom
- Relationships/Friendships – where, how, family role

# CREATING/ MODIFYING YOUR VISION

In beginning or expanding consider:

- relationship to family
- friends and other relationships
- education
- career and employment/income
- home
- health/well-being
- leisure identity
- spiritual/cultural

# SHARING YOUR VISION – SECOND BREAKOUT GROUP

Share your vision in the short term and long term

Seek clarifying questions

Add to or modify your vision, if and as necessary

TAKE A MOMENT TO STATE YOUR VISION FOR YOUR SON, DAUGHTER OR FAMILY MEMBER WITH DISABILITIES:

OVER THE NEXT 3 – 5 YEARS

10 YEARS FROM NOW

20 YEARS FROM NOW

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE IN THE VISION THEY WOULD HOLD FOR THEMSELVES?

# FAMILY MANAGED SUPPORTS FUNDING

Individualized funding, personal budgets, direct funding

History

Utilizing FMS to enable a meaningful life within an inclusive pathway  - see FMS Online Guide with videos

AN INCLUSIVE PATHWAY IS THE PRIMARY MEANS TO A LIFE OF MEANING, BELONGING AND POSSIBILITIES

TO HAVE AN INCLUSIVE LIFE REQUIRES IMMERSION IN THE VALUED, NORMATIVE PATHWAYS OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LIFE OVER THE LIFE-SPAN

Based on what we have learned - we are nowhere near knowing the limits of inclusion and the capabilities of individuals with intellectual disabilities – their lives too often remain limited by the lack of a positive and life-enhancing vision and the failure to pursue an inclusive life ---

For additional information on visioning and planning and FMS please visit:

https://inclusionalberta.org/fms-online-guide/