WORKSHEET + WORKED EXAMPLE

Give a Big Ambition a First Step

A long-term aspiration connected to a near-term learning step and clear boundaries.

25 minutes | Long-horizon ambition

Use it in three moves

1. Name an ambitious future and make its status explicit.
2. Discuss the conditions and boundaries with the people affected.
3. Choose a near-term inquiry before treating the aspiration as a delivery plan.

What future would be worth working toward?

Describe the difference before choosing a slogan or number.

What horizon are we imagining?

Separate an aspiration from an approved delivery commitment.

Who would it help, and what do they say?

Leave room for people to question the ambition.

Give a Big Ambition a First Step

YOUR WORKING NOTES / CONTINUED

What would need to become true?

Name capability, resources, relationships, and uncertainties.

What will we not sacrifice in pursuit of it?

Be concrete about workload, access, quality, and dignity.

What can we learn in the next 30 days?

A useful first move should reduce an uncertainty.

When will we revisit the ambition itself?

Changing the destination can be evidence of learning.

A question for me

Would I still value the people here if the ambition changes?

See one way through

FICTIONAL WORKED EXAMPLE / NOT THE ANSWER TO YOUR SITUATION

What future would be worth working toward?

Every neighborhood has a dependable place where people can get practical help locally.

What horizon are we imagining?

A five-year aspiration to explore, not a promise of funded coverage.

Who would it help, and what do they say?

Residents ask for help outside office hours. We have not yet heard from people without transport.

What would need to become true?

Trusted local partners, accessible spaces, sustainable staffing, and clear referral routes.

What will we not sacrifice in pursuit of it?

No expansion dependent on volunteers being permanently available or taking work home without support.

What can we learn in the next 30 days?

Listen with residents in two neighborhoods and map existing help before proposing another service.

When will we revisit the ambition itself?

After the listening month, invite residents and partner teams to reshape the aspiration.

The thinking behind it

An ambition should enlarge people's possibilities without making their exhaustion proof of commitment. Let those who will live with the work influence the destination.

Jim Collins and Jerry Porras popularized the Big Hairy Audacious Goal, or BHAG. This independent exercise borrows the idea of a long horizon while adding explicit human boundaries and permission to revise the ambition.

Jim Collins · BHAG

Read You Have a Culture Problem by Nic Payne