

***THE BLIND VISIONARY***  
**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**LESSON #1: REACH OUT AGGRESSIVELY.**

1. An important part of Virginia Jacko’s success as president & CEO of the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired is her relationships with key stakeholders, such as her Board of Directors. Identify some of your important stakeholders – personal, professional, organizational – and, for each: (1) identify what’s at stake for you in each relationship; (2) identify what you think the stakeholder will need/want from you to keep the relationship in balance and healthy.
2. What attributes of Virginia’s appear to have made her so successful at building and maintaining key professional relationships?
3. What strategy did Virginia employ to convince the influential optometrist and future donor to join the advisory board of the Heiken Children’s Vision Program? What strategies have you employed to get reluctant stakeholders involved in activities?
4. Virginia Jacko is always on the lookout for mentors, such as former Purdue President Steven Beering. Identify important mentors you have learned from or whom you might seek out and how you have benefitted – or might benefit – from their mentoring.
5. What makes nonprofit advisory or governing boards such a rich source of mentors? Why do you think many CEOs are reluctant to use board members as mentors?

**LESSON #2: ACT ON OPPORTUNITIES.**

1. How does Viktor Frankl define “meaning,” and how does this apply to Virginia Jacko’s journey from Purdue University to the Miami Lighthouse?
2. Virginia is very adept at spotting and acting on opportunities. How have you gone about identifying opportunities for action in your life and career, and what can you do to hone your skills at spotting opportunities?
3. Virginia talks about “changing the problem” as a means of taking creative action. What is she talking about? Cite examples of changing the problem in order to take action in your own life or career.
4. Virginia talks about blindness as an asset in her life. What does she mean? Cite a barrier, challenge, or disability in your own life that has turned out to be an asset in your personal or career development.

### **LESSON #3: DON'T LET FEAR WIN.**

1. Why can being creative require courage? Think of situations in your own experience where you have had to overcome fear in order to take creative action,
2. What have been the source's of Virginia's courage in overcoming fear and meeting challenges head-on? Why did fear win on a couple of occasions in Virginia's career?
3. What role has "mission" played in Virginia's overcoming fear? How does Virginia define mission, and how has her mission evolved as she moved from Purdue to the Lighthouse? Has your personal or professional mission changed over time? How?
4. Virginia talks about listening to an inner voice. What does this have to do with one's evolving mission?
5. Virginia believes that the spiritual dimension of her life has helped her overcome fear and take action. What is she talking about? What has your experience been in this regard? How can a person develop the spiritual dimension of his or her life?

### **LESSON #4: KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.**

1. What does Virginia's experience at the upscale department store restaurant that didn't want to seat her with her guide dog teach about keeping things in perspective? Describe similar experiences of yours and what you learned – personally and professionally. Think of situations that might occur in nonprofit organizations where keeping things in perspective might serve you well.
2. Virginia believes that humor has made her a more effective nonprofit leader. Why do you think that is the case? Cite examples from your life and career where humor has been an effective tool.