

Your Values

You will eventually start to notice how easy it is to slip into the negative. In fact you may find that you struggle to be able to find the necessary positive thoughts, let alone the positive emotional energy that is necessary for success, for a strong relationship, and for good health. Do not be discouraged if you are a bit (or a lot) uncomfortable with this new way of thinking. Fear not, for the positive that you are looking for is there, but often well hidden by years of negative conditioning.

Knowing your values is extremely important to maintaining a positive mindset and acquiring the skill of Positive Presence. A personal value is an individual's absolute or relative and ethical value, the assumption of which can be the basis for ethical action. A value system is a set of consistent values and measures. A principle value is a foundation upon which your other values and measures of integrity are based.

Some values are physiologically determined and are normally considered objective, such as a desire to avoid physical pain or to seek pleasure. Other values are considered subjective, vary across individuals and cultures, and are in many ways aligned with belief and belief systems.

Values can be defined as broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes. As such, values reflect a person's sense of right and wrong or what "ought" to be. They identify what should be judged as good or evil. Values are abstract concepts of what is important and worthwhile. "Equal rights for all," "Excellence deserves admiration," and "People should be treated with respect and dignity" are representative of values. Values tend to influence attitudes and behavior. Different cultures reflect values differently and to different levels of emphasis.

Most concede the power of core values in business. Jim Collins made a great case in his book "Built to Last." But it's difficult to accurately create or accept core values for your company if your own personal core values have not been clarified. You may claim to understand your own values, but real awareness does not arise until you have articulated them clearly in writing and tested them through daily decision-making. Real awareness begins with asking yourself daily, moment by moment, "Am I thinking true to my core values? Am I feeling true to my core values? Am I acting true to my core values?" Real awareness truly begins when those questions are asked often enough to become an unconscious habit and ultimately become 'who you are.'

Your personal values are there to guide behavior and choice, much the same as business core values. Identifying your values enables you to be swift and focused in your decision-making, with clear direction. Identifying your values and then living in sync with them allows for living in harmony with your choices – your choice of friendships, relationships, profession and business partnerships; how you choose to manage your personal resources such as time and money; and how to stay true to yourself.

Without personal value clarity you will suffer from cognitive dissonance, a term often used to describe the feelings of discomfort that result from holding two conflicting beliefs – when there is a discrepancy between beliefs and behaviors, something must change in order to eliminate or reduce the dissonance. Without personal value clarity you will ultimately suffer from stress, low emotional energy, lack of motivation, low productivity at work and at home, poor relationships and overall poor health.

Steve Pavlina provides a great list of values that can help you develop a clearer sense of what's most important to your in life. To see Steve's comprehensive values list go to '<https://stevepavlina.com/blog/2004/11/list-of-values/>'. This values list is merely a guide. It is lengthy and contains many synonyms but is certainly not exhaustive, so feel free to add unlisted values to your own list as well. There are many excellent articles and exercises on line that can help you think more about how your values influence your actions, and understand why you may respond in a certain way if someone acts in a manner that goes against one of your values. Also, understand that as we grow and as we change, our values may also change and so it is good to 'check-in' every once in a while to make sure you are still clear and can articulate your personal values.

As you work on your values list you will find that some just jump out and call to you, and you feel, "Yes, this value is part of me." These values reflect how you live, how you think, and how you make decisions and choices. Research coming from the neurosciences shows clearly that you can assess your personal energy flow through your feelings. Feelings such as happiness and optimism can be linked to a positive energy flow, and feelings such as anger and frustration can be linked to a negative energy flow. You can control your feelings with your thoughts. It is through your thought process that you choose how to behave. A clear and concise picture of your beliefs and values as they exist today, and perhaps even your goals and aspirations of tomorrow, is essential for enlightened leadership and a life of harmony.

Mahatma Ghandi said it best; "Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny."