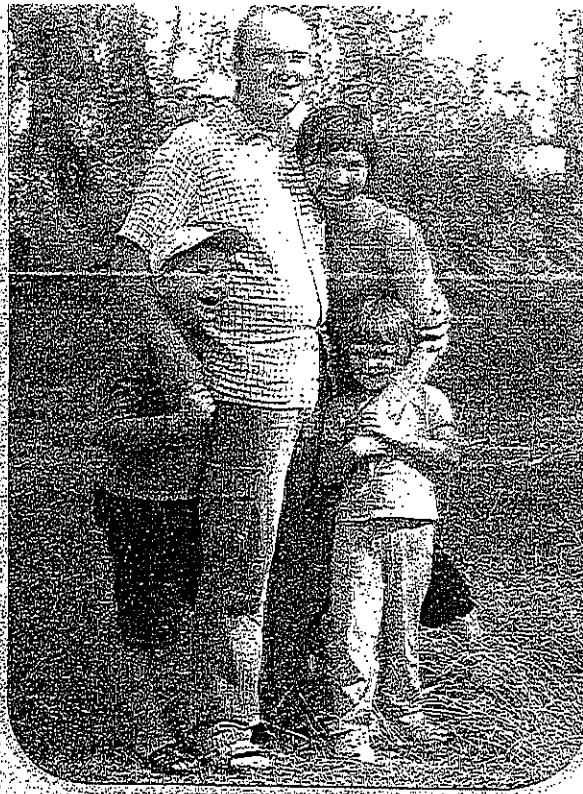


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Values and Ethics

Myself

I have to live with myself, and so
 I want to be fit for myself to know,
 I want to be able, as days go by,
 Always to look myself straight in the eye;
 I don't want to stand, with the setting sun,
 And hate myself for things I have done.

I don't want to keep on a closet shelf
 A lot of secrets about myself,
 And fool myself, as I come and go,
 Into thinking that nobody else will know
 The kind of man I really am;
 I don't want to dress myself in shame.

I want to go out with my head erect,
 I want to deserve all men's respect;
 But here in the struggle for fame and self
 I want to be able to like myself.
 I don't want to look at myself and know
 That I'm bluster and bluff and empty show.

I can never hide myself from me;
 I see what others may never see;
 I know what others may never know,
 I never can fool myself, and so
 Whatever happens, I want to be
 Self-respecting and conscience free.

Edgar A. Guest

Think about this

The Last Lecture

What wisdom would you impart to the world if you knew it was your last chance? At many colleges, professors are asked to give a hypothetical final talk called "The Last Lecture." In this talk, they ruminate on what matters most to them. In 2007, Randy Pausch, a professor in the computer science department at Carnegie Mellon University, agreed to give a last lecture. A few weeks later, he learned that he had only months to live—he was dying of pancreatic cancer.

A month after learning that his cancer was terminal, Randy Pausch gave his 76-minute speech, "Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams." He talked about what his childhood dreams had taught him about life and the lessons he had learned along the way, such as to show gratitude, don't complain and don't give up when faced by challenges, which he calls "brick walls." He also discussed enabling the dreams of others, having fun, asking for what you want, daring to take a risk, looking for the best in everybody, dreaming big, making time for what matters, and living with integrity and joy. At the end, Pausch tells the audience that his talk isn't for them—it's for his kids. The lecture isn't about dying—it's about living. Ten months after giving the lecture, Randy died at the age of 47.

Randy Pausch's last lecture has become an Internet sensation, a bestselling book, and inspiration to others who are going through cancer or other tough situations. As Randy said, "We cannot change the cards we are dealt; just how we play the hand."

So, if you had to vanish tomorrow, what would you want to leave as your legacy?

We face a rapidly changing world in which old values give way to new ones or to none at all. Today, people are trying to make sense of the world in which we find ourselves. Many who are fortunate enough to achieve power, ~~the~~ success, and material comfort nevertheless experience a sense of emptiness. It is no surprise that people are asking more value questions: What is ~~the~~ good life for me? What is really important to me? What is life all about? What are my personal ethics? How can I find meaning and purpose in ~~life~~? In order to begin to find answers to these questions, we need first of all to be able to identify what values are.

What Are Values?

For just a few minutes, consider the following analogy: If you were going to build a new home, one of the first considerations would be to ~~decide~~ upon your house plan. After having carefully studied your house plan ~~and~~ having made the necessary adjustments, you would have your house plan converted into a blueprint. This blueprint would serve as a guide for the construction of your new home. For example, the choices and decisions concerning the layout of the kitchen, the placement of doors and windows, the design of electrical outlets, and so on, would be in accordance with ~~the~~ blueprint—the plan or guide for your new home.

Could it be possible that we also have a blueprint or guide concerning the choices and decisions we make in our way of living? Is there a relationship between this blueprint or guide and our values?

Authors have written extensively about the meaning of the term values. For example, a value is the degree of importance we attach to various beliefs.

Things have the value that we ourselves have the capacity to give them.

NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

~~These~~ objects, or things (Mynatt and Doherty 2001). Hunter Lewis (2000)
~~values~~ values in this way:

Although the term value(s) is often used loosely, it should be synonymous with personal beliefs about the "good," the "just," and the "beautiful," personal beliefs that propel us to action, to a particular kind of behavior and life.

We could conclude then that our values give rise to our personal goals and tend to place limits on the means we shall use to reach them (Rathus and Rathus 2007).

Because we have many values, it is, therefore, appropriate to speak of a set of values or our value system. A set of values is more than just a set of rules and regulations. Instead, it is the underlying system of beliefs about what is important in life to a person. Actually, our value system represents the blueprint or guideline for the choices and decisions we make throughout life. Still true today, Kluckhohn (1956) explains these choices and reasons:

Every individual operates according to a system of values, whether it is verbalized and consistently worked out or not. In selecting goals, in choosing modes of behavior, in resolving conflicts, he is influenced at every turn by his conception of what is good and desirable for him. Although everyone's value system is in some degree unique, an individual's values are usually grounded in the core values of his culture. . . . Depending on his conception of what is desirable and good in human life, he selects certain goals over others and patterns his behavior according to standards of what he believes to be right and worthwhile. The way a man carries on his business activity, the kind of relationships he has with his wife and children and with his friends, the degree of respect he has for other individuals (and for himself), his political and religious activity—all these reflect the individual's values, though he may scarcely have thought them through.

Actually, as Elliot (1991) explains, "everything we do, every decision we make and course of action we take is based on our consciously or unconsciously held beliefs, attitudes, and values."

One excellent test to determine the intensity of your conscious or unconscious values is to notice how strongly you feel about an idea or thought. For example, how would you react to these issues: abortion, drug abuse, and nuclear war? If you have a strong conviction on any of these issues, it is highly probable that aspects of your value system are being revealed.

Types of Value Systems

the 19th century, Eduard Springer (1928) defined six different types of value systems based on their types of value systems, or their frameworks for expressing their own beliefs (Lamberton and Minor 2010). Do you fit into Springer's Six Value Systems?

God is a value system.¹ First of all, it's yours, and it is unique because you are one-of-a-kind. It is your code of ethics by which to live. It is your "behavior-bible." It is what guides your life.

NELEN, JONASCH

praise and ethics are not a religion. They are logical, sensible principles of good conduct that we need for a peaceful, productive society.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

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It is easier to fight for one's principles than to live up to them.

ALFRED ADLER

The strength of a nation derives from the integrity of the home.

CONFUCIUS

1. *The theoretical person.* This individual seeks to discover truth. He or she observes happenings and thinks them through, trying whenever possible to put ideas into a system. He or she avoids judgments about the beauty or usefulness of ideas.
2. *The economic person.* Personal needs, production, marketing, credit, and wealth are more important to this type of person than are social or artistic values. Things in life that are useful are the most important.
3. *The aesthetic person.* Beauty, form, and harmony are most important to this type of individual.
4. *The social person.* This person values and loves other people. Kindness and unselfishness are both very important values.
5. *The political animal.* This type is very power motivated. His or her values center on influence, fame, and power. These individuals do well in careers that involve the use of power and control.
6. *The religious person.* To this individual, the highest value is unity. He or she tries to understand the universe as a whole and relate to it meaningfully.

Most people don't identify with just one single type since a combination of two or more is often more accurate and descriptive. Which value system/s do you think are more closely related to your own personal value system?

How Do Values Develop?

Throughout your life, you have, in all probability, heard many *life messages*: "Life is . . .," "Success is . . .," "The most important thing is . . ." transmitted to you by parents, peers, and society in general.

We are not born with values, but we are born into cultures and societies that promote, teach, and impart their values to us. We learn to be what we are.

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Were your parents the biggest influence on your value system?

SHOULDs AND SHOULD NOTs. Basically, the years of adolescence are extremely important for the learning and development of values (Worchel and Goethals 1998). Most psychologists concur that we first acquire the cognitive understanding of right and wrong by observing the behavior of the people most important to us, usually (and hopefully) our parents (Begley and Kalb 2000). Actually, our first goals and ambitions will be drawn from this frame of reference. During the first few years of our life, we lacked the knowledge and maturity to evaluate our value orientation (Freiberg 2009/2010).

As we entered school, however, parental influence was combined with the influence of peers, teachers, and public media. We had one set of *shoulds* and *should nots* from our parents. The church often suggested a second. Our friends and "peer group" offered a third view of values. And then, the chaos of value conflicts: values from opposing political groups; militancy of left or right; the values of different cultures and social classes; the influence of Hollywood, popular magazines, television, the "net," and advertising claims (Grasha and Kirschenbaum 1999). As a side note, with recent research indicating that many young people spend thirty to forty hours a week in

rent of the TV set and the Internet, there continues to be great concern about the influence of television, the "net," and advertising claims on values formation (Reece and Brandt 2008).

With all of this additional information, we began to question and reevaluate our original value orientation. Much of this questioning was revealed through testing the *shoulds* and *should nots*. Therefore, actual experience became very real in the forming of our value system. For some people, this reevaluation period occurred during the adolescence period, early adulthood, or maybe even later.

INDIVIDUATION. How old were you when you reevaluated your original value system? Were you 18, 20, 25, or . . . ? Regardless of the exact time, examining and acquiring your personal set of values was, or is, the birth of your own individuality. In fact, Carl Jung (1923), one of the early psychoanalysts, called the process of becoming an individual—individuation.

Individuation refers to the separation from our family system and the establishing of our identity based on our own experiences, rather than merely following our parents' dreams. Although individuals may accept many of their parents' values, to genuinely individuate they must choose these values freely rather than automatically incorporating them into their personality.

The values we place upon different aspects of our environment have an effect upon how we view things and how we function. In other words, an act viewed as right or wrong, moral or immoral will depend upon the frame of reference of the perceiver. As a result, something that one person considers worthwhile and desirable may appear exactly the opposite to another person. We, therefore, tend to judge other people's actions by our own standards—our values?

What else influences the development of our values?

The Influence of Other Factors

Other important factors are influential in the formation of our value system. Some of these are religious beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, and stereotypes.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. What is a belief? A belief is the acceptance of some thought, supposition, or idea. This belief may be in a God, or in Gods, or even in some form of spirituality. Studies show that most Americans want spirituality, but perhaps not in religious form. The desire to explore and incorporate beliefs and teach treasured values to the next generation is still with Americans, even if they don't call it religion (Elkins 1999). In fact, M. Scott Peck (2002), in *The Road-Less Traveled, 25th Anniversary Edition*, notes that he likes to speak of "spirituality" rather than "religiosity." Peck goes on to indicate that every major religion of the world has similar ideas of love, the same goal of benefiting humanity through spiritual practice, and the same effect of raising their followers into better human beings. However, in an interview with Robert Epstein (2002) for *Psychology Today*, Peck reminded readers that one person's experience with spirituality would be different than another person's experience.

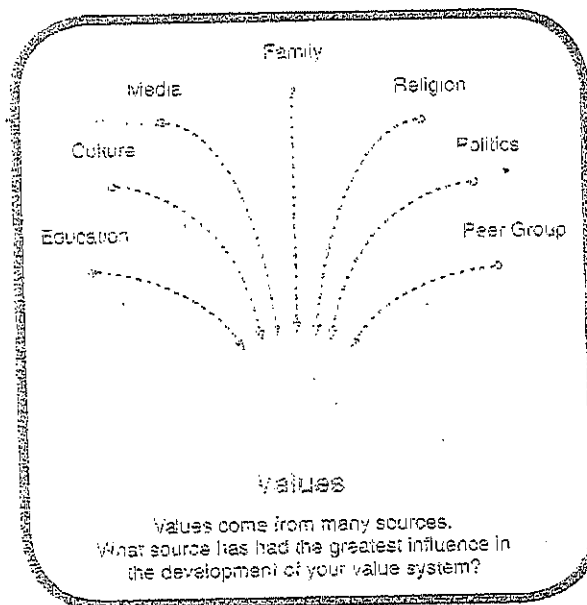
In some form or another, religion and established moral codes are found in all cultures and societies. A commitment toward a chosen moral code helps individuals gain a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives, and thus, becomes an integral part in shaping their value system (Compton 2005).

Consider this . . .

Possible Life Messages

- ☐ "Life is to have things: your own home, enough money for an emergency, security for old age."
- ☐ "Life is to get ahead, to prove yourself, to make people respect you."
- ☐ "Success in life is judged by how popular you are—by how many people love you."
- ☐ "You are worth only what you are worth in God's eyes."
- ☐ "Success in life is spelled: M-O-N-E-Y."
- ☐ "Life is for having good times."
- ☐ "If you've got your health, you'll be all right."
- ☐ "Education is what is important. They can take everything away from you except your mind."
- ☐ "Life is for loving and sharing with others."

What messages did you hear about the nature and purposes of life? Have you had any conflicts between what you heard and in what you now actually believe?



ATTITUDES. Attitudes are positive or negative orientations toward a certain target. For example, you have attitudes toward specific persons (parents, children, teachers), as well as toward groups of people (blacks, whites, male ministers, female ministers). You also have attitudes toward things or targets such as food, movies, holidays, or marriage.

The attitudes you have today have been acquired throughout your life. How did you acquire them? You may have acquired some of your attitudes by hearing parents, family, friends, and teachers express positive or negative attitudes toward certain issues or people. The mass media, including advertising, may also be responsible for shaping some of your

attitudes. The attitudes you have formed through your own direct experience are strongest, however, and they are also more resistant to change (Hetherington 1996).

More than likely, your positive attitudes are a result of positive experiences, and your negative attitudes are a result of negative experiences. Whatever you learned in these experiences is likely to take the form of expectations later in life. It is just natural to expect the same or similar results from similar situations. Consider these statements:

I'm not going to get married again; if I did, it would just probably end in another divorce.

Tom's mother is so different from Frank's mother—certainly not what I expected from a mother-in-law.

I'm sure I can work for Mrs. Jones; I've worked for another female, and we got along just great.

As you can see in these examples, the attitudes were formed from prior experiences and expectations. Is it possible that your prior experiences and expectations are shaping the attitudes and values you presently hold? If so, do you need to reevaluate these attitudes and values? Remember, the stronger an attitude is, the more difficult it is to change. Why? Because your emotions are involved.

PREJUDICES. A prejudice is a preconceived opinion, feeling, or attitude, either positive or negative, that is formed without adequate information. For example, you may have a negative prejudice towards the black English teacher who is going to teach your class next semester. Although you have not had this teacher before, you have heard statements made by other students, and you have already formed your opinion. It is only when you are actually in this teacher's class that you can make a justified opinion. Why? Prejudices are unjustified attitudes. And, sometimes these attitudes extend to entire groups of people.

Actually, there are three components to a prejudice (Myers 2006). They are as follows:

- To hold certain beliefs against members of a group—"Indians are mostly alcoholics."
- To feel negatively toward them—"I despise Jews."
- To be inclined to act negatively toward them—"I wouldn't hire a Mexican."

It is interesting to note that our strongest negative emotions are often reserved for groups rather than individuals. As Gordon W. Allport (1979) commented in his classic book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, "anger is customarily toward individuals only, whereas hatred may be felt toward whole classes of people."

STEREOTYPES. When we allow our prejudiced attitudes to make generalizations by categorizing an object, person, or situation, we are guilty of stereotyping. As psychologist Jack Dovidio of Colgate University notes: "we create stereotypes to explain why things are the way they are and stereotypes don't have to be true to serve a purpose." For example:

These attitudes are not based on facts, but on our attitudes towards them.

Reject and condemn prejudice based on race, gender, religion, or age.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Expectations
Attitudes
Prejudices
Stereotypes

Prejudice is being down on what we are not up on.

JOHN STEVENS

If I've ever tried to tell anyone is that I'm not a black man or a white man or anything else. All I've been was American.

GEORGE FOREMAN

Women are emotional.

Latin Americans are a hot-headed race.

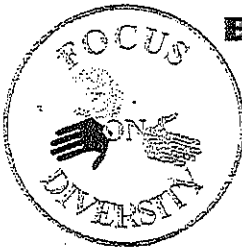
Mothers-in-law are bossy and interfering people.

There are just a bunch of hypocrites at *that* church.

According to these examples, if you are a woman, a Latin American mother-in-law, or if you go to *that* church, you have now been given a label. You are not thought of as an individual—you are a member of the group. Of course, you have *their* similar characteristics.

Pause for a minute and just ask yourself these questions: What prejudices and stereotypes do I have? What are they based on? Do I really want to live these values?

At this point, you may find it helpful to review Focus on Diversity: Breaking Down Barriers, for some suggestions on dealing with prejudices and stereotypes.



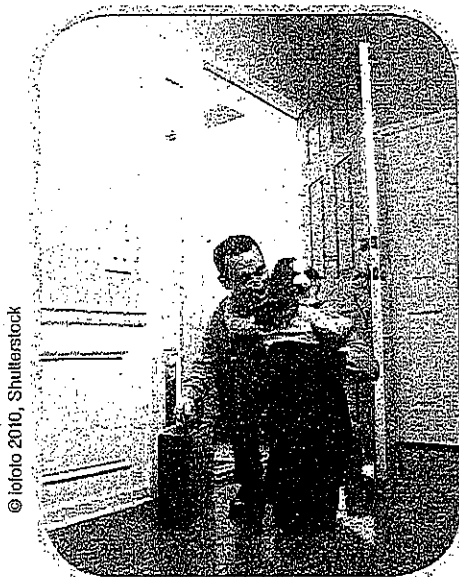
Breaking Down Barriers

To reduce your prejudices and use of stereotypes, these steps may be helpful:

1. Admit your prejudices and biases and try to understand them.
2. Identify the stereotypes that reflect your prejudices and attempt to modify them.
3. Identify the actions that reflect your prejudices and modify them.
4. Avoid judging differences; view diversity as a strength.
5. Attempt to learn about cultures that differ from your own. Try to understand their values.

Are you willing to test, adapt, and change your perceptions?

Johnson (2008); Corey and Corey (2008); and Henslin (2006).



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What things are most important in your life?

What Are My Values?

At the present time, what things are most important to you in your life? Is your career of primary importance? How about your school work and/or the training for your future career? How about the time you spend with your family? Do you have outside leisure interests, community activities, or volunteer work?

As Shames (1991) confirms, there are always many factors in your life that compete for your time and attention. Actually, what you value most often determines how you will spend your time. When you decide to work late on a repeated basis rather than go home to dinner, this is a value decision. If you gave up a movie in order to study for a test, this is also a value decision. When you decide to go out with some friends rather than attend your son's baseball game, this is another value decision.

You are always making value decisions, and an awareness of what values are most important to you can help you to live a more harmonious and less stressful life. When you know which values have a higher



Top Six Personal Values

In human relations/psychology of adjustment classes at Tarrant County College, Northeast Campus, 1183 students—52% females and 48% males—reveal their top personal values:

Males

1. Close family and friends
2. Happiness
3. Stable marriage
4. A fulfilling career
5. Financially stable
6. Good health

Females

1. Close family and friends
2. Stable marriage
3. Happiness
4. Good health
5. Financially stable
6. A fulfilling career

How do your top five values compare with what the male and female students said?

priority, you can more easily make life's major and minor decisions. We'll have more to say about prioritizing values a little later, but for now, think of your own values as you read the following results of a Personal Value Assessment Survey.

GENDER AND YOU. 1183 students in human relations/psychology of adjustment classes at Tarrant County College-Northeast Campus were asked to complete the Personal Value Assessment in the activities section at the end of this chapter. They were then asked to prioritize their top five values. Values frequently mentioned, but not prioritized by the students, were as follows:

- ☐ Happiness
- ☐ Good health
- ☐ A stable marriage
- ☐ Close family and close friends
- ☐ Living according to strong moral values
- ☐ Happy love relationship
- ☐ Stable life
- ☐ Fulfilling career
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Children

From the more commonly-mentioned values, the final results above actually reveal the top six prioritized values. You will also be given an opportunity to complete this activity, and you might want to compare your results with these findings.

DO VALUES CHANGE? Your values do change as you go through the various life stages. As children, your highest value might have been play and having fun; as adolescents, perhaps it was peer relationships; as young adults, it may be relationships with the opposite sex, and as adults your highest value may be your family and the work you do. For many older people, service to others and enjoying leisure time is often the highest value.

If you are currently seeking some change in your career or lifestyle, it may be due in part to the fact that some of your values may have changed. What was important to you in the past may be less important now. You may want to devote greater attention in your life to new things or to some of the things you did not have as much time for in the past.

It's good to have money and the things money can buy, but it's good to check once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things that money can't buy.

GEORGE NORRIS LOEWNER

What do I believe? To what extent am I ready to live up to my beliefs? How far am I ready to support them? We all create the person we become by our choices as we go through life.

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Robert Louis Stevenson's Daily Dozen

The most interesting thing about any human being is the values by which he or she lives. Unfortunately, most of us never take the time to sit down and really think through the moral precepts that consciously or unconsciously guide our lives.

The following "daily dozen" constitute the personal creed of writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894).

1. Make up your mind to be happy. Learn to find pleasure in simple things.
2. Make the best of your circumstances. No one has everything, and everyone has something of sorrow intermingled with the gladness of life. The trick is to make the laughter outweigh the tears.
3. Don't take yourself too seriously. Don't think that somehow you should be protected from misfortunes that befall others.
4. You can't please everybody. Don't let criticism worry you.
5. Don't let your neighbor set your standards. Be yourself.
6. Do the things you enjoy doing, but stay out of debt.
7. Don't borrow trouble. Imaginary things are harder to bear than the actual ones.
8. Since hate poisons the soul, do not cherish enmities, grudges. Avoid people who make you unhappy.
9. Have many interests. If you can't travel, read about new places.
10. Don't hold postmortems. Don't spend your life brooding over sorrows and mistakes. Don't be one who never gets over things.
11. Do what you can for those less fortunate than yourself.
12. Keep busy at something. A very busy person never has time to be unhappy.

It is a law of human life, as certain as gravity: To live fully we must learn to use things and love people . . . not love things and use people.

JOHN POWELL

Do you see any changes in your personal set of values over the past five or ten years? Has there been any change in the kinds of values you consider to be important in your life? You will be given several opportunities in the activities at the end of this chapter to review your values—past and present.

We have already stated that because we are unique individuals, something that one person considers a value might not be a value to another person. For

Consider this . . .

Your Values—Some Hard Questions

You probably do not have the answers to these questions on the tip of your tongue. They require some thought and discussion. They will lead you to a better understanding of your values.

1. If you were independently wealthy, what would you do with your life?
2. What issues are of deep concern to you regarding your home, campus, community, church, state, country, or world?
3. If you were independently wealthy, to what causes would you contribute?
4. After your death, what would you like people to say about you? How would you like to be remembered?

example, we all want a feeling of security. However, your idea of what makes you feel secure may differ remarkably from that of other people. Some people may equate security primarily with money; others may equate security with education, religion, or close family relationships. Sometimes a combination of all these types of security are desired. The order of importance then becomes a matter of value.

The cost of a thing is the amount of what I call life which is required to pay for it, immediately or in the long run.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Clarifying Your Personal Values

Clarifying our values is a crucial aspect of self-development (Rathus and Nevid 2007). Sometimes important choices in life are made on the basis of peer pressure, unthinking submission to authority, or the power of propaganda. We may even guide our lives by what others expect of us, instead of what we truly believe is right. Many times, thoughts and expectations of society and others largely influence our value system. Thus, our value orientation becomes other-directed rather than self-directed. The obvious result is a feeling of being very insecure and easily threatened in our valuing process.

When we become conscious of our own personal value system and how it functions, we can begin to manage our own value system rather than allowing others to manage it. Hunter Lewis (2000), in his thought-provoking book *A Question of Values*, emphasizes the importance of managing our own value system:

People need to think about their own values, think hard about them, think for themselves. Personal values really do matter. Without functioning values, we can hardly live at all, much less lead a purposeful and satisfying life.

How do we discover what our true values are?

Values clarification is a process that helps people arrive at an answer. Simon et al. (1995) share this thought:

It is not concerned with an ultimate set of values (that is for you to decide), but it does stress a method to help you determine the content and power of your own set of values. It is a self-audit, and an inventory of soul and spirit. It is a tool to help you freely decide between alternatives or among varied choices. It is a methodology to help you make a decision, to act, to determine what has meaning for you.

According to Simon et al. (1995), the process of clarifying values involves choosing, prizing, and acting. See How To on the next page.

Before something can be a full, true value, it must meet all seven of the following criteria. Simon et al. (1995) suggest that there are three levels involved in the criteria: *choosing* relies mainly on the cognitive or thinking area; *prizing* relies on the affective or feeling area; and *acting* relies on the behavioral areas. When we have a full value, our thoughts, feelings, and actions are in agreement; what we think, say, feel, and do are in agreement and are evident in our lives.

Let us look at the seven criteria a little more closely.

Choosing freely means we consciously and deliberately make the choice ourselves. There is no pressure to believe what our parents taught us. An example of choosing freely would be when you have been raised and taught



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Are you a people-oriented person?

To describe a man's philosophy is to say how he orients himself to the world of his experiences, what meanings he finds in events, what values he aspires to, what standards guide his choices in all that he does.

ABRAHAM KAPLAN

Life is an endless process of self-discovery.

DAVE GARDNER

How To Clarify Values

Choosing

Freely

without alternatives

after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative

Prizing

cherishing, prizing, and being happy with the choice

willing to affirm the choice publicly

Acting

Doing something with the choice-taking action

can be repeated in some pattern of life

Simon et al. (1995).

that there is only one religion worthy of your belief, and you later decide ~~the~~ your beliefs are more in line with another religious faith. Even if you ~~end in~~ choosing the same religious faith which your parents hold, that becomes full value for you because you make the personal choice to follow that faith.

Choosing from alternatives means there are options. If there are no ~~alt~~ natives, there is no freedom of choice. For example, you really cannot ~~take~~ breathing, of itself, because there is no choice involved; a person must ~~breath~~ to live. However, you can value mountain air, or a special breathing technique such as yoga.

Choosing after considering the consequences means you ask yourself "What would be the result of the alternatives of my choice?" This gives you an opportunity to choose with thoughtful consideration, and not on impulse. ~~Many~~ of the problems which we have are the result of impulsive, poorly thought ~~out~~ decisions, or action taken without regard for ourselves or others. For example, sometimes people impulsively decide to get a divorce and then later realize ~~the~~ are not happy with their "quick" decision.

Cherishing and feeling happy about the choice means that it influences your behavior in some way, and you do not mind spending your time on ~~the~~ value. For example, if you value being thrifty and you need to buy a new VCR you will spend a considerable amount of time researching and comparing ~~price~~ prices. When you finally get your VCR, you will be satisfied and content that you ~~got~~ the best buy.

Publicly affirming a value means you are willing to tell others about it. Some people even crusade for their values. For example, if you value a particular political ideology, you may be seen campaigning for the politician who holds ~~the~~ same value. Remember, you have the right to publicly affirm your values, but you do not have the right to impose your values on others. This interferes with ~~their~~ freedom of choice.

Doing something about a value means taking action. Full values ~~are~~ those things which we work for, do something about, and take action on. Thus, what a person does reflects his or her values. For example, you will read literature that supports your values; you will join clubs or organizations

whose members share your values and whose goals correspond to your values.

Acting repeatedly means there is a life pattern that is evident, and the stronger the value, the more it influences your life. There is a consistency of action which manifests itself in all aspects of your life: in dress, in friends selected, in the place you live, in leisure time, in what you read, in your career, in the selection of your spouse, and how you spend your time and money.

In summary, a value that is freely chosen from alternatives whose consequences have been thoughtfully considered, of which we are proud and happy to the point that we publicly take a stand, and that we act upon with repetition and consistency is a full value.

Some authorities add an eighth criterion as the natural outgrowth of the other seven: A value enhances a person's total growth. If a value has been affirmed as a full value by having met the seven preceding criteria, it follows as a matter of course that value will contribute to and enhance the person's total growth toward the goals and ideals that he has chosen for himself. We are more likely to continue choosing, prizing, and acting upon those values that help us to grow in our lives and that help us to achieve the goals which we have set for ourselves.

What about those values we simply say are important to us?

Value Indicators

Most of us have partial values that are in the process of being formed. Partial values, or value indicators, include desires, thoughts not acted on, opinions, interests, aspirations, goals, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, convictions, activities, day-dreams (Rokeach 2000). For example, we may say that we have a certain goal, but we are not working toward it. Also, we may say that we have an interest in learning to play bridge, but we have never taken the time to act on that interest.

We have already stated that the way we use our money and time is a strong value indicator. For example, John may say he values very highly the importance of reading and keeping up in "his thinking." However, if you asked him how much time he spends reading each week or when he last bought a good book, you may be surprised to discover that he does not even remember. It has been said before that a simple process in determining the strength of a value is to ask a person or family to describe how they spend their money. Generally speaking, the more money they spend on something, the greater the value is to people.

From the preceding, it is easy to see that we can find out what our real values are by examining our actual behaviors—the way in which we invest our time, money, energies, and resources. Consequently, in order to better understand your real values, you might want to apply the following four tests to your value orientation (Rokeach 2000):

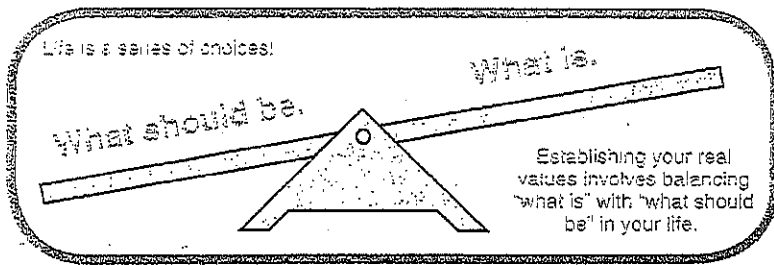
1. The Choice Test. What do I do in situations involving a choice?
2. The Time Test. How much time and energy am I willing to spend on the value?
3. The Sacrificial Test. What satisfaction am I willing to forego on behalf of the value?

When you walk your talk, people listen.

GERMAN PROVERB

If you can bring your actions and the time you spend in your life more into harmony with your values, you will feel more in control of your life and more satisfied with the decisions you make.

FRED NECKLINER



4. The Emotion Test. How much satisfaction or guilt do I experience when I am true to my value or when I violate it?

The most important thing to remember is that to claim a value, you ~~must~~ act in accordance with what you say you believe. Otherwise, you will be on a seesaw, going up and down and back and forth between "what is" and "what should be" in your life.

We Learn to Value What We Suffer For

Why does a child who has to work to earn money value his or her bicycle more than the child who is given a bicycle? Why are members of cults so dedicated to their organizations? These questions and many others may be answered by taking a look at cognitive dissonance, the mental pain of inconsistency, and justifying a sacrifice.

④ We write our own destiny...
we become what we do.

MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE. What is cognitive dissonance, and how does it affect our values, beliefs, and attitudes? We are all motivated to maintain consistency within ourselves. We do not normally hold values, beliefs, or attitudes that are mutually incompatible or dissonant with each other, nor do we behave in ways contradictory to our values or attitudes. Although people differ in the amount of inconsistency they can tolerate, a basic assumption of cognitive dissonance theory is that inconsistency is intolerable to an individual.

The concept of cognitive dissonance was introduced by Leon Festinger (1957) to account for reactions to inconsistencies in attitudes and beliefs. According to this theory, when two or more cognitions such as beliefs, opinions, and the things we know about various types of behavior, people, objects, or circumstances are in disagreement (dissonance), a state of tension results. This inconsistency (dissonance) motivates the individual to adjust these cognitions so as to reduce the dissonance and thereby reduce the tension (Aronson et al. 2006).

THE MENTAL PAIN OF INCONSISTENCY. When there is dissonance between attitudes and behavior, the individual may modify attitudes rather than behavior.

To illustrate these points, suppose that a cigarette smoker is aware of the dangers of smoking to his or her health but continues to smoke. The individual is faced with two dissonant cognitions: "I enjoy smoking, or smoking is harmful." The dissonance theory predicts that such an inconsistency would produce an uncomfortable state that would motivate the individual either to give up smoking or change his or her ideas about the risks involved in

continuing to smoke. In cases such as this, we typically find the individual expressing one of the following ideas:

- ☐ "I enjoy smoking and it is worth it."
- ☐ "No one in our family has ever had cancer."
- ☐ "A person can't always avoid every possible dangerous situation and still continue to live an enjoyable life."
- ☐ "Perhaps if I stopped smoking I would put on weight, which is equally as bad for one's health."

Thus, Festinger suggests that continuing to smoke is, after all, consistent with the person's ideas about smoking.

Although the individual may have stated that he or she would like to give up smoking, the person's inability to do so resulted in rationalizing some facts to support his or her belief system and to match the person's behavior. Now the tension is somewhat relieved. However, it has been suggested by some authorities that the individual may have to deal with his or her true feelings and behavior again.

Can you think of ways cognitive dissonance and the mental pain of inconsistency might apply to difficulties in losing weight or in breaking a substance abuse habit?

JUSTIFYING A SACRIFICE. To answer the questions asked earlier, as we have observed through cognitive dissonance, an individual is motivated to justify his or her behavior. A child who has to work to earn money to buy a bicycle will value it more because he or she put more effort into getting it. Cult members, just as other members of groups and organizations, will generally experience some type of initiation process that will take a lot of effort on the individual's part. After putting in all this effort, the individual has to justify why he or she suffered or worked so hard in order to be a member of the cult or organization. As a result of all this, the individual will generally become a very dedicated member of this group as a means of justifying why he or she went through this process.

As a student, most of you would admit that you value a class you succeed in that takes more effort than a class you succeeded in that was considered "easy." As you can see from these examples, we learn to value what we suffer for (Aronson 2007).

Making Ethical Choices

This is a confusing world to live in. At every turn, we are forced to make choices about how to live our lives. Consider these questions: What is your philosophy of life? What would be included in your system of personal ethics? What do you do when you are confronted with confusion and conflicts regarding your values and ethics? How do your decisions affect your character and integrity? As you think about these questions, one thing is certain, your personal system of ethics is based on the values and attitudes you practice in your daily living. Actually, your system of personal ethics becomes an attempt to reconcile what ought to be with what is. Each of us, relying on our set of personal ethics, must decide what is *right* or *wrong* for us. There are many alternatives, but each of us can *choose* our direction in life.

If you do not live the life you believe — you will believe the life you live.

STEPHEN COWEY

It's important for people to know what you stand for. It's equally important that they know what you won't stand for. Above all, you better not compromise yourself. It is all you got.

JAMES JOPLIN

It's the action, not the fruit of the action, that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may not be in your power, may not be in your time, that there'll be any fruit. But that doesn't mean you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no result.

GAUDI

Watch your thoughts;
 they become words.
 Watch your words;
 they become actions.
 Watch your actions;
 they become habits.
 Watch your habits;
 they become character.
 Watch your character;
 it becomes your destiny.

FRANK OUTLAW

CHARACTER AND ETHICS. Stephen Covey (2004), in his highly popular book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, is concerned about some of the choices currently being made. He indicates that prior to World War I, people governed their lives by values like “integrity, humility, fidelity, temperance, courage, justice, patience, industry, simplicity, modesty, and the Golden Rule.” He calls these attributes the character ethic because they are basic principles of effective living, and true success depends on integrating these principles into one’s character. Covey is concerned that we have made a distinct shift away from the character ethic toward the personality ethic, where success is based more on image, personality, technique, appearance, and having a positive mental attitude. Covey says:

We have become so focused on building ourselves up we have forgotten the foundation that holds it up is that of character and integrity. Many are focused on reaping the goods without the need to sow the fields. And, if there is no integrity, the challenges of life will reveal one’s true character.

Former U. S. senator Al Simpson said, “If you have character, that’s all that matters; and if you don’t have character, that’s all that matters, too.” So what is character? Character is composed of personal standards of behavior, including honesty, integrity, and moral strength (Reece and Brandt 2008). Can this be learned?

Ethics educator Michael Josephson (1994) of the Character Counts Coalition has developed a *Character Counts!* model for educational institutions and organizations throughout the country to teach the “six pillars of character”: (1) trustworthiness, (2) respect, (3) responsibility, (4) fairness, (5) caring, and (6) citizenship. The coalition has developed the following list of 10 key guidelines as a foundation for character development: (You will have an opportunity to evaluate your own standing on these character traits in an exercise at the end of the chapter—See Guidelines for Character Development).

- ☐ **Be honest.** Tell the truth; be sincere; do not mislead or withhold information in relationships of trust; do not steal.
- ☐ **Demonstrate integrity.** Stand up for your beliefs about right and wrong; be your best self; resist social pressure to do wrong.
- ☐ **Keep promises.** Keep your word and honor your commitments; pay your debts and return what you borrow.
- ☐ **Be loyal.** Stand by family, friends, employers, community, and country; do not talk about people behind their backs.
- ☐ **Be responsible.** Think before you act; consider consequences; be accountable and “take your medicine.”
- ☐ **Pursue excellence.** Do your best with what you have; do not give up easily.
- ☐ **Be kind and caring.** Show you care through generosity and compassion; do not be selfish or mean.
- ☐ **Treat all people with respect.** Be courteous and polite; judge all people on their merits; be tolerant, appreciative, and accepting of individual differences.
- ☐ **Be fair.** Treat all people fairly; be open minded; listen to others and try to understand what they are saying and feeling.
- ☐ **Be a good citizen.** Obey the law and respect authority; vote; volunteer your efforts; protect the environment.

10 Things That Make a People Who Know You

1. Keeping promises
2. Punctuality
3. Ethics and honesty
4. Demeanor
5. Respect
6. Gratitude
7. Sincerity
8. Feedback
9. Enthusiasm
10. Initiative

Levinson and Godin (1997), *Get What You Deserve*.

There is a choice you
have to make
in everything you do.
And you must always
keep in mind,
The choice you make
makes you.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Andrew Dubrin (2008) defines *character trait* as an enduring characteristic of a person that is related to moral and ethical behavior that shows up consistently. For example, if an individual has the character trait of being untruthful, he or she will lie in many situations. However, the character trait of honesty leads to behaving honestly in most situations. It is believed by Durbin that if you develop, or already have the ten character traits, it will be easy for you to behave ethically in your dealings with others.

INTEGRITY AND ETHICS. If ever in doubt when trying to understand the ethics of a situation and find the proper solution, it might be helpful to review and consider your responses to the following questions (Vandever and Menefee 2006):

1. Is it legal?
2. How do I feel about this? Am I feeling unusually anxious? Am I fearful?
3. Will any rules, policies, or regulations be violated?
4. Is the proposed action consistent with past practice?
5. Does my conscience bother me?
6. How would I feel if the details of this situation appeared on the front page of the local newspaper?
7. Does the situation require that I lie about the process or the results?
8. Do I consider this to be an extraordinary situation that demands an unusual response?
9. Am I acting fairly? Would I want to be treated this way?
10. Would I be able to discuss the proposed situation or action with my immediate supervisor, my family, my minister, my closest friends, my company's clients, or the president of the company?
11. What would I tell my child, sibling, young relative, or close, valued friend to do in this situation?
12. Will I have to hide or keep my actions secret? Has someone warned me not to disclose my actions to anyone?

While you may not need to ask yourself all 12 questions in every situation, your honest answers to perhaps even half of the questions may give you guidance in difficult situations.

Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1981), who studied moral development and elements of the character ethic for many years, reminds us that

"the highest level of moral functioning requires us to use ethical principles to define our own moral standards and then to live in accord with them." Ideally, our choices will be made on the basis of our values and *ethics*—our standards of conduct or behavior—what we do (DeCenao and Silhanek 2002). In short, ethics determines where you draw the line between right and wrong.

It is important to note that *integrity* is exhibited when you achieve congruence between what you know, what you say, and what you do. When your behavior exhibits your beliefs, you have integrity. When you say one thing but do something else, you lack integrity. When your behavior is in tune with your professed standards and values—when you practice what you believe in—you have integrity (Reece and Brandt 2008).

CONFUSION AND CONFLICT. Being human, sometimes we may experience confusion and conflict and, we may even have a value conflict, a clash between values that encourage opposing actions (Wyer 2004).

Perhaps one of the most difficult things to do is to establish for ourselves a consistent set of values (Pojman 2005). If we go against a value, we feel bad. Inconsistencies in our values make us unhappy; they make us feel guilty. If we usually live up to our values, we are happy, satisfied people with consistent value systems.

It is true that we cannot always satisfy our values; many compromises must be made, because value conflicts are likely to appear when two or more people get together. Therefore, we need to learn when we can afford to give up and compromise values and when we cannot. It is best not to compromise values of high priority. Values that are not so important may be compromised without destroying our self-concept, as well as our personal ethics. Actually, satisfied, happy people are people who do not compromise their most important values but are willing to compromise their less important values.

Perhaps the question is really—What is most important to me? In making value compromises, therefore, it is very important that we understand our priorities. It is this understanding that helps us define our purpose and give meaning to our life. Controversial radio icon, Dr. Laura Schlessinger (2008), puts it quite simply: "ultimately, we decide the course of our lives by the ethical decisions we make."

Character is what you are in the dark.

DWIGHT MOODY

The Importance of Meaning and Purpose

Something to do, someone to love, and something to hope for, are the true essentials of a happy and meaningful life. No matter how rich you are, if you lack one of these essentials, life's true fulfillment will not be yours. No matter how poor you are, if you possess all three of these, you can build a satisfying existence for yourself.

DAVID GOODMAN

Viktor Frankl, a European psychiatrist, dedicated much of his professional life to the study of meaning in life. According to Frankl (1997), what distinguishes us as humans is our search for purpose. The striving to find meaning in our lives is a primary motivational force. Humans are able to live and even die for the sake of their ideals and values. Frankl (1997) is fond of pointing out the wisdom of Nietzsche's words: "He who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how." Drawing on his experiences in the death camp at Auschwitz, Frankl asserts that inmates who had purpose or a meaningful task in life had a much greater chance of surviving than those who had no sense of mission (Corey and Corey 2008).

Someone might reasonably ask what having a sense of meaning and purpose gives to a person. Crystal Park and Susan Folkman (1997) define *meaning* as simply "perceptions of significance." They argue that meaning gives life

significance. Irwin Yalom (2000) reviewed a number of studies of the role of meaning in people's lives and described the following results:

- ▣ A person's lack of a sense of meaning in life is related to the existence of emotional and behavioral disorders; the less the sense of meaning, the greater the degree of personal disturbances.
- ▣ A positive sense of meaning in life is associated with having a set of religious beliefs.
- ▣ A positive sense of meaning is associated with possessing values relating to the betterment of humanity and an interest in the welfare of others.
- ▣ A positive sense of meaning is associated with a dedication to some cause and with having a clear set of life goals.
- ▣ Meaning in life is not to be seen as a static entity but should be viewed in a developmental perspective. The sources of meaning differ at various stages in life, and other developmental tasks must precede the development of meaning.

In *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Albom 2002), the dying Morrie shared a thought worth reflecting upon: "Learn how to die, and you learn how to live." Morrie makes some perceptive comments that go to the heart of finding purpose and meaning in life:

So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way to get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.

Dr. Barry Schwartz (2000), professor of psychology at Swarthmore College, in his review of social psychologist David G. Myers's latest book, *The American Paradox: Spiritual Hunger in an Age of Plenty*, discusses additional insights about the importance of meaning and purpose. He notes that in some respects freedom and opportunity have simply made us more miserable than ever. For example, even though wealth is at an all time high, we have less happiness, more depression, more fragile marital relationships, less communal contentment, more crime (even after the recent decline), and more demoralized children. It seems that we walk aimlessly through life—searching, searching, searching for "what's the meaning" (Rogers 2005). Incidentally, we will discuss the research on happiness in the next chapter.

Corey and Corey (2008) summarize the importance of meaning and purpose:

Humans apparently have a need for some absolutes in the form of clear ideals to which they can aspire and guidelines by which they can direct their actions.

Do you have clear ideals to which you can aspire and guidelines by which you can direct your actions? Do you have meaning and purpose in your life?

As human beings, it is our challenge and our task to create our own meaning. No one can do this for us. We encourage you to take some of the wisdom from William Ward's *"Life"* and begin to practice these thoughts each day.

Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: The last of his freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.

VICTOR E. FRANKL

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

That
I
can
do

The adventure of life is to learn.
The purpose of life is to grow.
The nature of life is to change.
The challenge of life is to overcome.
The essence of life is to care.
The opportunity of life is to serve.
The secret of life is to dare.
The spice of life is to befriend.
The beauty of life is to give.
The joy of life is to love.

William Arthur Ward