

TRANSFORMATIONS

Your Values

By Pamela Bell

Your values! What are they and how do they apply to your everyday life?

Your values are what bring heart and meaning to your life. They are the bookends that inform your desires and your actions toward living a fulfilling and robust existence. They are also a measuring tool that let you know when things are "off-track" and they offer you a foundation with which to connect your choices to. Understanding what your values are about life, work, relationships and yourself, will allow you to

make more grounded decisions and will support you in committing to the decisions you make. Whether you are transitioning into a new job or out of a relationship - connecting the process to your values will bring clarification and provide for a smooth and successful passage to the next stage of your life.

The values I am speaking of here are not your ordinary "laundry list" that you might expect. These "values" are not necessarily morals or spiritual principles laid down by the 10 Commandments. The values

I am speaking of are at the core of your individual being and are what feed the joy and exuberance of your life. What lights you up? What makes you giddy from the inside out? What contributes to your sense of well-being? What is present when there is synergy in your life? What, if taken away, would leave you less than whole? Knowing the answers to these questions offers a connection between what you are wanting from your life and the actions you must take in order to have what you want. Your values may not be visible but the effect and impact of your values are. On a daily basis you are either living your values or you are not. When you are not living your values disharmony is sure to be lurking. If you are facing personal difficulties, other than those beyond your control such as our wavering economy, asking yourself the question, "Which of my values are not being met?" might be a good place to start in finding a meaning-

ful solution.


So how do you then, discover what your values are? There are several techniques to do this but without having your own professional life coach to guide you and for simplicity purposes, we will stick with only two. The first method is called Peak Experience and in this you will describe to a friend, partner or in writing to yourself, an experience in your life where everything was essentially perfect: from the company you were with, the clothes you were wearing, the weather or the light of day, to the way that you were feeling. Hold nothing back in your description and notice how good it feels to revisit this satisfying place. From here pick out what qualities supported this state of well-being. Was it that you were surrounded by people you love and those who love you? Were you in nature perhaps and the profound beauty of it struck something deep inside you? Maybe you were lying in bed after a great

nights sleep and the sun was casting a warm beam of light on your face? Dig deeper. Pull out more from your memory bank and begin to make a list of qualities (a.k.a. values) that contributed to this sense of "rightness" in the world. Now, take those qualities and extend them even further. Say for example, nature is a value of yours - what "nature" means to you might be entirely different than what "nature" means to me. So it is important to clarify what it is about "nature" that makes it important. (Example: Nature = beauty/spontaneity/perfect order/humbling/etc.) It is important to do this extension with each of your core values. It is a natural human instinct to be curious about ourselves so go ahead, be curious! Understanding your values on a experiential level is both rewarding and beneficial as it leads to greater clarity and expanded personal freedom.

The second method is more of a "back-door" approach to discovering your values. Here you are asked to speak to what it is that drives you crazy or insane? What makes you most frustrated - with yourself? With others? When do you feel hurt by others and what is attributing to this? Most upsets occur because our values are not being met. These are known as Suppressed Values. Perhaps you are not being acknowledged at work for the great job you do, or you feel you are not being "heard" by a spouse or close friend. These point to values of: 1) a need for recognition and personal acknowledgement, and 2) a need to be listened to and taken seriously. These are perfectly honorable and essential values that are shared by many; but unfortunately these so often go unrecognized that they turn into resentment and blaming - a place where your needs will continue to go unmet. Be certain to extend these values also. (example: Recognition

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NATURE

PRUNING

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able to provide her children with enough heat. Check trees about to be pruned carefully first: if there's a nest up in the branches, it's best to wait the short time it takes for the family to move out before doing the work.

Nearly all birds will take their babies back if you return them soon enough, even if you've touched them. In fact, many birds will even accept a fake nest if their real one gets damaged by an arborist. It's better to prevent the accident in the first place, but when a nest does get destroyed, the first thing you can do is to return the babies to the same tree. It's worth a try to place a basket with the babies and broken nest inside. If you watch through a window, you'll soon know if the parents are willing to return or not. If they don't, then it's time for the call to Bird Rescue.

There's no substitute for a real mom, who has more time and tastier food than wildlife

rescuers.

Plain ol' lawn cutting isn't too hazardous for most animals, unless you count a gardener's renewed interest in underground moles or gophers, who live in constant danger because of the disturbance they make to homeowners' green outdoor carpets.

Country dwellers, however, have grassy areas that are field-sized, and mowing leaves both eggs and baby mammals left exposed. Walk your property first to check for fawns and jack rabbits, and cut slowly enough that you can stop in case of finding someone unexpected. If you put off cutting until the later part of spring, you'll have better luck with wildlife preservation.

Fawns and jackrabbits, both hypersensitive animals difficult to rehabilitate, are both at risk here. They both are left by their mothers for many hours at a time, and have received instructions to

lie low in case of danger. They have no defenses other than hiding, so they don't move until you nearly step right on them.

Kindly gardeners often want to rescue fawns and jackrabbit babies, who are tiny and adorable in their helplessness. But both these animals have mothers who will return later, looking for their young ones. In most cases, you should put the baby near the spot you found it, making sure that it is hidden from predators, and check on it later. If you believe that the mother is dead or injured, then calling Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue is the next step.

Barbara Caswell, owner of Designs of the Times, is the creator of Haverfield Park, a unique residential property which incorporates habitat for wildlife in its landscaping. Her interior work is often based on nature themes.

VALUES

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& Personal Acknowledgment = it let,s me know that my efforts count/ connects me to others/ encourages me to want to do better/ it feels good/etc.)

If you do not know what your "values" are and have never asked yourself these questions, don,t worry you are in good company. The fact of the matter is most people have never been through this process and live their lives rather haphazardly. Once you have this self-knowledge however, your life will never be the same. Living your values will bring you increased joy and confidence in all areas of your life: it will simplify decision making as your choices will suddenly seem so obvious; it will bring a sense of freedom and relief as you finally begin to understand what it is that makes you tick; and it will add purpose and meaning to your actions because you will have established a foundation

that guides you toward greater personal fulfillment.

Pamela Bell is a professional Life Coach, Educator and Inspirational Speaker. She is founder of LifeSource Coaching, a company that specializes in reconnecting people with their true nature so they may live more meaningful and purposeful lives. She periodically conducts workshops and is currently working on a workshop series for young adults, developing in them the tools of self knowledge, so they may forever remain their own greatest resource. She can be reached at: (707) 762-2345 or via email: pamelabell@mindspring.com

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

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