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You Need a Manifesto

Knowing Your Values

Values are simply what you value in your life. They help you determine what is important to you in both the long term and the short. These underlying beliefs influence your behavior and motivate your actions—the ones you take and the ones you don’t take. Some are derived from your personal experiences, some you inherit from your family or your culture, and others you adopt as a part of your learning. Your values are changeable. What is of value to you today may not be in ten years. (In fact, let’s hope not.) Your values are also personal. I can’t tell you what values to have—they are yours, not mine. What I can tell you is that you need them. Why? Values motivate you. They push you. Let them. Get good at letting them push you.

Values matter because they are present in everything we do, but they also hide in our actions—they are not always self-evident and not often self-examined. By airing your values, you have the opportunity to examine and evolve your sense of purpose as you gain experience and wisdom.

This activity from *You Need a Manifesto* by Charlotte Burgess-Auburn will help you discover what you value beyond the obvious. The aim of this activity is to help you develop self-awareness and a deeper understanding of what motivates you. It has been adapted for use in K12, higher education classrooms, and other learners.

Activity: Your Love Is Like a Red Red Rose

LEARNING GOAL

To help learners uncover their values. To help them develop self-awareness and independent thinking, build creative confidence, enhance motivation, and strengthen their moral compass.

WHERE TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

Classrooms | Virtual learning sessions (Zoom, etc.) | Workshops | Individual reflections

MATERIALS

Paper | Writing instrument

FORMAT

Individual work, with opportunity for individual or paired reflection.

INSTRUCTIONS

Consider what you love to do. To pull some deeper meaning out of your treasured pursuits, chronicle what you care about by using some strategic metaphors or similes. This is a technique designers use all the time. By testing comparisons and associations between two concepts, you can create a new understanding of your pursuits and goals and why they are important to you. Metaphors and similes highlight particular (and sometimes peculiar) meanings through comparison. Sometimes they click, other times they don't. But when one clicks, it lets you see something that you think of as normal in a totally new way, and that can help you change course.

- 1. Write down a very short description of something you do that you truly love.** Explain all the little reasons why you love it, all the moments that you savor, the triumphs and the tribulations.
- 2. Next, look at the following statement** and begin associating your loved activity, one by one, with each of the metaphors in the list:
My loved activity is like a metaphor (a river, a clock, a giraffe, a peppermint) because a reason.
- 3. Search your mind to find an association between the two ideas.** Try hard! But if you can't find anything, move on to the next one. Some similes will be really fruitful, some less so. Keep going until you get to the end of the list.
- 4. Take a look at what you've written.** Can you pick out some specific words that give you a clue to what you might value about the concept you've described? Highlight them.
- 5. Look at all your highlighted words and try them on for size.** Interrogate them. Which ones do

you care about the most? Why? Write a bit about each one to see if it leads you to another.

6. Finally, compare the words you've highlighted to the list of common core values below and pick out the ones that correspond. What stands out? What is a surprise to you? What feels like it is missing?

An Extremely Short List of Core Values

Authenticity

Achievement

Adventure

Autonomy

Balance

Beauty

Boldness

Compassion

Citizenship

Competency

Curiosity

Determination

Faith

Friendships

Fun

Growth

Honesty

Influence

Justice

Kindness

Love

Loyalty

Optimism

Recognition

Respect

Responsibility

Security

Service

Status

Wisdom

WE'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!



This is a prototype (hooray!). If you used this, please share your feedback with us in this four-question survey.

WANT TO READ MORE?

Check out *You Need a Manifesto!* The book offers even more ways to nurture an inquisitive mind and the ability to act with intention.

Learn about all of our d.school books at dschool.stanford.edu/books.

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