

Core Values

Lindsay Lavalle

Azusa Pacific University

Values play a key part in peoples' lives. They can help dictate how we navigate our decisions with careers, friends, family, hobbies, social life, and various other aspects. The influence of values instilled in us speaks volume to what and how we prioritize. Values can be constructed through influence of family, friends, media, school, and other channels of connection. We can constantly evolve in our values, but there are definite stages of influence. Adolescence is such an impressionable time where many of my values stem from. If surrounded in a positive environment with a sound moral compass to instill values, usually children grow up with a confidence in what they value. If surrounded in a volatile environment with not a lot of guidance some children can grow up confused and unable to understand their values. Either way, no one is assured to have values instilled in their lives that are positive. It is up to the individual to process what, who and how to establish value in his/her life.

"To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting." This quote by E.E Cummings is by far one of my most favorite pearls of wisdom. I value the beauty in taking pride in the gifts and talents God has given to each of us because he has made us perfectly unique. This is a value I have due to my parents instilling in me the importance of individuality. I grew up in a Christian home and was very fortunate to have extremely loving and compassionate parents. The best way to describe them is "hippie Christians." They raised me with strong morals and values but also had very free spirits. I never felt pressure from them. They would constantly empower me to make good decisions and explain the consequences if I did not.

Many of the values I inherited from my parents I have strengthen but sadly they have lost a few of the values they raised me with. I value people and life experiences. Both of my parents did not complete college but they did instill the importance of education and have always supported me. I value my relationship with Christ over rules and regulations set by the church. This value I have adopted from my parents, as they have been heavily involved with church yet never let church dictate their life or worth in Christ. My parents also live a very healthy life style. They are firm believers in holistic medicine and using God's earth to heal our bodies oppose to medicines. They also are avid exercisers. They value taking care of mind, body and soul. These are all values I have tried to emulate and strengthen.

Sadly some values such as the importance of family and financial structure are two values my parents have not continued to grow. I grew up with strong connections with all of my extended family and as my parents have got older they seem a bit jaded from family and have not made them a priority. They seem to live in in their own world at the beach and do not care to reach out. My father has always been self employed and been very successful and invested his money into real estate. After the economic downfall it seems him and my mother have not tried to take steps to build their financial structure back up. I understand they have needed time to grieve over their losses but I feel they have become a bit paralyzed in their hardship.

Experiences have definitely helped continue to shape and challenge some of the values. Watching my parents struggle in losing both of their homes and cars made me really reevaluate my idea of money and investment. Their loss brought me motivation to work hard and continue with my education. Money can come and go but no one can take away my education. They both regret not finishing school because they put all their energy into growing my father's business.

My culture has also greatly affected how I value family. I am half Hispanic and the Mexican culture greatly values family time. My husband is full Hispanic and he has also continued to strengthen my love for family. Although my parents have become more distant with my relatives I have made it a priority to spend time with my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins because I love our community of constant love and support. I understand family can be tough to deal with as relationships can be messy at times, but I would rather endure the struggles that come along with family than isolate myself.

Education challenged my faith but eventually made my beliefs stronger. I went to a community college and studied honors courses in Judeo-Christian faiths, as well as Hinduism and Buddhism. These classes rocked me in such a powerful way. I am a very curious person and love people and learning. Diving into these religions pushed me to really lean into my own convictions and truths. I have come to a peace of knowing I can not discount the power of Christ's deity and sacrifice but also that God's grace abounds in ways I will never understand as a human.

I value testimony and story. I love hearing people's stories because I love the beauty of the human spirit and uniqueness of each life. A mentor in my life I have been inspired by is Monica Molina. She grew up in the barrios as a struggle Latina, got pregnant at 19 and still pushed through working hard for her education; earning her master degree by age 24 being a single mom. She has dedicated her work in education as a counselor for Hispanic underprivileged students at the community college. She is a fierce woman with a gentle yet bold spirit. She has experienced discrimination for her gender, culture, and ethnicity but has fought back with tact and developed ways to help the next generation not have to endure the same struggles. She runs the Puente program at Chaffey Community College which helps Hispanic

and first generation students transfer to four year colleges and counsels them through their journey in education.

Monica is a great example of someone living their life with virtue. As Steve Wilkens states, people with virtue ethics possess courage, self-discipline and benevolence (2011, p. 130). Monica has shown courage in her professional and personal life by beating the odds and tensions society has pushed against her in being a woman, being Hispanic, and raised in the barrios. Only through discipline was she able to stay committed to her goal of being an educated woman and making a difference in the college system for first generation and Hispanic students. Her perseverance has triggered motivation in me to continue her legacy and create more opportunities to support struggling students. She has also endured sacrifice in able to give back to the community she fights for. She takes time out of her work and schedule to visits low income schools and speak pro bono in order to create awareness of college opportunities for underprivileged children's future.

A few women in cinema have been inspirations for my love and value of women and individuality. I grew up singing, dancing and acting and spent time in college researching how women broke out into the industry. It was not easy but they succeeded. Mae West and Marlene Dietrich are two inspiring women who created movement for women's equality and pushed boundaries to develop people's view of women. Both women were starlets in their own manner but one quality they had in common was congruence. No matter how they were ridiculed for being too sexy or manly or outspoken they remained true to themselves. I strive to take pride in my individuality and fight for what I believe in without having to water down and compromise who I am.

“‘Doing what comes naturally’ sounds dangerous because in modern parlance it usually means that we can follow our impulses, whatever they may be (Wilkins, 2011, p. 182).” Aquinas explains this means to follow our desires with purpose, intention and thought, not do whatever we please at anyone’s expense. I see people’s innate desires and natural abilities as God’s unique creation manifested in his creation. I admire and value when people strengthen their natural abilities with intention which is why I respect Mae West and Marlene Dietrich. They did not let social constructs prevent them from pursuing their love for art and theatre.

My values play a huge role influencing how I work with students. My desire to counsel and teach community college students is a direct result of pursuing a career that exercises my values. Because of my love for individuality I am a firm believer in encouraging students to pursue education in what they desire, not society or family pressures. I also find value in financial structure so I find it very important to ask my students what kind of life style they want to live. Their desires to live a lavish or simplistic life style will play a role in what career they journey into. Providing my students with as much information to empower them to make educational decisions based on their desires and unique qualities is very important to me as a professional. I value education and it is my duty to educate my students on their options and create pathways for them to achieve their goals.

References

Wilkins, Steve. (2011). *Beyond Bumper Sticker Ethics: An Introduction to Theories of Right and Wrong*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press