

What Do You Value?

By Connie de Veer

Pure and simple, values are what's most important to you. In this context, we're talking about personal values, not moral values. While they're certainly related and often overlap, moral values are learned, personal values are inherent. Like emotions, they just are. They're neither right nor wrong. They're just what matters to you. Compassion, independence, creativity, relationships, and flexibility are all examples of values.

Places to look for values:

Anger – If you were ever really mad at someone, chances are they were stepping on one of your core values.

Must haves – What *must* you have in your life, beyond the basic needs of food, shelter, etc.? Must you have other people? Must you be close to nature? There's usually a value tied to it.

Invisible values – These are those values that are so fundamental to us that we don't even think about them. They're so obvious, they're invisible! Perhaps something like "being able to walk."

Obsessive Expression – Sometimes values get mutated when they're not honored. If you've ever behaved compulsively, there was probably a value not being honored. For example, if you have a value around order and clarity and you live with people who invade your space and don't honor your boundaries, your behavior might turn to controlling perfectionism or rigid intolerance.

Here are some examples. If they're somehow related in your mind, you could link them together in a string, like this:

Nature/my dogs/change of seasons/gardening

or

Humor/playfulness/quirky friends/others who can see irony, ludicrousness

Now you try. What are your value strings?

How well are you honoring your values?

Look over your list of values and rank them on a scale of 1 (not honoring them), to 10 (honoring them really well).

What are you doing to honor the ones you're honoring?

What will you do to better honor the ones you're not?

