
Living By Your Values

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by Kathleen Gage

Being able to identify your values is one of the most important things you can do for yourself. Values are the guiding force of your life. They are your beliefs - what is important to you and what directs your life. They are a driving force in everything you do. It is important to identify our values in order to honor and live by them. Values are your individual core beliefs and your personal lifetime goals. They are meant to fulfill you and are the standards by which you desire to live. You will be happiest when you are able to identify your values and honor them. Some of your values may change as you go through the experience of living.

IDENTIFY AND LIVE BY YOUR VALUES

When you can identify and live in integrity with your values, you will be happy. There are many people who have never taken the time to think of what their values are and how they shape their life. Some people will say, "I can't honor my values because society doesn't let me." Look at those who have really made a difference in our world. Often they were people who said, "I don't care what others think, I have to honor what is true to me." Many famous people have lived by their highest values without concerning themselves about approval from others. There are also many people who are not famous who do the same. It could be someone from your neighborhood, your church, your job, or an organization you volunteer time with.

There may be obstacles to overcome in honoring your values. Perhaps this is because of other's beliefs and standards or your present circumstances. And yet, when you do honor your

own, you will be honoring your personal path in life. You will be able to tune in to your intuition when you honor your values and, as a result, you will build more confidence.

When people don't honor their values they may become depressed, frustrated or angry. They may blame others for not allowing them to be who they are. Being who you are is not a matter of getting permission from somebody else. It is finding what is truly important in your life, not somebody else's design of life for you. And once you find what is important to you, having the courage to live by your beliefs. When you can identify your values and live by them, life will be more fulfilling.

For example, let's say someone's highest value in life is adventure. For whatever reason, they are in a job that does not allow for much adventure at all. Actually, it may be quite mundane. To honor their values does not mean they have to give up their current job, it simply means they need to find ways to incorporate adventure into their life. Perhaps taking on weekend adventures to maintain balance in their life.

Or perhaps someone's high value may be quality time with the family and yet, they are in a situation which frequently takes them away from their family. In order to maintain balance and happiness it is essential this person incorporate ways to spend quality time with their family when they are in town. Otherwise, time will pass and they will grow more dissatisfied with their life.

What about the person who has a very high value of honesty and comes to find out that the company they are with is dishonest with customers. If the person does not change the environment there is a

very good chance the conflict of their values and what the company is doing will create a considerable amount of dis-ease within this person. No amount of justification or rationalization is going to make this go away. In this case it is essential for the person to take action as soon as possible to change to a more conducive situation.

Living by our values does not always have to mean black and white changes as in the last example. For most of us there are a lot of gray areas in between. Again, if you know something is important to you, then it is up to you to incorporate that into your life. Wouldn't it be sad to get to the end of our life, look back and say, "I wish I would have, I wish I could have."

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