

Values Evaluation

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Each and every individual has a set of values to live by. For each person the types of things they value in life will vary; no two people are the same. The values in my life help me to determine how I am going to live, what my career will be, and what I consider to be precious and hold close to my heart. There are five things that I value above all else. My family, faith, relationships, education, and ability to help other people make up what I hold closest to my heart. I consider each of these precious and important in my life.

Over time the values you believe in will change. At a young age, around 7 or 8 years old, my values were entirely different than they are today. I used to value dessert, TV time, and being able to play with my friends. I didn't think life was about much else. In the book "The Impossible Will Take a Little While" Jonathon Kozol describes an experience with a little boy in first grade who ran back into his burning house to save his teddy bear, or his dad. His classmates describe the ordeal as the boy trying to save his beloved teddy bear; the boy's sister, however, explains her brother thought his dad was still inside and went back in to save him (Kozol, 2000, p.32). This is an example of how as you age your values change. The first graders in this story value the relationship of a boy and his teddy bear, which was then used to describe why the boy had died in the fire. It was considered noble to them. However, to the sister of the boy, he went back into the flames to save his dad. This shows her values were different than that of the first graders, she valued her family and wanted to believe he went back inside for a noble cause, such as saving his father. There is no direct evidence in the book stating the sister was older. However, from personal experiences and from experiences of people I know, as you get older the values you hold in your heart change and become more relative to your life and what you consider important.

Age isn't the only factor that shapes what you value. In the human service profession particularly, a professional will be required to change their values when working in different environments. The values of an organization will vary with what their primary focus is. A homeless shelter will have different values than a counseling center or an emergency room. If you were to work with a homeless shelter, such as Boulder Shelter for the Homeless in Colorado, it would be common to value "[t]reating all people with dignity, [o]ffering support and opportunity, [p]racticing responsible stewardship, and [a]chieving results through competence and creativity." (Boulder, 2011) However, at an emergency room in Seattle's Swedish hospital you wouldn't value achieving results through creativity; instead you would value "safety, service, and quality." (Swedish, 2011)

Whatever my values may be, my family has always provided support and care. By paying for my associates degree at Everett Community College my family is the reason I am here, studying at Western Washington University. Along with my family I am thankful for the relationships I have with my friends and my boyfriend. They know all of who I am and have been there to tell me when I am making a bad decision or to congratulate a good one. My family and friends have been there and loved me throughout all my mistakes and accomplishments. The love in their hearts has helped shape me into who I am today.

The education I have been blessed with has given me more opportunities than many people receive in a lifetime. Knowing there are thousands of people around the world who aren't fortunate enough to be blessed with an education, let alone a university level education, has influenced school as something I deeply value and treasure. I am incredibly lucky to have experienced college while still in high school and be able to finish my Associates degree within a year of graduating. Having this education and continuing to go to school at Western, in the

human services program, has been such a blessing to me. I chose to focus my education on helping people who aren't as fortunate as me in all aspects of life.

The ability to help other people is such a valuable opportunity. I know in my heart this is what I am meant to spend my life doing. I learned growing up there are many people across the globe who don't have basic necessities and aren't able to receive them without help. It was a life changing experience to decide to focus my life on assisting individuals over any bridge they need to cross. It takes opening your heart to new experiences to figure out where you belong. My experiences through life have shaped my beliefs. Being a human service professional and taking advantage of my ability to help people is who I am supposed to be and what I am meant to do. This is an important aspect of being a human service professional. To be able to do your best in the community and around the globe it is important to "discover and become 'who we are supposed to be, and what we are meant to do in the world.'" (Smith and Smith, 2008, p. 54) I strongly believe a little work can go a long way and with my faith I can do anything I set my heart to.

My Christian faith has guided me through many of the struggles in life. It has inspired me and brought hope to dark situations. When I feel lonely, upset, or hopeless my faith gives me confidence. Working with organizations, such as World Vision and the Eden League with my church, inspired and showed me how far a little help can go. I have participated in World Vision's 30 hour famine a number of times. This includes going without food for 30 hours and helping to raise funds and awareness for those living in hunger. Contributing to the world wide 30 hour famine instilled belief in helping people around the world. Once I saw what I can do in just a weekend I began to find other sources and organizations I can contribute my time and effort toward. Eventually I came to participate in the Eden League's reforestation project. By

donating \$10.00 I was able to plant 100 trees and provide an income for 10 women living poverty. About a year ago I went on my first mission trip to an orphanage in Mexico. I volunteered for a week with the children at Foundation for his Ministries. My group spent our time doing work on the grounds, bringing food to those who need it, playing with kids who don't have a home or a family, and putting a smile on people throughout the community. This was an experience I will never forget. I am thankful for my faith that instilled the confidence I need to make sure my abilities can reach many open hearts. All of these involvements remind me what my life is about and what I want my life revolve around.

I treasure having values such as, my family, faith, relationships, education, and my ability to serve the community. They have contributed to who I am and who I will be later in life. As I grow in the human service profession my values will continue to change with each organization I work with. The challenges with learning new values as I go through my career, is a struggle I am eager to endure. Determination and passion for this field is strong in my heart; I will never give up on what is good and I will always have a love for working with people who need me.

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