

The quickest way to someone is through their values

Those who have taken any leadership training at all know that people do things for their own reasons, not for yours. So if we want to motivate somebody, what we've got to do is not come to them with motivation but rather look inside them for their motives.

Primary motives develop very early in life, as do other individual characteristics. Have you ever noticed the differences in infants even when they come from the same parents?

There are two kinds of motivation extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation occurs when we try from the outside to provide a motive for some action or behavior. For instance, you might say to your child, "If you pick up the toys in your room, you can stay up thirty minutes later tonight." Or maybe a sales manager decides to give a bonus to the person who brings in the most money in a month. That's extrinsic motivation-- the outside trying to get the inside excited.

The second kind of motivation, intrinsic, occurs when we are moved to action because of our internal motivation. For instance, maybe when you were a kid you really wanted a new bike but your parents said they wouldn't pay for it. You decided that somehow you would earn the money to buy the bike. So you got a paper route, sold cookies door to door, did babysitting or started a lawn mowing business, anything to get that money because you really wanted that bike. You were internally motivated to find a way to get the money.

That's intrinsic motivation-- when we make a conscious effort to achieve a goal because we want it, not because someone else sold us on it. The secret to great leadership is to find out what the intrinsic motivations of your followers are, then gear the extrinsic motivators to appeal to those. And the key to intrinsic motivation is in a person's value system, because values shape who you are and direct why you do what you do.

Each of us has a unique set of values. Value denotes the importance of something relative to other alternatives. Values are what you care about, the qualities you find desirable. Values are not attitudes or behaviors, though they form the basis of our attitudes and behaviors. Every decision we make is based on our own set of values.

Natural values model

In this research I have found seven values which are common to everyone. These aren't values we've learned, rather they're part of who we are. These seven natural values are with you at birth and stay with you throughout your life. These values are in the acorn, part of your very nature. They are:

Sensuality-- the relative importance of one's physical experience

Empathy-- the relative importance of feeling connected to other people

Wealth-- the relative importance of ownership and worth

Power-- the relative importance of control and recognition

Aesthetics-- the relative importance of beauty, balance, order and symmetry

Commitment-- the relative importance of being committed to something, having a cause or mission, doing the "right" thing

Knowledge-- the relative importance of learning and understanding

You and I share all seven of those values, but if we were to rank which ones were most important to each of us, your top values may be different from mine. If my top value is power and yours is knowledge, we will respond to a stimulus in different ways.

For example, say our employer offers us a chance to attend a seminar on value systems. Your main reason for attending might be simply to gain the knowledge because you love to learn-- you have a high knowledge value. But if my highest value is power, my main reason might be to find ways to use this new knowledge to advance my position and better lead my team.

None of the values is better or nobler than the others in and of itself. It's how they're acted upon that determines that. Our values don't determine whether something will appeal to us nearly as much as they determine how that thing will appeal to us.

Incidentally, there's no importance to the sequence in which I've listed these values. The reason they're listed this way is because they're easy to remember if you use the acronym S E W P A C K: sensuality, empathy, wealth, power, aesthetics, commitment, knowledge.

Seeing and hearing the values

People show their values all the time through what they say and don't say, what they do and don't do. What they approach and what they avoid. Here are some indicators to watch for to identify people's top values.

1. Sensuality-- A person with a high sensuality value shows an interest in and affinity for physical experience; taste, touch, smell, fit, comfort, temperature, texture, humidity, sound, volume, light, etc.
2. Empathy-- People with a high empathy value need to be around other people they care about. The helping impulse is very strong in these folks.
3. Wealth-- People with a high wealth value find that the worth of a thing or its fair price value matters a great deal. They may wear an expensive ring even though they don't particularly care for how it looks. A person with a high wealth value really cares about accumulating things, because that's how they evaluate how things are going. It's not greed to them; it's just putting value on acquiring or owning things of quality.
4. Power-- Someone with a high power value finds acknowledgment, praise, special privileges, honors, titles, and prestigious things of prime consideration. Position and control matter a lot. High power value types love to be in charge.

5. Aesthetics-- Someone with a high aesthetic value would find beautiful sunsets, organized systems, certain color combinations, paintings, landscapes, and architecture of strong appeal. Someone with a high aesthetic value truly cares how things look and feel.
6. Commitment-- A person with a high commitment value has strong convictions. Beliefs and affiliations are at the center of their attention. Working to advance a cause, crusading and campaigning feel good to them. These people do things because it's what they feel is the right thing to do.
7. Knowledge-- A person with a high knowledge value loves to learn. Books, seminars, discussions, problem solving are things they enjoy. They may tend to listen to learning tapes or public radio rather than music stations. They seem to have an endless curiosity, being constantly amazed at how little they know on each subject.

Behaviors that grow from each value

Certain behaviors are driven by our value system. Here are some characteristics for each value. See which ones you identify with:

High sensuality value-- This is someone who is acutely aware of their physical experience. Before they get involved with a task they take a few moments to get comfortable. They tend to be touchers, enjoying very much the physical aspects of everything. Everything they do is experienced initially through a sensual filter. They are drawn to physical experience, easily distracted by their five primary senses. High sensuality is a noticeable value ranging from passive sunbathing to the excitement of downhill skiing.

High empathy value-- Empathy leads a person to be more compassionate and understanding of others. They often feel it's better to give than receive, and are willing to take care of other people's needs before their own.

High wealth value-- People with a high wealth value demonstrate a maximum interest in the security of their money. They direct their efforts toward their job and economic security. They really dislike monetary waste; a spendthrift makes them very uncomfortable.

High power value-- Someone with a high power value exhibits two elements, control and recognition, as primary appeals. They want to be in charge of whatever they're involved in, love to get things done and meet schedules, eliminate disagreement and questioning. They are intolerant of errors and tend to blame others. They like direct confrontations and enjoy winning arguments.

High aesthetic value-- People with a high aesthetic value are drawn toward beauty, harmony, balance, blend, symmetry. They're distracted by disorder or ugliness, they feel a need for closure, they like systems and structure, they like the completion of an act. Everything in its place, a place for everything, works for them. These people are more likely to be an artist at

what they do, even if that's mathematics or computers.

High commitment value-- People with a high commitment value really think that doing what you believe in is the essence of being a good person. Doing what's right takes precedence over doing what works best. They tend to be fatalistic, saying, "It was meant to be."

High knowledge value-- Those with a high knowledge value have an intense drive to discover. They need a way to explain things in the world and want to better their situation through learning more. They are seekers of the truth, wanting to make sense out of things.

What about you?

Now, what about your own top values? I'm sure you've been thinking about them throughout this article as I've listed them-- it's only a natural impulse.

Here is a quick values check you can do. Answer the following five questions in writing. Write them quickly; write down what first comes to your mind. Trust your gut reaction.

What qualities do you most admire in a friend?

What traits do you most want in a mate?

What do you think kids should be taught in schools?

If you could change the world in some way, what would it be?

If you won the lottery and money was no longer a limitation to you, what would you do with the money?

Now look over your answers, then look back at the seven natural values and look for matches. What you'll find is that the values tend to pop to the surface in your answers. Which values were expressed most strongly? Those questions all had the same basic inquiry-- what do you care about?-- but they asked it from five different points of view.

Once you've evaluated your answers you'll have a pretty quick sense of what your top few values are.

Here is what makes it special: Everyone enjoys good things, but the things that are aligned with our values we not only enjoy, we cherish! The quickest way to someone's heart is through their values. With an ear to noticing someone's values, new ways to tailor your gifts, motivation, incentives and rewards will become obvious to you. You'll see not only how to increase the appeal but also add impact to your leadership. People will be more likely to follow your lead because your lead follows their values. This applies to parents, managers,

salespeople, everyone.

Thought Break:

-What values from the list of seven did you identify with strongest?

-What top values would you say your parents had?

-What values do you demonstrate in your work environment?

-Are they the same ones you demonstrate outside work?

-How can you better nurture your values?

-What are your top three values? Bottom three?

-How do your top values differ from your mate's?

To understand somebody and know how to use this value equation to relate to them, all you really need to notice is their top few values. If you know the top two or three you've got enough to understand how you can appeal to them with whatever idea you may be presenting.

What we care about most drives our interest and our criteria for decisions. So your highest values cause you to focus on certain aspects of a situation and overlook others until you've handled whatever it is you're concerned about on your top values. Only then can you effectively focus on the other parts of it. The better we understand what's important to others, the more we can attune our own preferences and information to their top values, and we'll be working in alignment with them from the start.

