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## **Aligning Values and Dreams**

### **Learning to Leverage and Motivate**

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Values are beliefs, missions, traits, or philosophies that are meaningful. They represent your highest priorities and deeply held driving forces with motivate you to be successful. Whether we are consciously aware of them or not, every individual, work team, group, business, and organization has a core set of values. Values can range from the commonplace, such as the belief in hard work and punctuality, to the more psychological, such as self-reliance, concern for others, and harmony of purpose.<sup>1 2</sup>

Mikel Harry, the co-creator of Six Sigma, defines value as anything of worth, utility, and importance. Merriam-Webster defines:

- Worth as measured by its qualities or by the esteem in which it is held.
- Utility as something useful or fitness for some purpose.
- Importance as something of consequence or significance.

Other searches to uncover the definition of value might reveal:

- Essential and enduring principle
- Ideals, customs, principles, institutions, etc. in which there is an affective regard.
- Intrinsic excellence or desirability
- Regarded highly
- Think much of
- Holds dear
- Quality you consider worthwhile.

“Your values are made up of everything that has happened to you in your life and include influences from: your parents and family, your religious affiliation, your friends and peers, your education, your reading, and more. Effective people recognize these environmental influences and identify and develop a clear, concise, and meaningful set of values/beliefs, and priorities. Once defined, values impact every aspect of your life. You demonstrate and model your values in action: in your personal and work behaviors, decision making, contribution, and interpersonal interaction. You use your values to make decisions about priorities in your daily work and home life. Your goals and life purpose are grounded in your values.”<sup>2</sup> The Great Discovery asks you to reflect on these values and provides tools to help you identify which values are most important to you and helps you align these values with your dreams. By aligning your values with the dreams you create a strong spirit that will keep you motivated toward achieving those dreams.

The following are examples of companies who used their core value to drive their success: <sup>1</sup>

- Sears' commitment to *trusting the customer*.
- Apple Computer's belief in the values of *solving problems of society*.
- Marriott's values of *systemization and standardization*.

“When you are part of an organization, you bring your deeply held values and beliefs to the organization. There they co-mingle with those of the other members to create an organization or family culture.” <sup>2</sup>

“When organizations adopt values, individuals working at the organization become energized, as do its customers, its products and services, and everyone and everything else associated with that organization.” <sup>1</sup>

“Political parties and politicians might subscribe to values ranging from helping the poor, easing the burden of the middle class, improving the environment, making government responsive and efficient, engendering loyalty and unity, and so forth.” <sup>1</sup>

Personal values guide and propel people to the top of their fields. “For example, one actor was motivated by his commitment to *social justice*, which led to important acting roles related to that value making him world famous. Likewise, a well-known business CEO was motivated by the personal value that *technology should be easy to use*, which caused his company to spawn a technology revolution.” <sup>1</sup>

“Whatever one's values, when we take them to heart and implement them in our lives, great accomplishment and success are sure to follow.” <sup>1</sup> This is in large part because passion is rooted in our values. We have a high desire to accomplish those things in which we are passionate about. There are many personal development books on the market that take you through a process of identifying your values and then stop there. The Great Discovery continues where these other books leave off by helping you align those values with your dreams and by teaching you how to follow a proven path that will lead you to accomplish those dreams. As you go through your list of values, you may find many values in which you can relate. As you select your initial set of values, you should err on the side of selecting more rather than fewer. It is easier to refine your initial list, than it is to add to it once you have limited the selection. It is important that you think deeply and intimately about determining your core values and not rush through the process.

One of the rudiments of Six Sigma is the concept of leverage. Which values on your list are more important to you? Which values will motivate you at the highest level to achieve your objective? The values that provide leverage and motivation are your core values. One of the keys to success is “focus.” By determining your core values, you will be able to manage your time wisely by focusing on aligning only those values most important to you, thus providing great leverage toward success. If you do not clarify your core values, you may waste your time working on values that do not motivate you sufficiently to move you forward. You will lose interest and excitement and find yourself no longer focusing on your dream. Time is our most valued resource and it is important that we use it wisely.

It is important to note that The Great Discovery does not guide you to selecting certain values. Each life is different and my values might be different than your values. The Great Discovery simply shows you how to select the core values that will motivate you to achievement of your dream.

You may find that you are having difficulty defining your core values. Identifying your values and then narrowing them down to your core values is a difficult and tedious step. Don't be frustrated that this takes deep thought and requires you to agonize about your personal feelings. It is always good to use divergent

thinking. In business, this is most commonly accomplished with brainstorming. In our personal lives we might want to consult with our friends. The Great Discovery calls this Peer2Peer Coaching. Your values are likely driving your life even if you don't know it and your friends should be able to help you uncover them. Most of us carefully guard our deepest thoughts and it might be difficult to share these thoughts with others. However, if you have a deep conversation about your values and dream with your friends, rather than a flippant conversation, won't they want you to achieve your dreams and take the process seriously? View this fear of sharing as a constraint to achievement of your dreams and find a way to overcome it. As you go through the process, visualize what it would mean to live in a world where your core values were fully realized. You will probably have feelings of great satisfaction. Imagine how this will serve to motivate you when you get your entire set of core values aligned with your dream.

Once you identify your core values, will they always remain the same? Some will. Some might not. I am a cancer survivor. I have survived nearly 20 years now. However, having cancer at age 42 definitely changed my core values. The importance of time moved much higher on the list. When one retires, it is important that they re-evaluate their core values. If their core values had been centered on work, they need to find new motivation to live the remaining part of their lives fully. It is wise to periodically reassess your core values, particularly if a centennial event occurs.

Being a cancer survivor, I can really relate to the movie, "*The Bucket List*;" although, I cry each time I watch it. The bucket list is a list of dreams that was aligned with core values. Knowing that death was imminent, it was important to accomplish those dreams in order to feel that life had been fulfilled to its fullest. When making a bucket list, you might believe that many of the items on your list are beyond accomplishment. This is true only if you do not have the motivation and methods for accomplishing them. It also may be that your dream only symptomatically represents your core values. You might have a dream that you would like to win the lottery. What are the odds of that happening? Is the dream really about winning the lottery or removing the monetary constraints in your life? If you are not sure what you would do after winning the lottery, you are not really clear about your core values.

What comes first, the chicken or the egg? Do your core values define your dream or does your dream define your core values? Most personal development books will tell you to let your core values determine your dreams. This makes sense because would you likely not want to change your core values just to accomplish a dream. Core values can be changed and should be reassessed periodically as discussed above; however, it is unlikely that our core values are so insignificant that they will be easily changed by a dream. The Great Discovery too, requires you to focus on your core values first; but, views this as a reflective process. It may take several iterations of reflecting on your core values and your dream before you are satisfied with the alignment. What is important is that you go through deep self reflection and clarification of your core values prior to thinking about your dream the first time. Generally, this self analysis will allow you to dream bigger. This does not mean that you can't have a "big dream" and then evaluate the dream against your core values making adjustments to one or the other. But it is important that before you proceed to planning how to accomplish your dream, that you have your core values aligned with your dream so you will have a strong spirit to aid you in accomplishing your dream. This does not mean that all core values have to be aligned to the same degree. It is possible that some core values might have some degree of conflict with other dreams. In this case you have to optimize the alignment of the core values to give you the most leverage.

If you are working with a team or a group, going through the process of assessing and aligning the goals of individuals with the team; the team with the organization goals; etc. will bring focus on the dream or objective and put everybody on the same page. This will motivate all involved to do what they can to accomplish the goal. DMAIC (Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve, Control) provided a common language and a common focus for those the companies who adopted Six Sigma. Likewise, the common

language of The Great Discovery will allow the people working on teams and organizations to focus and accomplish goals they might have otherwise found unachievable.

Below is a list of possible personal values. It is not comprehensive, so feel free to add to the list.

<b>Personal Values</b>		
Accuracy	Excitement	Optimism
Achievement	Fame	Order (tranquility, stability)
Accomplishment	Fast living	Peace
Advancement and promotion	Financial gain	Persistency
Adventure	Financial Independence	Personal development
Affection (love and caring)	Flexibility	Physical challenge
Arts	Freedom	Pleasure
Ambition	Friendliness	Power and authority
Challenge	Friendship	Privacy
Change and variety	Fun	Project Choice
Close relationships	Generosity	Public service
Collaboration	Growth	Purity
Comfort	Happiness	Quality
Community	Having a family	Quality relationships
Compassion	Health	Recognition (respect from others)
Competence	Helping other people	Religion
Competition	Helping society	Reputation
Cooperation	Honesty	Responsibility and accountability
Country	Improvement	Respect
Courage	Independence	Scholarship
Credibility	Individuality	Security
Decisiveness	Influence	Serenity
Dedication	Inner harmony	Service
Democracy	Innovativeness	Sophistication
Dependability	Integrity	Stability
Dignity	Intellectual status	Status
Discipline (order)	Intimacy	Stewardship
Diversity	Involvement	Success
Ecological awareness	Job tranquility	Supervising others
Economic security	Leadership	Teamwork
Education	Learning	Time freedom
Effectiveness	Location	Truth
Efficiency	Love	Wealth
Enjoyment (fun)	Loyalty	Wisdom
Ethical practice	Market position	Work under pressure
Equality	Meaningful work	Work with others
Empathy	Merit	Working alone
Empowerment	Money	
Excellence	Nature	

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gurusoftware.com/gurunet/personal/topics/values.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Heathfield, Susan M., *"Identify and Live Your Personal Values - Values Bring You Success in Life and Work,"*  
[http://humanresources.about.com/od/success/qt/values\\_s7.htm](http://humanresources.about.com/od/success/qt/values_s7.htm)