

Whose Life Is It Anyway?

WHO AM I?" "WHERE AM I GOING?" "WHY AM I DOING THIS?"

These are important questions that you ask yourself at various times throughout your life. The answers, which are significant life decisions, will determine what major you study in college, what kinds of jobs you take, what kind of employers you work for, who your friends are, who you marry, what your priorities are, etc.



While many of us spend a good deal of time and energy trying to answer the question of who we are and where are we going, we may forget to look closely at where and how we derive meaning in our life - that is, assess the values that drive our life decisions. This is an important process because values are not rigid; they shift and change as we mature.

CLARIFYING OUR VALUES

Psychologist Carl Rogers stated, "**Clarifying your values is the essential first step towards a richer, fuller, more productive life.**" In a diverse environment such as college, you continually face new experiences and challenges. How you choose to respond to these situations and the decisions you make will be influenced by your values. So, this is an excellent time to take a close look at what you value and whether it fits with who you are now.

This process of **value clarification** is a "must-do" activity if you are to become autonomous. And becoming autonomous is what college is all about: acquiring new knowledge with which to evaluate your world; acquiring new skills so that you can live independently; developing decision-making abilities that allow you to weigh options and choose those that are healthy for you. Becoming actively aware of what you value allows you to question, search, decide, and act. Consciously knowing your values will allow you to respond to life, not just react to it. That is, when you are faced with tough decisions, you can respond with complete information and awareness, and not just do something a certain way because that is what you or other people in your life have done before.

THERE ARE NO "RIGHT" OR "WRONG" ANSWERS

You derive meaning in your life from different sources and activities. Clarifying your values allows you to consciously acknowledge those sources and activities. The process allows you to determine what you expect from yourself, as compared to what others expect from you - a critical step toward autonomy.

There are no right or wrong answers. The self-assessment exercises that follow are simply "lanterns" - helping to light the path during your journey of personal growth and development.

VALUES APPRAISAL SCALE

This scale provides a brief, simple means of appraising your values. You will read 100 statements indicative of 10 defined values (on the following page).

- If a statement is DEFINITELY TRUE, write a 10 in the blank
- If a statement is MOSTLY TRUE, write 7 in the blank.
- If a statement is true or false some of the time, making you UNDECIDED, write 5 in the blank.
- If a statement is MOSTLY FALSE, write 3 in the blank.
- If a statement is DEFINITELY FALSE, write 0 in the blank.

- ___ 1. I have a regular physical check up by my doctor every year.
- ___ 2. I regularly take my children to church activities.
- ___ 3. I enjoy attending musical concerts.
- ___ 4. It is important to me to have lots of friends.
- ___ 5. I donate to charities that I feel are worthwhile.
- ___ 6. I envy the way the movie stars are recognized wherever they go.
- ___ 7. I would like to have enough money to retire by the time I am 50.
- ___ 8. I would rather spend an evening at home with my family than out with friends.
- ___ 9. I enjoy making decisions which involve other people.
- ___ 10. If I had the talent, I would like to write songs.
- ___ 11. I have a close relationship with either my mother or my father.
- ___ 12. I have taught a church class or otherwise taken an active part in my church.
- ___ 13. I am willing to spend time helping another student who is having difficulty with his/her studies.
- ___ 14. Even at the same salary, I would rather be boss than just another worker.
- ___ 15. I have a special appreciation for beautiful things.
- ___ 16. If I had the talent, I would like to appear regularly on TV.
- ___ 17. I would like to counsel people and help them with their problems.
- ___ 18. I would enjoy association with movie stars and other celebrities.
- ___ 19. I have a regular dental check up at least once a year.
- ___ 20. I enjoy writing short stories.
- ___ 21. I would rather spend a summer working to earn money than to go on an expense-paid vacation.
- ___ 22. I like to attend parties.
- ___ 23. I think it would be fun to write a play for TV.
- ___ 24. I believe in a God who answers prayers.
- ___ 25. I prefer being an officer rather than just a club member.
- ___ 26. I would spend my last \$100 for needed dental work rather than a week's vacation at my favorite resort.
- ___ 27. I enjoy giving presents to members of my family.
- ___ 28. If I were a teacher, I would rather teach poetry than math.
- ___ 29. I often daydream about things I would like to have if I had the money.
- ___ 30. I enjoy giving parties.
- ___ 31. I am willing to write letters for old or sick people.
- ___ 32. It would be satisfying to act in movies or TV.
- ___ 33. When I am ill, I usually see or call a doctor.
- ___ 34. I believe that tithing is one's duty to God.
- ___ 35. I enjoy taking part in the discussion at the family dinner.
- ___ 36. I enjoy visiting art museums.
- ___ 37. I like to write poetry.
- ___ 38. I like to be around other people most of the time.
- ___ 39. When with a friend, I like to be the one who decides what we will do or where we will go.
- ___ 40. Someday I would like to live in a large expensive house.
- ___ 41. I pray to God about my problems.
- ___ 42. If I knew a family which had no food for Christmas dinner, I would try to provide it.
- ___ 43. I like to spend holidays with my family.
- ___ 44. I like to see my name in print (newspapers).
- ___ 45. I would rather take a class in freehand drawing than a class in mathematics.
- ___ 46. I do not like to spend an entire evening alone.
- ___ 47. If the salary were the same, I would rather be a school principal than a classroom teacher.
- ___ 48. I have expensive tastes.
- ___ 49. I can tell the difference between a really fine painting and an ordinary one.
- ___ 50. If I had regular headaches, I would consult a doctor even if aspirin seemed to lessen the pain.
- ___ 51. I have several very close friends.
- ___ 52. I expect to provide music lessons for my children.
- ___ 53. It is important that grace be said before meals.
- ___ 54. I sometimes miss sleep to visit with late company.
- ___ 55. I usually get at least 8 hours of sleep each night.
- ___ 56. I like to design things.
- ___ 57. I would like to be looked up to for my accomplishments.
- ___ 58. I would feel a sense of satisfaction from nursing a sick person back to health.
- ___ 59. I care what my parents think about the things I do.
- ___ 60. I daydream about making a lot of money.

VALUE WORKSHEET

Instructions: Mark each of the values listed below in the following way:

- Put a check mark (✓) next to those values you personally endorse.
These are values you would be willing to dedicate significant time and energy to achieve.
- Put an (X) beside those values that you personally reject.
These are values you would not be willing to expend much time or effort to achieve.
- Put an (O) beside those values that are neutral you.
You neither endorse nor reject them.

Many of the below values may sound good to you. Force yourself to make some choices. Be honest about your willingness to dedicate a significant amount of time or effort to each. Do not show your responses to anyone.

I VALUE ...

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> career success | <input type="checkbox"/> being prepared for emergencies | <input type="checkbox"/> serving the less fortunate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> honesty in all my dealings | <input type="checkbox"/> athletic excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> health and vigor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> religious activity | <input type="checkbox"/> pride in my community, state, region | <input type="checkbox"/> keeping careful records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> social correctness | <input type="checkbox"/> musical excellence | <input type="checkbox"/> understanding other cultures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> open mindedness | <input type="checkbox"/> awareness of my heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> being a leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> high individualism | <input type="checkbox"/> projecting the right image | <input type="checkbox"/> mentoring others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> winning | <input type="checkbox"/> honoring my parents | <input type="checkbox"/> intellectual growth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my family's success | <input type="checkbox"/> ability to build things | <input type="checkbox"/> trust in God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> giving my children a competitive advantage | <input type="checkbox"/> habits of thrift | <input type="checkbox"/> financial security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being law abiding | <input type="checkbox"/> financial wealth | <input type="checkbox"/> personal attractiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> being loyal to country | <input type="checkbox"/> self-sufficiency | <input type="checkbox"/> tolerance of others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> orderly home life | <input type="checkbox"/> involvement in government | <input type="checkbox"/> being witty, clever, articulate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> keeping all commitments | <input type="checkbox"/> marital harmony | <input type="checkbox"/> artistic sensitivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knowing the right people | <input type="checkbox"/> fame within my profession | <input type="checkbox"/> being a good team player |
| <input type="checkbox"/> having balance in my life | <input type="checkbox"/> being productive | <input type="checkbox"/> dressing for success |
| <input type="checkbox"/> having a wide range of friends | <input type="checkbox"/> being creative | <input type="checkbox"/> skill to influence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> having many skills | | <input type="checkbox"/> skill to repair things or solve problems |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> accuracy of work |

Rank the four **values you endorse** most strongly and the four **values you reject** most strongly.

MY TOP FOUR ENDORSED VALUES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

MY TOP FOUR REJECTED VALUES

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.