

Another FREE Personal Development Article

From LifeHappens

Living Your Values

By Paul Dalton

"Although gold dust is precious, when it gets in your eyes it obstructs your vision." – Hsi-Tang Chih Tsang (Zen master)

Whenever I meet anyone who is unsatisfied with the state of their life, it usually only takes a short conversation to discover that they spend a lot of time doing things that conflict with their true personal values. An example of this is someone who is highly creative at heart, but whose job requires them to stick to the rules. Or a gentle caring type of person who is surrounded by hard nosed straight talkers. It's quite easy in today's society to fall into the rut of maintaining a lifestyle, while forgetting what it is that makes that lifestyle important to us in the first place.

We all have a set of values that defines our inner characters, and when we are prevented from doing the things that put us in touch with these values we can begin to feel frustrated or even empty. Numerous studies into what makes people happy have consistently shown that the most important ingredient for life satisfaction is having plenty of opportunity to express your true authentic self.

I often talk with people who claim they do not know what their values are, so I explain that true values are just the personal qualities that you feel are important to have for yourself. Everyone's values are different and one way to find out what yours are is to follow this exercise:

Imagine that its way off in the future

and someone close to you is presenting you with a lifetime achievement award at a glamorous ceremony. How would you like for them introduce you to the audience? E.g. "Mary is such a loving person who has brought great happiness to those who know her. Her creative nature has always ensured that life's obstacles were overcome with grace and dignity. She is an honest and loyal friend whose positive and humorous approach to life had been a great inspiration to others." Thinking about how you would like others to view you is a good indication of the values you consider important. As you think about this, honestly assess how much of yourself you are currently putting into living these values now. What could you do right now to be that deserving person collecting the award?

Money can be a very handy bonus for most of us, but do not mistake financial status as a true personal value. I recently had very bizarre conversation with a man who said he works all hours god sends so that one day he will be rich enough to spend more time with his family!!! Why doesn't he ditch the job and live that value now? If your life is not currently reflecting what's important to you, how could you plan to change it so that you are free to be the fullest most positive expression of yourself?

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