

Values

Have you ever sat down and wondered what the word 'values' means and what they actually are?

I have often heard world leaders using statements such as 'human values' 'national values' 'migrants should embrace our values' and so on.

If I was to poll 10 people, I am certain I will encounter different opinions as to what they considered a 'value' to be.

Let me start to explore this word by firstly defining the word, then look at synonyms for the word, then research the internet to find sites offering their author's understanding of the word and finally draw my own conclusions.

Definition

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines values as:

1. The worth, desirability, or utility of a thing, or the qualities on which these depend (the value of regular exercise).
2. Worth as estimated; valuation (set a high value on my time).
3. The amount of money or goods for which a thing can be exchanged in the open market; purchasing power.
4. The equivalent of a thing; what represents or is represented by or may be substituted for a thing (paid them the value of their lost property).
5. Something well worth the money spent (cf. value-for-money).
6. The ability of a thing to serve a purpose or cause an effect (news value; nuisance value).
7. One's principles or standards; one's judgement of what is valuable or important in life.
8. The meaning (of a word etc.); the quality (of a spoken sound).

Synonyms

The following words can be used in place of the word 'value':

- Appraise
- Appreciate
- Assess
- Esteem
- Estimate
- Ethics
- Ideals
- Morals
- Price
- Principles
- Standards
- Treasure
- Reckon

Even so, they do not really seem to help. To me they only offer a guide as to what we should be looking for.

What exactly are values?

So what exactly are the values we human beings should consider?

You can use the internet to search for articles containing the word 'values' and will probably discover over 129,000,000 references to the word. -

<http://www.google.com.au/search?q=values&sourceid=mozilla-search&start=0&start=0&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official>.

Even if one was able to spend 10 minutes researching each one it would take over 21,500,000 hours or over 7,000 years for one person, researching 8 hours a day non stop to try to uncover all possible meanings - and then that is only web pages available in English. Even so some references are so blatantly out of scope (covering such topics a real estate values or car values) so as not to be of interest. Still one would have to at least give them a cursory glance in order to eliminate them from further investigation.

So why bother?

Well if one does not bother, how in the world can any one person, or group of people or spiritual leaders or political leaders hope to overcome the animosity, hatred, distrust and all other gaps keeping harmony only ever the 'light at the end of the tunnel'?

Well I for one have thought about this conundrum and have after researching several web sites, discovered an amazing set of words that could just help me solve this conundrum.

Traditional Values

The first web site that I examined was that belonging to the Traditional Values Coalition - <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/defined.php>. What I discovered on examining their definition of their traditional values (<http://www.traditionalvalues.org/defined.php>), were the following 9 major values:

1. Right to life
2. Fidelity in marriage and abstinence before marriage
3. The opposition to homosexual, bisexual, transgenderism, and other deviant sexual behaviours
4. The opposition to pornography
5. Patriotism, loyalty to country, and political involvement
6. Religious freedom
7. The opposition to addictive behaviours
8. Discrimination and tolerance
9. Love and hate

Citizens for community values

This web site (<http://www.ccv.org/>) simply stated their values as communities that are:

1. Healthy,
2. Wholesome
3. Safe, and
4. Happy

Think quest

This web site

(http://library.thinkquest.org/J001709/thinkquest_values/introfolder/intropage_frame_set.html) states that some of their values are

1. Respect
2. Responsibility
3. Love
4. Honesty
5. Cooperation
6. Family
7. Friendship, and
8. Caring for the environment

The values divide

This blog, <http://www.thevaluesdivide.com/> contains some 38 values grouped under 12 categories called 'Values of the wise'. These are

1. Knowledge, wisdom, & education
2. Respect, tolerance, & modesty
3. Fulfilment, meaning, & optimism
4. Humour, light heartedness, & acceptance of the absurd
5. Creativity, ingenuity, & vision
6. Dedication, responsibility, & will
7. Honour, integrity, & morality
8. Kindness, magnanimity, & altruism
9. Self-confidence & self-worth
10. Liberty & peace
11. Development, progressivism, & integration
12. Passion, willingness to risk, & self-awareness
13. Strength & courage
14. Truth & justice

Values@Work

This web site (<http://www.valuesatwork.org/>) cross referenced the 'Hall-Tonna values inventory' to categorise and cross reference the 125. They state that 'Successful people know what their values are, and how to live them'

They provide 25 examples of these said values under 12 categories:

1. Play/Recreation
2. Being Self
3. Knowledge/Discovery/Insight
4. Empathy
5. Adaptability/Flexibility
6. Control/Order/Discipline
7. Human Rights/Social Order
8. Accountability/Ethics
9. The Environment
10. Faith/Risk/Vision
11. Achievement/Success
12. Sharing/Listening/Trust

However, they explain their organisations values as:

1. Purpose
2. Relating
3. Profit
4. Work
5. Simplicity/Play

The cost of their publication containing the categorised values is \$US35.

My Life Changes

This web site (<http://www.mylifechanges.com>) introduces a relatively economical way of tracking your personal goals and values. The cost of this service is less than \$US5 per month.

They provide the following examples of values under the goal headings of

- Health/energy/image
- Emotion/happiness/growth
- Parent/family/home
- Career/thrift/wealth

The following values have been provided as examples

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|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Achievement | 12. Belief | 23. Dependability |
| 2. Acknowledgement | 13. Bliss | 24. Determination |
| 3. Adoration | 14. Cheerfulness | 25. Devotion |
| 4. Adventure | 15. Commitment | 26. Discipline |
| 5. Affection | 16. Compassion | 27. Education |
| 6. Ambition | 17. Concentration | 28. Energy |
| 7. Apology | 18. Confidence | 29. Enthusiasm |
| 8. Appreciation | 19. Consideration | 30. Happiness |
| 9. Assertiveness | 20. Contentment | 31. Harmony |
| 10. Balance | 21. Cooperation | 32. Initiative |
| 11. Beauty | 22. Creativity | |

Living values

This web site (www.livingvalues.net) provides the following 12 key universal values:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Cooperation | 7. Peace |
| 2. Freedom | 8. Respect |
| 3. Happiness | 9. Responsibility |
| 4. Honesty | 10. Simplicity |
| 5. Humility | 11. Tolerance |
| 6. Love | 12. Unity |

My conclusion

Every author seems to be saying the same thing and has a piece of the puzzle. They all seem right, but then again could be wrong.

From these seven (7) sites there are 122 words describing what values mean. I am sure that there are many more. How can anyone begin to remember these let alone try to find common ground.

Perhaps we need a simple approach to help resolve all this 'confusion' and 'chaos'. To me the difference between order and chaos is as follows:

- Order - A place for everything and everything in its place
- Chaos - A place for everything and nothing in its place

I have put together a simple presentation called ASimpleValueSystem which at least gives me a better understanding of this issue. Please peruse it at your leisure.