

# Values & Character

## Integrity

*Wisdom*  
is knowing the right path to take...  
*Integrity*  
is taking it

Values and character are two sides of the same coin. Like heads and tails, it is hard to separate these two.

Values are internal and represent what is important to you. Character is external and seen by others through your actions to show them what is important to you. If you asked others to identify your values based on your choices, do you think they would be accurate?

Take a few minutes and write just a few values that you believe are most important to you.

Now take a few minutes and identify what your choices say are important to you.

Do they match? If they do, that is integrity. What we value inside is showing up through our choices. Take time during your day to watch the choices you make. Write down the values behind a particular choice.

## Conflicting Values

It is not uncommon to find yourself making a choice that gives way to one value but opposes another value. Conflicting values happens often. You might value eating healthy but your friends are going out for pizza.

In cases like this we compromise. The problem arises when we live the majority of our lives with inner conflict. It is important that we identify our values and try our best to live them out for our personal emotional health. Share about a time you had conflicting values.



## Who Do You Admire?

Our values are pretty well established in childhood. Sometimes people find that the values they live by are the cause of issues they face. For example, a person whose family lacked structure growing up may find that they are often late to appointments, do not care for their things well or practice self-care.

Making a change to adopt more structure in their lives can be challenging. Consider that we learn our initial values by watching those closest to us. It would be a logical conclusion that we can relearn new values by watching others who exhibit these values.

If you are trying to change a behavior or belief in your life, think about someone who acts or thinks the way you are working toward. Then model them. Write in the space below someone you can learn from in order to make your own changes.

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## Whose Pulling Your Strings?

Values define who you are. They speak your identity to others. They guide every choice you make. But where did they come from? You learned your values from others besides your family of origin. Teachers, employers, your faith, Hollywood and our culture are all examples of how our values are shaped by others. The values you have today might be very different if you lived in the same place 100 years ago, or if you lived in another country today. We have values that differ from state to state within our own country.



We use the picture of the marionette to show that while we might think we determine our values, others are often pulling our strings. Because we are “herders” and want to belong, we often adopt values of those around us. We might even act one way around one group of people and adopt behaviors and values of another group in a different setting.

There is nothing wrong with this. It is perfectly natural. However, it can cause problems for us if we do not take some time to evaluate the values we are acting on. Making sure the values that guide your day-to-day choices fit the person that you want to be is helpful. You may have learned some values that cause you problems and might want to change them.

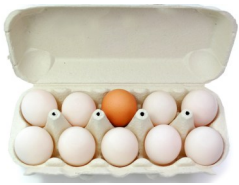
Choosing values according to the lifestyle you want is easy. Maintaining those values around others who do not agree is not easy. This is because of the herder concept. We all want to belong to our herds. We feel uncomfortable when we do not. So we make slight adjustments that can, over time, change us into people we never intended to be.

There are a few very touchy subjects that cause people to refrain from being truly authentic in front of others who do not share the same values. These include, but are not limited to, politics and religion. Adopting the values of those around you in order to fit in is called group think. It means that you are not standing your ground and thinking critically but instead are making choices in order to fit in.

Can you identify a time when you went with the rest of the crowd just to know you fit in? How did that choice help you? How did it strip you of your own personal values?

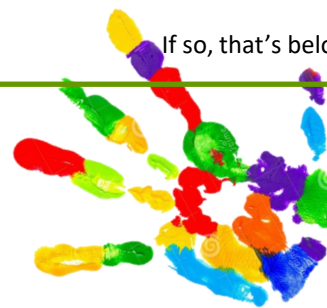


Can you identify a time when you stood as an individual against the crowd? How did that feel?



There is a difference between fitting in and belonging. Fitting in requires that you be like everyone else. Belonging is when others accept you just as you are even if you are different than they are. Are there people you feel like you can be yourself around and they accept you just as you are? Name them below.

Fill out the chart below to identify values that you may or may not recognize you are choosing every day. Your values are as unique as your fingerprints.



If so, that's belonging and it is a wonderful thing.

**“IT’S NOT  
HARD TO MAKE  
DECISIONS  
WHEN YOU KNOW  
WHAT YOUR  
VALUES ARE”**

– ROY DISNEY

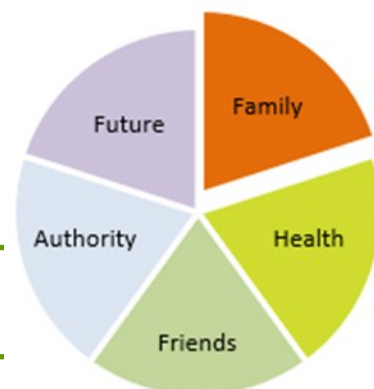
Choice to Be Made	What I Chose (or didn't choose)	What Value My Choice Reflects
What to eat for the day?		
What to wear?		
PATTERNS of self-care		
Who to spend time with		
Activities to engage with		
Responsibilities to complete		
Which thoughts stay or go?		

## Different Strokes for Different Folks

Think about different aspects of your life. See if you have different values in each group. Do you act and talk the same way around each group? Probably not. Because everyone is unique, there is not anyone we share every value with. We might talk about some things with our friends but not with our family. You might eat healthy but splurge now and then with family.

Most of us behave differently around authority. We all have people of authority whether it is our boss, police officers, parents or staff who work with us.

Our values alter depending on who we are with. However, we should never give up our values because we are hanging with others who do not share them. Try to never let others tell you what you should or should not value. That is a very personal choice. Own your own values.



## Stand Tall with Character

Check out the following character traits. Remember, character is what others see in your words and actions.

- ☐ Keep your promises even if it takes extra effort.
- ☐ Go back to a store and pay for something you forgot to pay for (honesty).
- ☐ Never betray a friend's trust even if you get in trouble (loyal).
- ☐ Do not gossip or talking badly about someone (trustworthy).
- ☐ Remain true to your spouse or partner (faithful).
- ☐ When in a serious relationship, do not keep secrets from each other (openness).
- ☐ Do not expect a reward for doing the right thing (integrity).
- ☐ Do not let someone else take the blame for something you did (upright).
- ☐ Notice other people's accomplishments even if they "won" over you (good sport).
- ☐ If someone gives you confidential information, never tell anyone what you know (confidentiality).
- ☐ When you have problems with someone, discuss it openly with that person (maturity).
- ☐ Those in authority should exhibit strong character (responsible).
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
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## Roots That Go Deep

The word picture for character is a tree with deep roots. Character requires that I dig deep into myself in order that I am not blown over by life's circumstances. Being a hard worker means that I am a hard worker no matter what. It means that I remain a hard worker even if I have a boss who does not respect me or is not kind. It means that I remain a hard worker when someone invites me to skip work to do something fun. It means that I remain a hard worker when other distractions call me to lose focus of my work.

The tree represents this concept because what others see above ground is dependent upon the depth of the roots underground. A tree's stability over a long period of time is dependent upon how deep its roots go. The roots are what makes the tree. It brings needed nutrients to the leaves but also keeps it steady in strong storms. Values can be seen as the roots while character is the tree that is thriving. They go hand-in-hand so that my insides match my outsides.

*Character is revealed when pressure is applied.*



## TRUSTWORTHINESS

The ability to trust others and be trusted yourself is an important character trait. Below are some ways to show how trust looks. This list by Brene' Brown can help you identify elements of trust when communicating your needs to someone else.

- \* Boundaries - you respect my boundaries and set your own. We are okay to say no.
- \* Reliable - you do what you say you will do. You do not overpromise and then let down.
- \* Accountability - you own your mistakes, apologize and make necessary corrections.
- \* Vault - you do not share information that is not yours to share even when you are upset.
- \* Integrity - you choose to be courageous even when it is hard. You choose right over fun, fast or easy and mean what you say.
- \* Nonjudgment - we can ask for what we need and talk about how we feel without judgment.
- \* Generosity - we assume the best in each other and allow for shortcomings.

## RESPECT

Showing and giving respect is important to healthy relationships. The list below shows elements of respect.

- \* The Golden rule - treat others the way you would like to be treated.
- \* Be tolerant of differences - allow everyone to be unique. Celebrate differences rather than judging them.
- \* Use good manners - manners are a lost art. Saying please, thank you, raising your hand and waiting your turn are just a few.
- \* Do not use bad language - words are powerful. Make sure you do not harm others with them.
- \* Be considerate of others' feelings - not just when it benefits you.
- \* Do not threaten/hit/hurt others - we all need help to stand confident. No one needs help falling.
- \* Deal kindly when angry - emotions are strong but our speech should always be uplifting if we manage ourselves.
- \* Do not insult others - sticks and stones may break bones but words (insults) do harm others.

## RESPONSIBILITY

Taking personal responsibility for words and actions are important factors for strong character.

- \* Plan ahead - good time management is a wise life skill. Not too much, not too little and stay organized.
- \* Be diligent - do your work thorough and carefully.
- \* Persevere through hard times— resilience is a great skill to have. It is often an attitude of the mind to bounce back.
- \* Do your best - our best is all that can be expected. Even great people make mistakes.
- \* Have self-control - self-management of words and actions take us very far in life.
- \* Be self-disciplined - routines help us be disciplined as does doing what is right and not what we feel.
- \* Think before you act - actions speak louder than words.
- \* Take accountability for words/actions - apologize when wrong and make repairs with others.
- \* Set a good example for others to follow - be a leader and inspire others.



# FAIRNESS

Life is not always fair. But we can strive to be fair by following the following examples of fairness. In return, we can respect others when fair is not always possible.

- \* Play by the rules - even when you know you can get away with it.
- \* Take turns/share - keep things as equal as possible. This is the opposite of greedy.
- \* Be open-minded - you might learn new things! Listen to the wisdom of others. Even those you do not think have any.
- \* Listen to others - everyone needs to be heard. You will get your chance. Be patient.
- \* Do not take advantage of others - similar to the golden rule, you would not want to be taken advantage of.
- \* Do not blame others - we can not change others words or actions but only recognize our own buttons.
- \* Treat all people fairly - assume the best and do not accuse until you know the facts.

# CARING

Caring for others requires empathy which is understanding what they might be feeling. We do not carry their issues or emotions but we care for them by showing empathy.

- \* Be kind - your words and actions can heal deep wounds.
- \* Be compassionate - caring for others requires your time and resources but are worth it in the end.
- \* Be empathetic - empathy says, 'I can imagine how you feel' by putting ourselves in their shoes.
- \* Express gratitude - thankfulness is a measurement of your recovery. Be grateful for all and do not assume you are entitled to more than you have.
- \* Forgive others - forgiving releases you from the person so you are free. Remember the things you would like to be forgiven for.
- \* Help people in need - we all find times we are in need. We all need a hand up and not to be left alone.
- \* Be charitable - allow your things to be used for anyone in need. There is great joy and reward in this behavior.

# CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship is giving to the community around you so that you do not take more than you give. It requires us to trust the rules set out by authority. Rules and authority can be a struggle for some. Working through those issues is helpful to learn that some may misuse their authority, they are both meant for our benefit to keep us all safe.

- \* Make your community better
- \* Volunteer
- \* Vote/Stay informed
- \* Be a good neighbor
- \* Obey laws
- \* Respect authority
- \* Protect the environment

## Look straight ahead and fix your eyes on what lies before you.

### Proverbs 4:25

Directions:

- All questions are “behavior” based, meaning that you are rating yourself on what you “do” rather than what you “know”.
- Answer the questions below by rating yourself as follows:

0 - Does not apply to me at all.

1 - Applies sometimes, but not often.

2 - Applies to me often.

3 - I have this one down on a regular basis.

Check the boxes of the behavior you would like to work on during this section.

Pre		Post
	My choices reflect that my character matches my values (integrity).	
	I regularly recognize conflicting values and know how to consider each one.	
	I have at least one person that I look up to who models values that are important to me.	
	My values reflect strong character that most people would admire.	
	I recognize that I can be easily influenced by others and intentionally choose my own values.	
	I make choices that are consistent regardless of the group I am with.	
	I continue to make good choices when pressure is on me.	
	I take full responsibility of choices that do not reflect good character.	
	I do not expect anything from others that I am not willing to do myself.	

### ***“I Will” Statements***

To get closer to my Big Hairy Goal, “I Will” do the following:

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### ***What I Got Out of This Section***