

It was over the New Year's holiday last year when I finally attempted to send in the home videos of my kids to get converted to digital. Sadly, I discovered that some nasty chemicals from negatives stored with my VHS-C tapes had corroded the plastic cases and the magnetic tape. I don't know how to explain the feelings I was having other than anxiety and loss. It certainly wasn't a logical response, since it's not like we had been watching them over the past 20 years. I guess that's what happens when you're in the fog of raising children-also who still owns a working VCR?

So I cleaned them up the best I could and sent them into the service which promptly returned them with a note that politely explained that under no circumstances were they going to contaminate their equipment with my mold. After a dip into the deep end of the internet, it looks like the common method of ruining tapes is storage on the basement floor. At the very least, I didn't want to be lumped in with that group of degenerates. Either way, I was on my own.

So having nothing to lose, I decided to press forward with an internal recovery project where I enlisted the help of my son, Ethan since he's tech-savvy and was conveniently home from college for the holiday break. We cobbled together an old camcorder, video converter, and computer to try it ourselves. I should mention I had all of this equipment for years because I planned on doing it myself once upon a time, but got distracted after the first one. Don't procrastinate is the moral of the story, but not the point. I'm happy to report that other than a couple of broken tapes, that required delicate surgery, the recovery process was a success. As a bonus, we backed everything up to the cloud.

A nagging new question was why didn't I throw away the digitized tapes? Because they are hazardous waste-No? What is this residual personal, unquantifiable value? I could rationalize it by thinking of it as a memory, but still.



All of this made me think about the wide dynamic range of value people assign to objects, ideas, memories, and people. In the case of personal videos or pictures the value approaches priceless. Whereas those same objects are essentially worthless to nearly everyone else. So out in the wild, you have the spectrum of personalities that assign value to objects from minimalist to a hoarder. For the same reason its hard to understand a hoarder, I suspect there aren't too many people successful in Marie Kondo's approach to determining if your stuff 'spark's joy' in your soul. You can find *Tidying Up* on Netflix and TLC's *Hoarding: Buried Alive* on Amazon Video to find your tribe. BTW, the \$36B/year self-storage business has more

locations in the U.S. than McDonald's and Starbucks combined [[Huffington Post](#)].

I suppose we can assume there's a normal distribution for personality traits? Anyway, to stay away from abnormal psychology and examine the case of a normie, note that even the value we place on things initially changes over time. Remember you bought that sweatshirt because you liked it, but after years of washing and use you have assigned a value to it that is irrationally above the tax deduction recommendation for donations.

There are plenty of more cases that are interesting to look at like celebrities, music, artwork, friends, family, and pets. The realization that I came to is that we've always known that people assign different values to things but relevant to my pursuit of understanding the decision-making process, I think it is valuable to consciously be aware of this perspective when decision-making and problems-solving with a group of people. Recognize that others may not see the value that you see in your argument. Try explaining your perspective with some depth to help convince others of the value through your eyes.



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