

Know What You Value To Get What You Want

Rita's Career Corner ...With Rita B. Allen

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Identify your values and build a strong foundation towards greater personal empowerment. We all make choices every day and follow an internal voice that guides us directly or indirectly...and sometimes creates a tug of war or challenge for us. At times, we may feel this tug but don't quite understand why and/or cannot identify the source of this struggle. Some of you probably know exactly what I am talking about and some of you are probably thinking, what is she talking about?!

Allow me to offer an example – how would you respond to these statements:

- I prefer working in an environment that is collegial and team-oriented
- I prefer working in an analytical environment that is innovative
- I prefer to be measured by my ability to meet expected bottom line results
- I prefer to be measured by how I build relationships while achieving results

There is no right or wrong selections in the above statements. Each of us values different things and therefore will resonate with one or two more than the others. Our values are truly at the core of our vitality and will be the foundation of our fulfillment. It's like if you build a house, you lay a strong foundation for which you build upon. Think of your values in the same way...they are the foundation for which we build everything upon. If the foundation is not set strong in building a house, then your house will fall apart. If our values are not set strong in all of our life and work choices, we will feel the disconnect and not be content or productive.

Our core values are the foundation for all we do including our:

- Beliefs
- Motivations
- Attitudes
- Expectations
- Perceptions
- Fulfillment
- Productivity

- Energy
- Happiness

Take the time to assess, identify and prioritize your values. Think about the things that are most important for you to feel whole, satisfied and/or complete. Differentiate between values that are non-negotiable to you, values that must be present in everything you do, values that would be nice-to-have but not deal-breakers, as well as the values that are not as important.

What are your top 10 values? Make a list of several values and then force yourself to rank them 1 through 10 with 1 being the highest and so on. Some examples of values include respect, challenge, integrity, balance, wealth, health, recognition, competition, autonomy, loyalty, collaboration, cooperation, security, responsibility, acceptance, personal growth, education, fun....and the list goes on. When you have created your top 10 list, transpose them on to an index card and post them in a visible spot for you to see every day as reminder of what is most important to you.

Values will (and should) impact our decisions in all aspects of our lives – personal, social, spiritual, professional, political, etc. It is important to identify what our core values are and then work towards alignment which is critical for our fulfillment. It is necessary, however, to recognize and manage when our values are not aligned which will happen at times.

Here are some tips to follow to achieve a greater sense of Personal Empowerment:

- Flexibility and openness is essential – keep an open mind to new experiences and approaches
- Only constant is change – recognize that change is inevitable
- Expect to make compromises – at times, we will need to make concessions
- Carefully weigh rewards and/or risks – what will you gain and/or lose
- Apply appropriate strategies – acknowledge sacrifice is needed and utilize well thought out strategies for success
- Effectively manage compromise – identify what is being gained, value added
- Personal decision making – determine boundaries and personal choices
- Awareness leads to empowerment – know your values, get what you want!

Values Activity – Awareness leads to personal empowerment – know your values and stay true to them

1. Think of a time you experienced the most fulfillment - either at work, school, and/or in your community. Which of your core values were in play? What was the impact of those values on your vitality, productivity and performance?
2. Think of a time when you experienced the least fulfillment? Which of your top 10 values were missing? What was the impact of the absence of your values on your vitality, productivity and performance?

When we know what our core values are and stay true to them, we are able to lead a fulfilled life and career. More often than not, when someone is struggling at work or at play, and you peel through all of the layers to get to the core of the situation, you will find that their values are not

properly aligned and being sacrificed. In the world of constant change that we now live, we can expect a change in leadership, mergers, acquisitions, as well as a host of other shifts at work which may cause our values to no longer be exactly aligned. We want to embrace those changes, assess the situation, determine which values are being sacrificed, weigh the risks and rewards, determine our boundaries, make personal choices, manage compromises, and apply appropriate strategies for success.

Identify your values and incorporate them in all of your decision making and life choices. Stay true to your values, make compromises as you see fit. Identify your values and build a strong foundation towards personal empowerment.

Ask Rita...

Question: I have been working at my current organization for 6 years and have really enjoyed my position as well as working with all my teammates. I worked very well with my manager who was collaborative and really cared about how well the team worked together. Two months ago, we had a new manager replace our previous one who was promoted into a new department. My new manager is not as collaborative and seems more focused on individual results and working independently. The environment is so different now and I'm feeling frustrated. I have always been happy with my job in this company but now I'm starting to consider looking for a new job. What should I do?

Answer: It sounds like your core values were aligned very nicely within this organization and with your previous manager. Make a list of what those core values are for you. Identify your top 5 values, for example, collaboration may be one of them based on your description. What else is really important to you? Then you can determine where the gaps may be with your new manager. Perhaps competitiveness is a value to him/her which may not be one of your core values. Then weigh out the rewards and risks of those gaps. For example, if competitiveness is not a value for you but by embracing that value you will be able to build new skills such as working independently and/or negotiating skills, then you can utilize strategies that will help you make that compromise. On the other hand, after carefully review if you determine there is nothing for you to gain and it is impacting your performance poorly, you may decide the best personal choice for you is to look for a new role in another department or new company. Identify your values and then incorporate them into your decision making. Good luck!

Send your questions to: [Rita B. Allen](mailto:Rita.B.Allen)

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