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Self Awareness Exercise: Exploring Professional Values [1]

"Values" are what we believe in, what we support and what we stand for. We develop them early in our lives through experiences and the everyday life we live in our family, in school and thanks to our social interactions (religion, politics, interests, etc.). It is about fundamental principles for us that lead us to recognize what is good or bad, right or wrong. Most of the time we take our own 'System Values' for granted so that we are not able to realize that there are different points of view of reality. Thus, we often think that what is right for us is also right for everyone else, which of course is not the case, as cultural and social differences can lead a person, a group, a society, a nation to different value systems.

Behaving in a different way than what our values define, leads us to personal conflicts and disappointments. For example, suppose that X thinks that it is very important to share time with friends and with his family, rather than trying to acquire more money and material goods. On the contrary, Y believes that the goal of everybody should be to try to earn more money because through acquisitions they will be recognized as being successful. When X needs to stay overtime to complete a job, he / she resents it. The extra overtime money doesn't help him/her feel better, especially when he/she knows he's missing the prearranged date with his friends for Friday sports time. On the contrary, Y is happy and considers that overtime will help on the one hand to prove to the superior his special interest in the company on the other hand to create the right conditions for professional development and therefore an increase in salary. Now consider if Y was X's boss! The probability of interpersonal conflicts would be highly increased both in frequency and intensity and the rupture of their relations, almost certain.

Due to the fact that our value system is stable as it represents fundamental and basic beliefs for us, the conflicts arising from differences in values are very difficult to solve. For this reason, it is important to know one's own system values and choose work environments that are consistent with their own values.

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Exercise

With the following exercises you can identify, evaluate and classify your values. First, carefully read the following list of personal and professional values and note in the corresponding column how you feel about them. You can fill in any other values you consider important to you.

Attention: Note your own values and think about how you feel about each one and not how your parents, friends or in general people important to you feel or public opinion.

Value	Very important	Important	Trivial
Personal satisfaction *"I want a job that I will be happy with doing it"*			
Power or authority *"I enjoy taking decisions and supervising others'*			
Give back to the community "I'd like a job helping people"			
Leadership *"I enjoy overseeing others, giving tasks to people, and managing a group"*			
Independence – Autonomy *"I would like to work alone and my job not to depend to others"*			
Creativity "I want to do a job that allows me to realise my own ideas and feel useful''			
Others' respect "I want colleagues and partners to respect me'			

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Financial benefits *" My main driving forces are the compensation and the money I make"*			
Interest in knowledge "I'd like a job that will enable me to continue learning new things"			
Advancement prospects "A position with opportunities for advancement interests me"			
Job Security *"I want a stable and permanent job, to rely on"*			
Good working environment *"It's really important to me that I work in an environment that is friendly and helpful to my work"*			
Acknowledgment (financial or ethical) *"I want my work to be appreciated"*			
Fame-prestige-glory *"I care about other people to value me through my work"*			
Free time *"I would like to have a job allowing me plenty of free time"*			
Balancing a Family and a Career *"My goal is to be able to balance my personal and work lives. A fulfilling personal life is equally important as a fulfilling work life"*			
Health			

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"My ideal career would not negatively impact my physical or emotional well-being"			
Other			
Other			
Other			

Review your list of values again and then choose and mark below the 5 most important ones. Since there are no right or wrong answers, it is helpful to realize what is important to you in a career in order to search for and ultimately find the one that will provide you with what you are looking for. Your values will influence the type, content and performance of your chosen profession. It is important to know exactly why you hold these values.

Write below your 5 most important values and for each of them explain exactly why they are so important to you. This exercise will help you recognize whether or not certain studies or jobs match your own value system.

Based on this data you will be able to make the "best" decision for your future.

1. ……..……. is important to me because ……...
2. ……..……. is important to me because ……...
3. ……..……. is important to me because ……...
4. ……..……. is important to me because ……...
5. ……..……. is important to me because ……....

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