

VALUES imprint survey

This instrument is used to create awareness of individual values or priorities as a result of life imprints upon you from being born, reared, and educated in a certain place, situation, and time period.

You will respond to ten basic questions relative to the influences upon you—e.g., where your value system came from, personal and professional priorities, value differences, prejudices and biases, value reconsiderations, acquisition of new values, organizational values, transformational values, value evolution and competing values.

INTRODUCTION

Each of us has his or her own unique life space or energy field, which is both psychologically and physically demarked from others. In this “private world” we live in, there are many external and internal forces that influence our behavior. As we grow up, we seek to “make sense” out of the happenings and experiences of our lives. We literally construct a system for reading meaning into “our world or space.” Some of this “psychological construct” is genetically programmed, our biological and cultural heritage. Much is acquired through family, education, religion, work and social experience. It is part of our cultural conditioning and is subject to change when no longer relevant or appropriate. Consciously or not, this construct governs our behavior to a large extent, including our values and ethics.

VALUES are derived from our cultural heritage and this psychological construct. The concept has been defined in the Random House Dictionary as relative worth, merit, or merit judged or assigned to an object or action. In society, groups of people regard or value some activities, ideals, customs, or institutions positively (e.g., cleanliness or education) or negatively (e.g., crime or prostitution). Such judgments are culturally relative, depending on time of the world, place, and group circumstances. All human beings have needs, which are prioritized, thus establishing one’s values (e.g., money, recognition, excellence). Your psychological construct, including your value system, guides the way you work, play, and even worship, impacting your whole lifestyle.

Please answer the following questions for your own self-awareness.

- 1. Where did your values come from?** List below some of the influences upon your attitudes, philosophy of life, and unique belief system:

a.	b.	c.	d.
e.	f.	g.	h.

2. **What are now some of your personal and professional priorities?** List below, in terms of human needs, what you consider important or value:

a.
b.
c.
d.
e.

3. **How do your values differ?**

a. From your boss?
b. From your subordinates?
c. From your offspring/younger generation?
d. From those of your spouse/partner?

4. **Within your value system/structure, are there prejudices or biases of which you are personally aware?** If so, identify a few:

a.
b.
c.
d.

5. **Among your long-cherished values, are there some now subject to reconsideration or re-definition?** If so, identify a few:

a.	b.
c.	d.

6. Are there some new values to be explored or acquired by you?

a.	b.
c.	d.

7. Are there some new values, which you should take responsibility for promoting in your organization?

a.	b.
c.	d.

8. What are some of the major turning points in your life, which caused you to re-evaluate your values? List below some major transitional experiences which stimulated you to change in value or lifestyle:

a.	b.
c.	d.

9. In the evolution of your value system and life patterns, what are some of the current influences or happenings causing you to examine your options, choices or how to gain more balance?

a.	b.
c.	d.

INVENTORY of competing values

Sociologists have been doing research on competition among contemporary values and the probable cost. Reviewing their findings, Prof. Gywnn Nettler of the University of Alberta has summarized the principal ones. Query yourself on how you feel about each one.

VALUE	PROBABLE COST
A. Equality	Freedom
B. Freedom to reproduce	Quality of life
C. Freedom of movement	Congestion/ethnic separation
D. Social mobility	Discontent/status inconsistency
E. Mass communication	Cultural homogenization
F. Reduced infant mortality	Population pressure/famine
G. Improved living standard	Industrial technology spread
H. Affluence	Ennui/dependency
I. Mass education	Indoctrination/Awareness
J. Scientific technology	Environmental pollution/Ecology
K. Wellness lifestyle	Hospital decline
OTHERS	

OBSERVATIONS ON VALUES AND AMERICANS by Alexis de Tocqueville, a 19th Century Frenchman, writer, and observer of democracy in the United States of America:

“He defines morals as habits of the heart; notions, opinions, and ideas that shape mental habits; the sum of moral and intellectual dispositions of people in society .For as Tocqueville saw, the American was a new kind of person, a tentative character type shaped by inherited values on the one hand, and the challenges of the expanding frontier on the other.”

(From *Habits of the Heart—Individualism and Commitment in American Life* by R. N. Bellah, R. Madsen, W. M. Sullivan, A. Swidler, and S. M. Tifton. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

Post-script: What are your “habits of the heart” now that you have completed this survey?

RECOMMENDED reading

Elashmawi, Farid and Harris, Philip R. *Multicultural Management*, Chapters 3 and 4. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing, 1993.

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www.performanceSolutions.nc.gov/developmentInitiatives/CareerDevelopment/Assessments/Values Imprint Survey.doc