Values

How do you feel about yourself when you are alone and have an opportunity to think? How do you imagine you will feel as you age and look back on your life?

The answer to that will largely depend on the consistency between your values and your actions.

Over time, each of us develops a belief about what is important in life. We call these values. Some examples of values are: authenticity, balance, love, loyalty, duty, respect, service, honor, integrity, courage, honesty, humility, compassion, and justice.

The relative importance we give to each of these determines what we think, say, and do every day. Elvis Presley once said, "Values are like fingerprints. Nobody's are the same, but you leave them all over everything you do."

When you make choices that leave a gap between your values and your actions you make negative feelings. For example, if you place a high value on honor, and then do something dishonorable, you will likely feel guilt, shame, and fear.

By contrast, when you live your values and act in a way that is consistent with your values, you will have a sense of pride, satisfaction, and peace.

Try this: Make a list of values, and then circle the four that seem the most important or meaningful to you. Now remember those core values as you make decisions every day.

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