



A COLLECTION OF VALUE BASED STORIES

A SSSEHV RESOURCE



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1. A SIMPLE GESTURE

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE – Friendship, kindness, compassion

Mark was walking home from school one day when he noticed the boy ahead of him had tripped and dropped all of the books he was carrying, along with two sweaters, a baseball bat, a glove and a small tape recorder. Mark knelt down and helped the boy pick up the scattered articles. Since they were going the same way, he helped to carry part of the burden. As they walked Mark discovered the boy's name was Bill, that he loved video games, baseball and history, and that he was having lots of trouble with his other subjects and that he had just broken up with his girlfriend. They arrived at Bill's home first and Mark was invited in for a Coke and to watch some television. The afternoon passed pleasantly with a few laughs and some shared small talk, then Mark went home. They continued to see each other around school, had lunch together once or twice, then both graduated from junior high school. They ended up in the same high school where they had brief contacts over the years. Finally the long awaited senior year came and three weeks before graduation, Bill asked Mark if they could talk.

Bill reminded him of the day years ago when they had first met. "Did you ever wonder why I was carrying so many things home that day?" asked Bill. "You see, I cleaned out my locker because I didn't want to leave a mess for anyone else. I had stored away some of my mother's sleeping pills and I was going home to commit suicide. But after we spent some time together talking and laughing, I realized that if I had killed myself, I would have missed that time and so many others that might follow. So you see, Mark, when you picked up those books that day, you did a lot more, you saved my life." -John W. Schlatter (true story)



“Help ever, Hurt Never”

2. ONE THOUSAND MARBLES

VALUE: Right conduct

SUB-VALUE – Proper use of time

I'm a Ham radio operator and spend some time working with radios and electronics. So when I heard this story it really made me think! I hope that you will find some application in your own life as well...

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the basement shack with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. What began as a typical Saturday morning, turned into one of those lessons that life seems to hand you from time to time. Let me tell you about it.

I turned the dial up into the phone portion of the band on my ham radio in order to listen to a Saturday morning swap net. Along the way, I came across an older sounding chap, with a tremendous signal and a golden voice. You know, the kind, he sounded like he should be in the broadcasting business. He was telling whomever he was talking with something about "a thousand marbles".

I was intrigued and stopped to listen to what he had to say. "Well, Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. Too bad you missed your daughter's dance recital."

He continued, "Let me tell you something, Tom, something that has helped me keep a good perspective on my own priorities." And that's when he began to explain his theory of "a thousand marbles."

"You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years."

"Now then, I multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3,900, which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in their entire lifetime. Now stick with me Tom, I'm getting to the important part."

"It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail," he went on, "and by that time I had lived through over twenty-

eight hundred Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy."

"So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to round-up 1,000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside of a large, clear plastic container right here in the shack next to my gear. Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away."



"I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life. There is nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight."

"Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure if I make it until next Saturday then I have been given a little extra time. And the one thing we can all use is a little more time."

"It was nice to meet you Tom, I hope you spend more time with your family, and I hope to meet you again."

You could have heard a pin drop on the radio when this fellow signed off. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about. I had planned to work on the antenna that morning, and then I was going to meet up with a few hams to work on the next club newsletter. Instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss.

"C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast."

"What brought this on?" she asked with a smile.

"Oh, nothing special, it's just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. Hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles." ...**BY JEFFREY DAVIS**



3. AAA DAD

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB VALUE: Gratitude

For 52 years my father got up every morning at 5:30 a.m., except Sunday, and went to work. For 52 years he returned home at 5:30 p.m., like clockwork, for dinner at 6:00 p.m. I never remember my father taking a "night out with the boys," nor do I ever recall my father drinking. All he asked from me as his daughter was to hold his hammer while he repaired something, just so we could have some time to talk to each other.

I never saw my father home from work ill, nor did I ever see my father lay down to take a nap. He had no hobbies, other than taking care of his family.

For 22 years, since I left home for college, my father called me every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. He was always interested in my life, how my family was doing, and I never once heard him lament about his lot in life. The calls even came when he and my mother were in Australia, England or Florida.

Nine years ago when I purchased my first house, my father, 67 years old,

spent eight hours a day for three days in the 80-degree Kansas heat, painting my house. He would not allow me to pay someone to have it done. All he asked, was a glass of iced tea, and that I hold a paint brush for him and talk to him. But I was too busy, I had a law practice to run, and I could not take the time to hold the paint brush, or talk to my father.

Five years ago, at age 71 again in the sweltering Kansas heat, my father spent five hours putting together a swing set for my daughter. Again, all he asked was that I get him a glass of iced tea and talk to him. But again, I had laundry to do, and the house to clean.

Four years ago, my father drove all the way from Denver to Topeka, with an eight-foot Colorado Blue Spruce in his trunk, so that my husband and I could have a part of Colorado growing on our land. I was preparing for a trip that weekend and couldn't spend much time tallied to Daddy.

The morning of Sunday, January 16, 1996, my father telephoned me as usual, this time from my sister's home in Florida. We conversed about the tree he had brought me, "Fat Albert," but that morning he called the tree "Fat Oscar," and he had seemed to have forgotten some things we had discussed the previous week. I had to get to church, and I cut the conversation short.

The call came at 4:40 p.m., that day, my father was in the hospital in Florida with an aneurysm. I got on an airplane immediately, and on the way, I thought of all the times I had not taken the time to talk to my father.

I realized that I had no idea who he was or what his deepest thoughts were. I vowed that when I arrived, I would make up for the lost time, and have a nice long talk with him and really get to know him.

I arrived in Florida at 1 a.m., my father had passed away at 9:12 p.m. This time it was he who did not have time to talk, or time to wait for me.

In the years since his death, I have learned much about my father, and even more about myself. As a father he never asked me for anything but my time, now he has all my attention, every single day. *Author Unknown*



4. THE CARPENTER'S HOUSE

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB-VALUE: Responsibility

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family.

He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favour. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built. If we had realized that we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Build wisely. It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity. The plaque on the wall says, "Life is a do-it-yourself project." Your life tomorrow will be the result of your attitudes and the choices you make today.

Author Unknown



5. CUPCAKES AND ROOT BEER

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE : Kindness, joy, inner happiness

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with cupcakes, several cans of root beer and started on his journey.



When he had gone about three blocks, he saw an elderly woman. She was sitting on a park bench watching the pigeons. The boy sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink from his root beer when he noticed the lady looked hungry, so he offered her a cupcake. She gratefully accepted and smiled at him.

Her smile was so wonderful that he wanted to see it again, so he offered a root beer as well. Once again, she smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling without saying a word.

As it began to grow dark, the boy realized how tired he was and wanted to go home. He got up to leave but before he had gone no more than a few steps, he turned around and ran back to the old woman, giving her a big hug. She gave him her biggest smile ever.

When the boy arrived home his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked, "What has made you so happy today?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." Before his mother could respond he added, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile in the whole world!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her son was stunned by the look of peace on her face. He asked, "Mother, what has made you so happy today?" She replied, "I ate cupcakes in the park with God." And before her son could reply, she added, "You know, he is much younger than I expected."

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around. People come into our lives for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Take no one for granted and embrace all equally with joy!
By Julie A. Manhan.

6. LIFE IS FRAGILE - HANDLE WITH PRAYER

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE Faith, trust, sacrifice, patience

A man once asked his spiritual guru for advice: He said, "I truly believe in a creator. I serve people believing that serving them means serving God. I work as a volunteer, serving humanity, and I think this is the best prayer we can do. Now, I have some long-cherished wishes. Do you think God will ever listen to me and fulfil my desires? I believe so. With this belief in my heart, I continue serving others more and more. I serve God. God will certainly reward me. Do you think I am on the right path?"

The reply he received was as follows: "You say that God will reward you by granting your wishes, but if you believed that, you wouldn't have written. Rather than being filled with trust and faith in God, your heart is filled with doubt. If this condition remains, there is little likelihood that you will get your cherished desires.

Here is what is important to understand. God is not a Santa Claus dispensing gifts to all His children. Rather, God is the Creator. His creation is held together by laws which govern the universe and humanity. These are the natural laws. An example of a physical law would be gravity and an example of a spiritual law would be "you reap what you sow."

What if I jumped from a plane to commit suicide and then changed my mind as I fell to earth? No amount of praying would spare me! The natural outcome of such an act would be death by the law of gravity. Now, what if I would like to become a great success, but lack faith in God, myself and others? What if I would like to succeed, but expect to fail? If I expect to fail, I most likely will because of the spiritual law that "we get what we expect".

Christ didn't say, "All your prayers will be granted," but said, "All things, whatsoever you ask in prayer, **BELIEVING**, you shall receive." So, the first step to receiving your desires is to trust in God and believe in His love. Whenever things appear to be going wrong, it is just God telling us that He has better plans for us. That's why it makes sense to submit to the will of God. God always answers our prayers. he does this by giving us either what we prayed for or what we **SHOULD** have prayed for.



Muslims should have a good understanding of this idea since the name of their religion, Islam, means to submit or surrender. We surrender to the will of God not to be enslaved, but to be set free from making bad decisions. The act of submission and surrender is also to be found in Hinduism in Bhakti worship.

Besides believing that God will grant your wishes, or something better, you need to be patient. Buddha said, "The greatest prayer is patience." We not only should be patient, but we should pray persistently, for as William McGill wrote, "The value of persistent prayer is not that He will hear us, but that we will finally hear Him."

Thanking our parents ten times a day can keep us focused on them and ever grateful for their support, but if we are not careful, our thanks would be reduced to a mere ritual, empty of any feeling. So it is with our prayers. So, heed the advice of the ancient Jewish sages who taught, "Do not make prayer mechanical. Let it be a cry for grace and mercy, that love replace fear in the place in which you stand."

The 12th century Muslim mystic Hakim Sanai reminds us also of how important sincerity is, "When you sincerely enter into prayer, you will come forth with all your prayers answered, but a hundred prayers that lack sincerity will leave you still the bungler that you are." Your requests do not become holy just because you ask God for His favour, but if you first make your requests worthy and aligned with His will, they will surely be granted.

You also ask if you are on the right path. The answer depends on what you mean by "with this belief in my heart (that God will fulfil my wishes), I continue to serve more and more." If you mean by this that you serve others because God will reward you, you are on the wrong path. Those on the right path do not serve others because of obligations and rewards. No, they serve others because their help is needed and because it is the right thing to do. They wish to become more Godlike by serving others out of love. Their mission is to sow love and peace wherever they go. They look for no reward because their service is their reward. If it is done with a pure heart, and not with the hope of any reward, I agree with your statement that serving others is the same as serving God.

Finally, heed the advice of St. Augustine who said, "***Pray as though everything depended on God, and work as though everything depended on you.***" God bless you.

7. LOVE AND TIME

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE: Empathy

Once upon a time, there was an island where all the feelings lived: Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all of the others, including Love. One day it was announced to the feelings that the island would sink, so all constructed boats and left. Except for Love.

Love was the only one who stayed. Love wanted to hold out until the last possible moment. When the island had almost sunk, Love decided to ask for help. Richness was passing by Love in a grand boat. Love said, "Richness, can you take me with you?"

Richness answered, "No, I can't. There is a lot of gold and silver in my boat. There is no place here for you."

Love decided to ask Vanity who was also passing by in a beautiful vessel. "Vanity, please help me!"

"I can't help you, Love. You are all wet and might damage my boat," Vanity answered.

Sadness was close by so Love asked, "Sadness, let me go with you."

"Oh . . . Love, I am so sad that I need to be by myself!"

Happiness passed by Love, too, but she was so happy that she did not even hear when Love called her.

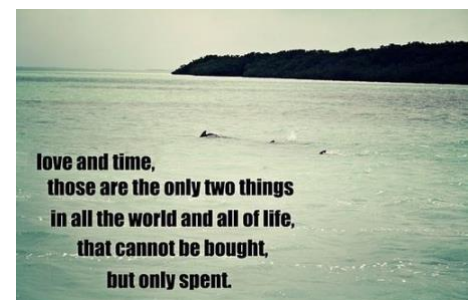
Suddenly, there was a voice, "Come, Love, I will take you." It was an elder. So blessed and overjoyed, Love even forgot to ask the elder where they were going. When they arrived at dry land, the elder went her own way. Realizing how much was owed the elder,

Love asked Knowledge, another elder, "Who Helped me?"

"It was Time," Knowledge answered.

"Time?" asked Love. "But why did Time help me?"

Knowledge smiled with deep wisdom and answered, "***Because only Time is capable of understanding how valuable Love is.***"



8. LOVE , WEALTH, SUCCESS

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE:

A woman came out of her house and saw 3 old men with long white beards sitting in her front yard. She did not recognize them. She said "I don't think I know you, but you must be hungry. Please come in and have something to eat." "Is the man of the house home?", they asked.

"No", she said. "He's out."

"Then we cannot come in," they replied.

In the evening when her husband came home, she told him what had happened. "Go tell them I am home and invite them in!"

The woman went out and invited the men in.

"We do not go into a House together," they replied.

"Why is that?" she wanted to know. One of the old men explained: "His name is Wealth," he said pointing to one of his friends, and said pointing to another one, "He is Success, and I am Love." Then he added, "Now go in and discuss with your husband which one of us you want in your home."

The woman went in and told her husband what was said. Her husband was overjoyed. "How nice!!" he said. "Since that is the case, let us invite Wealth. Let him come and fill our home with wealth!"

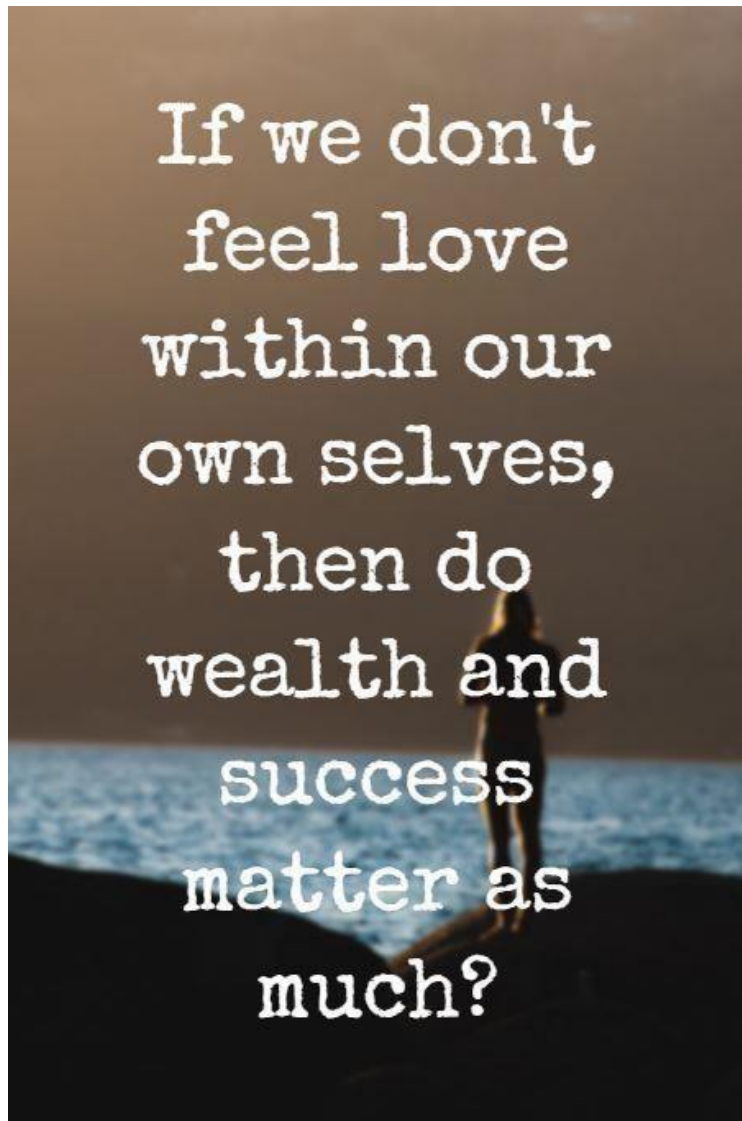
His wife disagreed. "My dear, why don't we invite Success?"

Their daughter-in-law was listening from the other corner of the house. She jumped in with her own suggestion: "Would it not be better to invite Love? Our home will then be filled with love!"

"Let us heed our daughter-in-law's advice," said the husband to his wife. "Go out and invite Love to be our guest." The woman went out and asked the 3 old men, "Which one of you is Love? Please come in and be our guest."

Love got up and started walking toward the house. The other 2 also got up and followed him. Surprised, the lady asked Wealth and Success: "I only invited Love. Why are you coming in?" The old men replied together: "If you had invited Wealth or Success, the other two of us would have stayed out, but since you invited Love, wherever He goes, we go with him.

"Wherever there is Love, there is also Wealth and Success!!!!!!"



9. THE MAKING OF A MOTHER

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE: Compassion

By the time the Lord made mothers, He was into the sixth day working overtime. An Angel appeared and said "Why are you spending so much time on this one?"

And the Lord answered and said, "Have you read the spec sheet on her? She has to be completely washable, but not elastic; have 200 movable parts, all replaceable; run on black coffee and leftovers; have a lap that can hold three children at one time and that disappears when she stands up; have a kiss that can cure anything from a scraped knee to a broken heart; and have six pairs of hands."

The Angel was astounded at the requirements for this one. "Six pairs of hands! No way!" said the Angel.

The Lord replied, "Oh, it's not the hands that are the problem. It's the three pairs of eyes that mothers must have!"

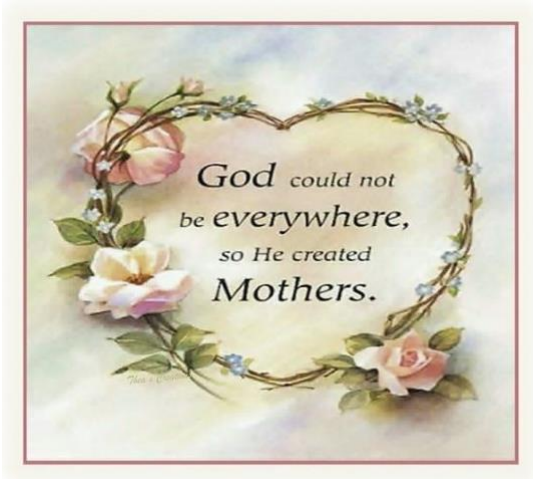
"And that's on the standard model?" the Angel asked.

The Lord nodded in agreement, "Yep, one pair of eyes are to see through the closed door as she asks her children what they are doing even though she already knows. Another pair in the back of her head are to see what she needs to know even though no one thinks she can. And the third pair are here in the front of her head. They are for looking at an errant child and saying that she understands and loves him or her without even saying a single word."

The Angel tried to stop the Lord "This is too much work for one day. Wait until tomorrow to finish."

"But I can't!" The Lord protested, "I am so close to finishing this creation that is so close to my own heart. She already heals herself when she is sick AND can feed a family of six on a pound of hamburger and can get a nine year old to stand in the shower."

The Angel moved closer and touched the woman, "But you have made her so soft, Lord."



She is soft," the Lord agreed, "but I have also made her tough. You have no idea what she can endure or accomplish."

"Will she be able to think?" asked the Angel.

The Lord replied, "Not only will she be able to think, she will be able to reason, and negotiate."

The Angel then noticed something and reached out and touched the woman's cheek. "Oops, it looks like You have a leak with this model. I told You that You were trying to put too much into this one."

"That's not a leak." the Lord objected. "That's a tear!"

"What's the tear for?" the Angel asked.

The Lord said, "The tear is her way of expressing her joy, her sorrow, her disappointment, her pain, her loneliness, her grief, and her pride."

The Angel was impressed. "You are a genius, Lord. You thought of everything for this one. You even created the tear!"

The Lord looked at the Angel and smiled and said, "I'm afraid you are wrong again. I created the woman, but she created the tear!"

Author Unknown

10. PAID IN FULL

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB-VALUE: Gratitude, contentment

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted. As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautiful, wrapped gift box. Curious, but somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold. Angrily, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money you give me a Bible?" and stormed out of the house, leaving the Bible.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realized his father was very old and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen Him since that graduation day. But before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away and willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things. When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw the still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse, Matt 7:11, "And if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children how much more shall your Heavenly Father which is in Heaven, give to those who ask Him?" As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation and the words...**PAID IN FULL.**



11. THE WOODEN BOWL

VALUE: Love , Peace

SUB-VALUE: Patience, understanding

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and a four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together nightly at the dinner table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating rather difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped the glass often milk spilled on the tablecloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about grandfather," said the son. I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor. So the husband and wife set a small table in the corner.

There, grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner at the dinner table. Since grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

Sometimes when the family glanced grandfather's direction, he had a tear in his eye as he ate alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food. The four-year-old watched it all in silence.



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One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and mama to eat your food from when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table.

For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled. Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes ever observe, their ears ever listen, and their minds ever process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently provide a happy home atmosphere for family members, they

will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives. The wise parent realizes that every day that building blocks are being laid for the child's future.

Let us all be wise builders and role models. Take care of yourself, ... and those you love, ... today, and everyday.

12. WHEN WILL MY FINGERS GROW BACK?

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE: Forgiveness, understanding

A man came out of his home to admire his new truck. To his puzzlement, his three-year-old son was happily hammering dents into the shiny paint.

The man ran to his son, knocked him away, and hammered the little boy's hands into a pulp as punishment. When the father calmed down, he rushed his son to the hospital.

Although the doctor tried desperately to save the crushed bones, he finally had to amputate the fingers from both the boy's hands. When the boy woke up from the surgery & saw his bandaged stumps, he innocently said, "Daddy, I'm sorry about your truck." Then he asked, "But when are my fingers going to grow back?"



The father went home and committed suicide.

Think about the story the next time you see someone spill milk at a dinner table or hear a baby crying. Think first before you lose your patience with someone u love. Trucks can be repaired. Broken bones & hurt feelings often can't. Too often we fail to recognize the difference between the person and the performance. People make mistakes. We are allowed to make mistakes. But the actions we take while in a rage will haunt us forever.

Pause and ponder. Think before you act. Be patient. Understand and love. **By: author unknown**

13. THE STRANGER

VALUE: Truth

SUB-VALUE: Discernment, discrimination

A few months before I was born, my dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

As I grew up I never questioned his place in our family. In my young mind, each member had a special niche. My brother, Bill, five years my senior, was my example. Fran, my younger sister, gave me an opportunity to play 'big brother' and develop the art of teasing. My parents were complementary instructors-Mom taught me to love the word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it, but the stranger was our storyteller. He could weave the most fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries and comedies were daily conversations. He could hold our whole family spell-bound for hours each evening. If I wanted to know about politics, history, or science, he knew it all. He knew about the past, understood the present, and seemingly could predict the future. The pictures he could draw were so lifelike that I would often laugh or cry as I watched. He was like a friend to the whole family. The stranger was our storyteller.

He took Dad, Bill and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars. My brother and I were deeply impressed by John Wayne in particular. The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind- but sometimes Mom would quietly get up-while the rest of us were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places-go to her room, read her Bible and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that the stranger would leave.

You see, my dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but this stranger never felt obligation to honour them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house-not from us, from our friends, or adults. Our long time visitor, however, used occasional four letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge the stranger was never confronted.

My dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home - not even for cooking, but the stranger felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often. He made cigarettes look tasty, cigars manly, and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (probably too much & too freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man-woman relationship were influenced by the stranger. As I look back, I believe it was the grace of God that the stranger did not influence us more. Time after time he opposed the values of my parents. Yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave.

More than thirty years have passed since the stranger moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive. He is not nearly so intriguing to my Dad as he was in those early years, but if I were to walk into my parents' den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures.

His name? We always just called him T.V.



14. THE TWO SPELLS – GOOD MANNERS

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB-VALUE: Good manners

There was once a rather amusing King. It was very unusual. No matter how many times he told people to do things, they would never obey him. As he was also a peaceful and just King, who didn't want to punish or imprison anyone, he ended up with no authority. So, the King decided to get a great wizard to come up with a magic potion which would get people to obey him. The old wizard - the wisest man in the kingdom - cast a thousand spells and made just as many potions. They produced some interesting results, like a fighting snail, or a dancing ant... but he couldn't find a way to get people to obey the King.

A young man, who was passing through, heard about the problem, and went quickly to the palace, telling the King that he knew the solution. The King seemed excited, and the young man gave him two small pieces of parchment, with incredibly colourful writing on them.

- "These are the spells that I have prepared for you, your highness. Use the first before saying that which you want your subjects to do and use the second when they have done it. A smile will indicate that the person remains under your power. Do this, and the spell will last forever."

Everyone was intrigued, curious to hear the spells, especially the King. Before using them, he read them several times to himself, trying to memorise them. A servant was passing by, carrying a large turkey in his arms. The King said to him, - "Please, Apolonio, come here and let me see that magnificent turkey."

Apolonio, surprised by the King's kindness, and never having heard him say 'please' before, approached the King. The King, and everyone else there, was surprised by how effective the spell had proven. The King, after looking at the turkey with little interest, said, - "Thank you, Apolonio, you may go."

And the servant left, smiling. It had worked! And, even better, Apolonio remained under the King's power, just as the young man had said! The grateful King festooned the young man with riches, and the young man decided to continue on his journey.

But before he left, the old wizard approached him, asking him where he had gotten his extraordinary magical powers, begging the man to share them with him. The young man, who was nothing more than an intelligent teacher, told the wizard the truth:

-"My magic does not lie in those worthless parchments which I wrote on arriving at the palace. I got my magic from school as a child. My teacher constantly repeated that with good manners you could get anything. And he was right. Your good King only needed good manners and some politeness to get just what he wanted."

The wizard, understanding the truth of this, spent that night destroying all his contraptions, and magical junk. He replaced them with a good book on manners, ready to continue educating his blunt and impolite King.

Author.. Pedro Pablo Sacristán



15 STORY: A RAY OF MOONLIGHT-RESPECT

VALUE: Non-violence

SUB-VALUE: Service to others, appreciation

The forest wolf spent his nights howling at the moon. He was making fun of her, of how old she was, how slowly she moved, and how little light she had. In the same forest, when the howling had stopped, the little hedgehog would come out to console the moon.

One day, both the wolf and the hedgehog were far from home and were caught unawares by a great storm. When the storm subsided, both animals were lost. As the moon came out, the wolf began his usual howling, while the hedgehog was feeling sad and frightened at being lost.

Before long the hedgehog heard a voice calling him, but he couldn't see anyone around. It was the moon, who was so grateful for the hedgehog's constant help and advice, that she wanted to help him find his way home. So, the moon gathered up all her light into one single ray, to help show the hedgehog how to get back safely.

The hedgehog arrived home in the early hours, while the wolf remained lost, out in the darkness, and scared to death.

Only then did he realise that all his rudeness to the moon had been pointless and cruel. The moon didn't shine for him until the wolf asked for forgiveness for his bad attitude and promised not to bother anyone again like that.

Author Unknown



16. THE KING IS MISSING

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB-VALUE: Cleanliness and Hygiene

There was once a boy whose parents were the custodians of an impressive old castle. The place was full of old paintings, arms and armour. One day, the boy noticed something strange about one of the main paintings. Normally, it showed one of the old Kings, with sceptre in hand, standing next to his son and some members of the court. But the King had disappeared from the painting.



The boy was very worried by this, and he thought he must have made some mistake; but a while later he walked past the painting once more and noticed that the sceptre had been left there by the King and was leaning over. The boy was intrigued. Even more so when, soon after, he saw that the angle of the sceptre had increased. At that rate, in a few hours it would end up hitting the prince on the head. So, the boy started looking throughout the castle for the missing King.

Finally, he found him in one of the castle bathrooms, quietly enjoying a wonderful bubble bath in the biggest bathtub in the whole building. The boy was speechless. On seeing his shock, the King explained to him that he had spent years and years hanging on the walls of that castle, and no one had cleaned the dust off him; not even once. He had gotten so dirty that he couldn't stand it a second more and had had to run off to get a bath.

When the boy had recovered from the surprise, he respectfully explained to the King what was about to happen with the sceptre and the prince. The King hurried out of the bath, to return to his place in the painting, thanking the boy for the warning, and begging him to ask his parents to clean the paintings every now and again.

But the boy didn't need to ask his parents. From that day on, he himself cleaned and cared for all the paintings and sculptures in that castle, making sure that none of the figures would ever again have to escape to have a good bath.

Author: Pedro Pablo Sacristán

17. THE CARELESS CLOWN

VALUE: Right conduct

SUB-VALUE: Responsibility and care for things

There was once a clown named Lemon. He was a lot of fun, but also very careless. Whenever he did anything, he almost always ended up tearing his jacket, getting a hole in his sock, or ripping the knee of his trousers. Everyone said he should take more care, but Lemon found that really boring. So, one day, he had the happy idea of buying himself a sewing machine. This machine was so fantastic that it sewed everything up within a moment. It seemed like Lemon wouldn't have to worry about his things anymore.

Soon, the most important day in Lemon's life arrived. It was the day when everyone in town prepared a party for him, in celebration of Lemon's many years of service in making the citizens chuckle. On that day he wouldn't have to wear his colourful clown suit. That day he would be dressed like anyone else; very elegantly in his suit, and everyone commenting on his smart appearance.

However, the night before, he had a look in his closet, and there wasn't a single suit in good condition. They were all ripped and torn, with dozens of stitching marks. Lemon couldn't possibly go to the party dressed in those. Well, Lemon was sharp and quick-witted, and he solved this problem by attending the gala celebration in his usual clown suit. That definitely amused the audience, but Lemon wasn't as keen on it. He had dreamed of being, just for one day in the year, the hero of the show, and not just the clown.

Very early the next day, Lemon replaced all those damaged old suits, and since then, he has looked after his clothes with great care. He realised that using short-term remedies ends up being no remedy at all.

Author: Unknown



18. FOREVER A MONSTER

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE : Kindness, Forgiveness And Generosity

Once upon a time, there was a boy who was so badly behaved that the Chief Fairy of the land came by to punish him. The Fairy turned the boy into a monster, in a spell which meant the boy could only escape from being a monster if he managed to seriously frighten someone. At first the boy thought this would be easy, but he soon found that the children in his area were very difficult to scare.

A long time passed, and he got more and more fed up; so he decided to look for some easy prey: a boy who was well known as a sucker. To ensure success, he studied this boy for some time, following him wherever he went, and in passing, seeing all the good works he did. His target gave to charity, played with the children in hospital, helped old people...

Finally, he had fully prepared the best fright ever. A fright that would free him from monster hood forever, and leave that good, unsuspecting boy, scared stiff. However, when he went to frighten the boy, there came into his mind the images of all the people the boy had helped. The monster decided to leave the boy alone, because he realised that all his good work was without price. And if he did the boy any damage, he would be responsible for him not being able to help more people.

At that exact moment the Chief Fairy appeared and rewarded the monster's good attitude by turning him back into a boy.

And that boy, who had been so badly behaved, became very kind, and a good friend of the boy he had been about to frighten to death.

Pedro Pablo Sacristán



19. PILLARS OF THE EARTH

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB-VALUE: Respect



There was once a boy who always treated his mother horribly, shouting at her, insulting her. It didn't matter to him how sad he made her.

One day, without knowing how, he woke up in an immense and lonely

place. He was sitting on a rock from which four huge pillars rose up into the sky, appearing to support the entire world.

He was all alone, but soon an enormous flock of crows with beaks made of steel landed on the rock and set about violently chipping away at it.

After the crows left, a mysterious door in one of the pillars opened, and through it came a charming and pretty girl.

- "Have you come to help us? That's great! We need all the people we can get."

The boy was puzzled, and spotting his confusion, the little girl explained.

- "So you don't know where you are? This is the centre of the Earth. These pillars support the whole planet, and this rock keeps the pillars in place."

- "And how can I help you?" said the boy, confused.

- "Well, to help look after the rock, of course. Anyone can see by your face that you're the best person for the job," answered the girl,

- "The birds you saw are only increasing in number, and if we don't look after this rock, it will eventually crumble and everything will come crashing down."

- "And what do you see in my face?!" exclaimed the boy, surprised.

- "I've never looked after a rock in my whole life!"

- "But you'll learn how, even if you've never done it. Here, look in this mirror," said the girl, holding one in front of the boy's face.

The boy could clearly see he now had the face of a bird, and his nose was gradually turning into steel. There he stood, shocked and worried, not a word passing his lips.

"All those crows used to be children like you and I," explained the girl, "but they decided not to look after the rock. Now that they're older they've turned into evil birds; all they do is destroy. Up to now, you haven't done much to look after it, but now that you know, will you help me to preserve all this?"

She said all this with a smile, taking his hand in hers.

The boy still didn't quite understand all this. He looked closely at the pillars and could see that each one was made of thousands and thousands of little figurines, representing the best virtues: sincerity, effort, honesty, generosity...

Closely inspecting the ground beneath him, he could see that the enormous rock was made up of little instances of children showing respect to their mothers, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and old people.

What the crows were trying to do was cover over these instances by carving out scenes of shouting and insults. Next to his feet, he could see his own little carving, representing the last time he shouted at his mother. That image, in such a strange place, made him realise that the only thing keeping the columns standing was respect. Respect was sustaining the world.

The boy, filled with regret, stayed there and looked after the rock for many days. He carried out his task joyfully, going without sleep to repel every crow attack. He carried on until, exhausted by his efforts, he collapsed; completely spent.

When he awoke he was back in his bed at home, and he didn't know whether it had all been a dream. However, what he was now sure of was that no crow would ever again get the chance to carve a picture of him shouting at his mother.

20. THE CHAIN OF SMILES

VALUE: Love

SUB-VALUE: Happiness and Kindness

One day, Miss Ellis gave her pupils a new assignment: an assignment on happiness. Her pupils would be "happiness collectors" and were to see what would happen when they tried to bring happiness to those around them. As part of their assignment, all the students did really delightful, wonderful things, but what Carla Chalmers did left everyone gobsmacked. Several days after the assignment had been handed out, Carla turned up carrying a big sack.

"Here in this bag, I have all the happiness I've collected so far," she said, smiling.

On seeing this, everyone was filled with expectation, but Carla didn't want to show anyone what was in the sack. Instead, she pulled out a small box and gave it to her teacher. When Miss Ellis had taken the box, Carla took an instant camera out of her own pocket and stood with it at the ready.

"Open it, Miss Ellis."

The teacher slowly opened the box and looked inside. A big smile shone on her face, and at that moment Carla snapped a photo. Carla's photo popped out the camera, and she offered it to Miss Ellis along with a sheet of paper. The teacher read the paper in silence, and when she had finished she gestured over at the sack.

"Oh, so it's... "

"Yes!" interrupted Carla, undoing the knot which sealed the sack, "It's a great big pile of smiles!"

She opened the sack and hundreds of photos fell out, all of different smiles, each one of them beautiful.

The rest of the class tried to work out how Carla had managed to create such a great big chain of happiness. All there was in the box was a photo of a big smile. But everyone who had seen it had felt happiness being transmitted to them, and in return, without even thinking about it, every person had responded with a smile of their own.

With all her classmates now smiling, Carla took a photo of each one of them. She gave them their own photo along with a slip of paper, which asked them to do the same with other people, and to send a copy of the photos to her home address. And for months afterwards, Carla's post box was always full to the brim with photos of happy, smiling people.

And so it was that she managed to spread understanding of the simple truth that every time you smile you are sending a gift to the world.



Author: Pedro Pablo Sacristán

21. THE JAR OF LIFE

VALUE: Truth

SUB-VALUE: Discrimination, self-awareness

When things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hrs in a day doesn't seem enough, remember the mayonnaise jar and coffee story.

A professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class commenced, he silently picked up a large mayonnaise jar and began to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They all agreed that it was.

Then the professor picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He rolled the jar from side to side so that the pebbles could settle into the spaces between the golf balls. He again asked the class if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand of course filled up all the empty spaces. He then asked once more if the jar was full, and the student answered with a unanimous "YES".

The professor then picked up two cups of coffee from under the desk and poured both into the jar, effectively filling all the empty spaces between the sand particles. The students all laughed. "Now" said the professor after the laughter subsided "I want you to recognise that this jar represents your life. The golf ball represents all the important things; family, children, health, friends, God and/or spirituality and your favourite passions, things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, house or car. The sand is everything else -the small stuff. "If you put the sand in first, there's no space for the pebbles or golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have time for the things that are important to you.

So, pay attention to the things that are important to you.play with your children, take your partner out to dinner, play a round of golf.... There will always be time to clean the house and fix the drain."

“Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand”.

One of the students raised her hand and asked what the coffee represented. The professor smiled and said “I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full life may seem, there’s always time for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend. “



22. DUCK OR EAGLE? You decide.

VALUE: Right Conduct

SUB_VALUE: Good manners, respect,

I was at the airport when a taxi driver approached me. The first thing I noticed in the cab was a phrase, I soon read: - Duck or Eagle? You decide.

The second thing I noticed was a clean, shiny cab, the driver well dressed, white shirt and well pressed pants, with a tie. The taxi driver got out, opened the door for me and said: "I am John, your chauffeur.

While I'm putting your luggage away, I'd like you to read on this card what my mission is."

On the card was written: John's Mission - To get my clients to their destination quickly, safely and economically, while providing a friendly environment.

I was impressed. The interior of the cab was equally clean. John asked me: "Would you like some coffee?" Joking with him I said: "No, I'd rather have a juice. He immediately replied: "no problem.

I have a thermos with regular juice and diet juice, as well as water," he also told me:

"if you wish to read, I have today's newspaper and also some magazines."

As the race began John told me: "These are the radio stations I have and this is the repertoire they play." As if that wasn't enough, João even asked me if the temperature of the air conditioning was good. Then he told me what the best route to my destination was and if I wanted to talk to him or if he preferred that I not be interrupted. I asked: "Do you always serve your customers like this?"

"No," he replied. "Not always. Only in the last two years. My first few years as a taxi driver I spent most of my time complaining just like the other taxi drivers. One day I listened to a doctor who was a specialist in personal development. He wrote a book called: Who you are makes the difference! He said: If you get up in the morning expecting to have a lousy day, you certainly will.

Don't be a DUCK! Be an eagle! Ducks just make noise and complain, eagles soar above the pack.

I was all the time making noise and complaining. So I decided to change my attitudes and be an eagle. I looked at the other cabs and drivers. The dirty cabs, the unfriendly drivers, and the dissatisfied customers. I decided to make some changes. Since my customers responded well, I made a few more changes. In my first year as an eagle, I doubled my turnover. This year, I have already quadrupled it. You are lucky you took my cab today. I am no longer at the cab stand.

My customers book through my cell phone or send me a message. If I can't pick up, I get a trusted "Eagle" taxi driver friend to do the job."

John was different. He offered a limousine service in a regular cab. John, the taxi driver, decided to stop making noise and complaining like ducks do and started flying over the group like eagles do.

It doesn't matter whether you work in an office, with maintenance, a teacher, a civil servant, a politician, an executive, an employee, a freelancer, or a taxi driver!

How do you behave? Are you dedicated to making noise and complaining? Or are you elevating yourself above the others?

Remember:
THE DECISION
IS YOURS! That
key only opens
from the inside!
AND YOU
HAVE LESS
AND LESS
TIME TO
CHANGE.



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