

# LESSON 4

## Values Can Transform Our Relationships

### Values play a pivotal role in our behavior

Personal values may be defined as a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life.

Community values (norms or traditions) may be defined as important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a community about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable.

Values have a major influence on a person's attitudes, emotions, motivations and behavior and serve as guidelines in all situations

### Values may be organized into ten major categories that apply across cultures<sup>1</sup>

- **Self-Direction:** independent thought and action—choosing, creating, exploring
- **Stimulation:** excitement, novelty and challenge in life
- **Hedonism:** pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself
- **Achievement:** personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards
- **Power:** social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources
- **Security:** safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships and of self
- **Conformity:** restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
- **Tradition:** respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides
- **Benevolence:** preserving and enhancing the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact (the "in-group")
- **Universalism:** understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection of the welfare of all people and for nature

Cultures, groups and individuals have different value "priorities" or "hierarchies." Moreover, each of these values has the potential to either strengthen or weaken relationships and to either cause conflict or promote peace.



Each of us brings  
to our job, whatever  
it is, our lifetime of  
experience and  
our values.

- Sandra Day O'Connor



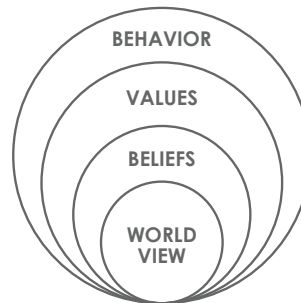
## Values arise from our worldview and guide our behavior

A worldview is a way of looking at the world and understanding our place in it. It is our perspective on reality and seeks to answer three fundamental questions: (1) where did we come from and why are we here? (2) what has gone wrong with the world? (3) what can we do to make it better?

Pantheism is the dominate worldview in Asia, and polytheism is prevalent in areas of the world that are predominantly tribal. Theism is the most widely accepted worldview in the United States, with 67% of Americans identifying as Christians, 2% as Jewish and 1% as Muslim. Even so, few Americans have consciously developed a specific worldview, and many of them are sympathetic to aspects of pantheism, naturalism, humanism and postmodernism. See detailed definitions at [rw360values.org/6worldviews](http://rw360values.org/6worldviews).

Different worldviews yield different values.<sup>2</sup>

- Worldview - What is real?
- Beliefs - What is true?
- Values - What is good or best?
- Behavior - What is done?



**Our choices are shaped by what we believe is real and true, right and wrong, good and beautiful. Our choices are shaped by our worldview.**  
- Chuck Colson

## Worldviews and values are often adopted randomly from a variety of sources

- Our surrounding culture
- Family and teachers
- Friends and peers
- Social media
- Religion
- Philosophy
- Books, magazines and movies
- Heroes and role models

<sup>2</sup> The Kwast Model of Culture

## Values have an enormous impact on our relationships

- They determine our stated and actual priorities (time, money, effort).
- They shape our character.
- They strengthen or weaken our motivation.
- They motivate us to resist harmful emotional impulses.
- They stimulate personal and corporate growth.
- They inspire confession, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- They inform negotiation and guide agreements.
- They inspire personal sacrifice.
- They stimulate the transference of values to others.



**Fulfilling traditional obligations, building strong personal relationships, succeeding at work, supporting family are far more important to life satisfaction than material living standards.**  
- Oren Cass  
The Once and Future Worker

## Our personal values sometimes conflict with one another

- Family closeness vs. professional or financial success
- Generosity vs. materialism, comfort or security
- Team player vs. personal advancement

## Our values sometimes conflict with those of our family, employer or community

- Immediate family vs. extended family/in-laws
- Family vs. employer
- Faith vs. political/cultural norms

## Our stated values don't always match our operating values

- Personal disconnects (we act contrary to our stated or aspirational values)
- Corporate disconnects (inconsistency leads to confusion, fear, cynicism, mistrust, ineffectiveness)



### Three ways to harness the power of your values

1. Honestly identify your operating values and evaluate their impact on your life and relationships.
2. Align your operating values more closely with your stated or aspirational values.
3. Seek a closer alignment between your personal values and those of your family, employer and community, without compromising your conscience.

The GPS acrostic in Lesson 6 provides practical ways to implement these changes.