

Do we honour our values?

Last Updated Monday, 13 November 2006

I think we would all agree that if something is of value or is important to us - really important - we make time for it. New lovers desire to spend time together and explore the excitement of intimacy and discovery - even if it is self-discovery in the mirror of a lover's eye. Serious students spend hours studying, pouring over books, making notes and study summaries. Serious athletes spend mind-numbing hours in physical training for no other reason than that this is a priority in their lives.

It's simple - if something is important enough we make time for it. The more important it is, the more time we make available.

But this simple acknowledgement or theory has an uncomfortable corollary. By extrapolation, we should then spend a large (read LARGE) portion of our day doing things that are important to us; things that we value doing. That does not mean a hedonistic pursuit of sensory pleasure - we are talking about spending the better part of our conscious day doing things that are important - taking care of our body, mind and spirit and those of our loved ones.

Spending time with family, doing chores because we see the value in helping out, encouraging friends or colleagues, finally getting around to that hobby, course, degree Making amends and making friends sharing, caring, nurturing, loving self and others.

What we truly value in our lives is shown by what we think and what we do.

And the stark truth is that our lives very seldom honour our values.

Take food as an example:

We eat, driven by the pleasure of taste, and not for the succour and nourishment of the meal - and in doing so we imbibe chemicals that slowly (generally) destroy the body and possibly also the mind.

Food comes in tins, boxes and plastic containers - it has lost its connection with earth, and in most cases lost most of its freshness, goodness and nutrients by the time we get around to eating it. Meat comes shrink-wrapped in polystyrene trays with no connection to animals - in fact, now days, meat and many other foods come pre-cooked for our convenience, with most of the nutritional value lost.

Even the way food is cultivated - for mass production and mass profit for the farmers and distributors - there's little concern for the healthy nurturing of plants and animals in order to produce healthy nutrient-rich food. Chemicals of all sorts are sprayed onto crops or force-fed to animals to optimise production yields - nothing else. And consumers rejoice in the lower price that mass production allows them to pay for goods and continue to poison themselves with a smile of gratitude on their faces.

We fail either to think and question or to honour our values at almost every turn.

Instead, we worship the latest fashion trend, and unquestioningly jump on the treadmill of work, chasing money in order to purchase the dreams that advertisers and the Joneses have created for us. We unthinkingly spend evenings gyrating to loud music, drinking alcohol and worse because it is the cool thing to do. In most cases, it is just a mindless activity that provides a thankful distraction from taking a good hard look at ourselves and our lives.

We fail to make time to get to know ourselves. To dream our own dreams and to pursue our own goals

We waste time vegetating in front of the television, pretending it relaxes when all we really want is to escape our morbid reality. We waste time making empty promises and emptier excuses about things that suddenly became too much effort to do. We think we deserve time off.

Surely if we are spending our time doing things that are important to us, there's little need to take a break. If our lives were spent doing what we felt we wanted or needed to do, why would we need a vacation. Vacation time would be spent doing more of the same. Not because we're workaholics, but because there's nothing we'd rather be doing.

If we structured our days to incorporate a balance of activity, rest, mental stimulation, time with loved ones, time on self development; time with friends, and time alone! Provided it is balanced there should be no need to break a structured, workable and desirable routine - except to incorporate the balance of experiencing something new.

Stop and think about your life for a moment. Do you make the time to do the things that are important to you?

What gods have you erected in your own life that you spend most of your time worshipping?

Is it the god of comfort, pleasantness and expediency? Have you chained your soul to your boss or the company you work for, or your own business? Do you honour yourself or the pressures of a conforming society where being mediocre and doing the bare minimum to get by are seen as the ideal target?

Do you exercise your power of choice? Do you ever sit still, alone in the silence, to see that everyday - at every turn - you are facing a choice: The choice to honour yourself and your unique set of values. The choice to become the best you can be, moment to moment.

All it takes is to question your choices - moment by moment - everyday. Is what you have decided to do now - with this moment - in accordance with your principles and values? This article has not been published. All rights available - please enquire on info@sharondavis.co.za