

HUMAN VALUES FOUNDATION

VALUES-THEMED ARTICLE: January 2014

VALUES mindfulness makes for positive mindsets

V	Vision
A	Attitude
L	Love
U	Understanding
E	Education
S	Service

Children and young people enjoy exploring the role of values in their daily lives because of the excitement as they begin to see more relevance in what they are learning. This awakening can help them experience the benefits of a positive mindset and how working on personal qualities, including resilience and patience, contributes to a greater likelihood of achieving their dreams and goals.

Many of us are probably not consciously aware of the degree to which we are driven by what we treasure and feel is important - in short, what we value. However, being more mindful of these influences is empowering.

A motivational, weekly VALUES exercise

To help children and young people strive to be the best that they can be, they need to start with a vision of themselves.

Here is a simple framework that provides a brief and regular focus on personal progress using the VALUES letters as prompts. It helps to make each day as meaningful and productive as possible.

During the course of a week the exercise captures the imagination of participants, allowing their ideas to shape their views of life and to pursue high and lasting goals, both in the week ahead and in the longer term.

Keeping a journal helps with the daily discipline and enables children and young people to look back with pride on what they have accomplished.

Monday	V	Vision - personal, relationships, society, environment
Tuesday	A	Attitude - the power of a positive mental attitude
Wednesday	L	Love - of all things beautiful and uplifting
Thursday	U	Understanding - oneself, others, cultures, big pictures
Friday	E	Education - opportunities opened up & lifelong learning
Saturday	S	Service - giving back to others & society
Sunday		<i>A time to reflect and resolve to go on achieving</i>

Monday - V - Vision

Encourage learners to visualize themselves succeeding. They may be able to identify one or more goals for the week ahead or perhaps over a longer timescale, such as by half-term or the end of term or by the end of the academic year or a calendar year and, for older pupils, what they would like to see themselves doing in 2 or 3 years' time.

Invite them to look back over the past week and then review the visions they have for themselves so as to enable them to steadily move forward in realizing their full potential.

This goal-setting website may prove useful - www.liftinternational.com

Tuesday - A - Attitude

Since a person's attitude is a strong indicator of his or her behaviour, it is helpful for children to see how, by adopting a positive mental attitude, either on their own or as a member of a group, they can continue to look on the bright side of life and overcome obstacles or setbacks.

Using someone's beliefs, emotions or behaviour highlighted by the press or on TV, discuss real-life examples of the effects of attitudes and how they have shaped what has happened to individuals, relationships, groups of people or treatment of the environment in the last week or more.

Participants may find it helpful to understand the power of attitudes by evaluating and recording how their own attitudes to, for example, a person, object or issue, have impacted themselves during the past week or so.

Wednesday - L - Love

The words, "Love makes the world go round." come from a song in a musical called 'Carnival' first performed in 1961. We can all identify expressions of love, giving and forgiving that have enriched and enhanced our daily lives.

To encourage children and young people to actively bring love into their lives each day, let them focus on something happy and uplifting, such as the short recording of "[What a wonderful world](#)" and then talk about different aspects of love, including compassion and empathy, and how love can bring about remarkable changes, acts of courage and transform situations.

To foster love in action and demonstrate how our own happiness is inextricably bound up with others' happiness, take a look at some of the ideas from [The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#), which inspires people to practise kindness and pass it on to others.

Thursday - U - Understanding

Promoting understanding helps children and young people to reach out to others and connect with them on a deeper level. Encourage thinking about personal 'light bulb' moments and the feelings when something suddenly became clear.

As individuals, we all have different experiences and opinions. Talk about recent events that illustrate the effects of gaining a greater understanding and examples of qualities, such as being a good listener, seeing other peoples' points of view and anticipating their needs.

Invite participants to imagine the benefits from developing the ability to seek harmonious resolutions, forgiving and managing conflict - bullying or Nelson Mandela's example could be fertile starting points. Discuss the importance of trying to understand others' perspectives and the priorities and values of different groups within societies.

Invite suggestions on how best to respond to various and sometimes opposing demands on the environment, thinking about the bigger picture and a longer-term view of likely outcomes.

Friday - E - Education

Talk about how valuing education and hard work opens up all kinds of opportunities, with illustrations of strivings, resilience and achievements, such as US President Abraham Lincoln being raised in a poor family and deciding to go outside and sit under a street lamp when it was dark so that he could read by that light and further his own education.

Encourage children and young people to think about the scope of what they are learning and how they are gradually acquiring more and more useful life skills, knowledge and the ability to enjoy their own talents and interests. A site such as [Global Partnership for Education](#) may provide some thought-provoking ideas to demonstrate the relevance and value of education.

Saturday - S - Service

Encourage learners to look into how much joy, satisfaction and fulfilment people derive from being of service to others and how it adds meaning to their lives. Invite them to explore how they could offer a helping hand, ranging from simply assisting with chores at home to alleviating distress after nature has unleashed its powerful forces somewhere in the world.

Saturdays, perhaps away from the school environment, may provide some expansive, real-life opportunities for learners to be of service to others. Stimulate investigation into teamwork and how creatively combining people's different abilities, talents and support can be key to successful outcomes.

Sunday - Moments of quiet reflection

As Queen Elizabeth said in her 2013 Christmas Message, "We all need to get the balance right between action and reflection. With so many distractions, it is easy to forget to pause and take stock."

In today's dynamic, exacting world, much can be gained from regularly easing the pressure by finding some time to be still and quiet, consciously appreciating the wonders of nature and our senses of sight, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. This space enables reflection upon the extent to which our habits are serving us well and how we can learn more from the past, awaken enjoyment of the present and refresh our plans for the future.

Try out this simple VALUES exercise for a while - the practice can transform youngsters' wellbeing, happiness and the quality of their learning.