

# Creating Values-Based Organizations

By  
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I recently had a conversation with a good friend on why people do and don't want to change. I struggle with that question all the time. In the past I would have spoken about how entrenched humans are, how we have been programmed into our current frame of mind, how our life experiences affect the way we look at the world. But a new insight has opened my eyes

Most people do change. They change their jobs, their geography, and their neighborhoods, their friends, all with the hopes of improving their lifestyle or finding happiness. When these changes don't deliver the intended result, people get frustrated with the whole concept of change. For those who have had good fortune during change, they have formulated an "I got to be me" attitude and have created walls around themselves to protect their fleeting bounty.

A majority of people try to alter their environment with frustrating and less-than-desired results. So, their tendency to change diminishes as they get older.

The problem with "change attempts" is that they are superficial. We feel a new car, a higher title, a better look, more rigid rules, a jet setting lifestyle or more money will make us feel better, live better, work better. Our entire society over the past 50 years has been based on the importance more is better. And who among us can honestly agree that this principle has truly benefited any of us?

Today, more people search for meaningful and purposeful lives. When we only look outside ourselves for the answers, we become disappointed and discouraged. Jeanine Just, a true Renaissance woman and success coach, said "I'm firmly convinced it's time millions of people stop searching for meaning or happiness... and experience it each day. It's time for people to 'tune out the old success path' ... get in touch with the things that really matter to them... and then design a meaningful life around their values."

The key word is VALUES. Until one really is in touch with their key values, living conflict, pursuing meaningless goals, increasing their stress levels, or worse is often the result.

Thoreau said "People lead lives of quiet desperation," and those same people compose all of our world's organizations. If people aren't in tune with their inner-most areas of real importance, then how can they be top performers? How many of us can live in or work but not in our life, or vice-versa? No wonder our society has grown more dysfunctional as we have become more "advanced."

It has been surveyed that 75 percent of all workers in America are not engaged in their work, do not enjoy their work (Gallup management Journal 2009). If you own or manage a firm today are

those acceptable numbers? How can organizations function without most people playing active, informed, interested and meaningful role? This is the seminal explanation for our lack of real effectiveness, progress and success in our time.

In the media and from politicians I hear the words family values and American values bantered around. Yet most people do not even know their own personal values. Not mom and dad's values, not your best friend's values, not your spouse's values, not even your boss's values...your own values. Just who are you, what do you want and what is really important to you! These questions must be answered before any lasting, meaningful change will occur in organizations and in our society.

I recently put myself through this searching process and believe me it is not easy, quick or predictable. I now have a more focused, enriched and purposeful life mission that makes the pieces of my life puzzle come together more easily. I have linked my vocation to my avocation, and my work now is totally meaningful. When people have a deep understanding of their values, those few ideals that are truly important to them, the energy and results of their work become geometrically positive. Imagine what an entire organization of people working together toward the same purpose can accomplish?

The process of establishing personal values is preeminent for lasting change. Organizations that believe in people development should first start on the values square. When a company's people know what is important to them, they can then conduct the process of collectively sharing their values. Those values that weave through the group form the tapestry of the group's common vision. This is the true meaning of Visionary Leadership – when everyone in the organization has a hand in generating and carrying out the reason for the organization's existence.

This collective purpose breathes real meaning into everyone's participation. You now have an organization where everyone wants to be there and has the opportunity to make a difference in their company and themselves. People want to be a part of something bigger than themselves, but they also want to feel like what they are doing really matters.

If you want to have an organization that taps into the unlimited potential and energy of people, begin by evaluating values. Clarify those things of "to-die-for" importance. Then direct that energy and enthusiasm toward meaningful objectives so you and your organization can succeed beyond measure.

A great formula I use to connect the importance of values is: Passion + Values + Vision + Strengths + Purpose = Meaningful Success!

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