

Focusing on Management in the Family:

YOUR VALUES, YOUR GUIDING STARS

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VALUES

Achievement

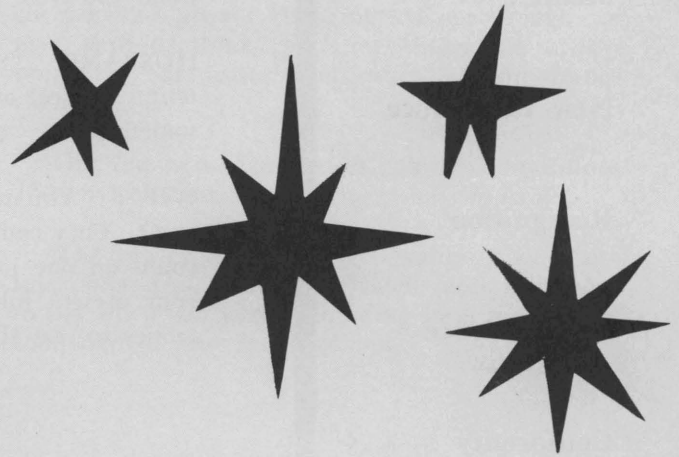
Work

Family Unity

Beauty

Comfort

Convenience



Values and goals are essential parts of management. Yet how do we grasp them, apply them to living and to reality?

We hear this question often and know that values and goals are not so easy to understand and use as a cake recipe or credit formula. Yet they are the core of our being.

Let's define each.

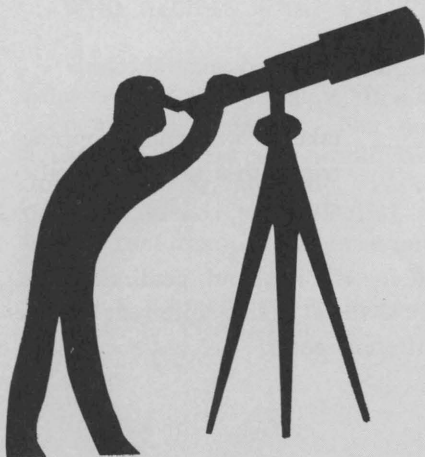
A *goal* is an aim, purpose or objective a person strives to obtain.

A *value* is that which a person holds as important, good or worthwhile.

Values and goals are related. Values are the *whys* behind our goals. For instance, your goal may be to plant a big hedge around your yard. Why? Because you value your privacy.

Maybe your goal is to be president of a certain club. Why? Perhaps because recognition is important to you. When you know what you value, you choose goals in harmony with those values. If you value conformity, your goals will be different than if you value individuality.

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Prestige

Leisure

Efficiency

Economy

Security

New Experience

Recognition

Independence

Conformity

Rationality

Physical Health

Mental Health

Privacy

Safety

Equality

Knowledge

Perhaps it would help to illustrate values and goals with a conversation a couple might have. Is it possible to draw some conclusions about their values and goals?

HUSBAND: "I would like to take that new job. I know it doesn't pay much more, but I could be my own boss. You don't seem to understand what that means to a person in his work. Besides, it would give me a chance to travel a lot, meet new people, important and interesting people."

WIFE: "I wouldn't like to have you traveling around so much. It's dangerous for one thing, and I'd be home alone so much. We couldn't do a thing as a family because you'd be gone most of the time and tired when you were home."

HUSBAND: "Sure, I'd be gone some, but my job would be *important*. I'd feel as if I were contributing something and accomplishing something!"

WIFE: "You might think that now, but what about 15 years from now? They could decide to drop you cold. I'd rather know we could count on one job for the rest of our lives. Besides, if you stay with your present job, you might get a raise sooner, and it takes a lot of money to rear three children."

GOALS ARE INVOLVED?

Considering the values you believe the wife holds, what goals from among the following would she choose?

- buy a fancy car
- putter around the house during vacation
- join the country club
- serve as foster parent for orphan children until they are placed

Considering the values you believe the husband holds, what goals from among the following would he choose?

- pilot lessons
- have a yearly checkup
- redecorate the formal dining room to be a den or family room
- take a weekend shopping trip with a neighbor to the city

Are some of the goals you checked for the husband, goals the wife might also have? This is likely because their having different values does not necessarily mean they have different goals.

For example, the husband may want to join the country club because he likes prestige or recognition. The wife might also have this goal because she thinks it an opportunity for the family to swim together, play golf together and do things as a family (she values family unity). Likewise, the wife may want to have a yearly physical check-up because she values health and security. The husband may also have this because a check-up is necessary for a job he wants (he values achievement).

In the example, the husband and wife have some different values but undoubtedly share many, too. Is it possible for a married couple to be happy together if they do not share some values? Some goals?

We have seen communities work together on a project, such as Head Start, where the goal united them, but the individuals' values and reasons for working toward this goal were quite different.

We have also seen two organizations with similar values work in different ways for different goals.

These examples show that:

- values are the whys behind our actions and bases for setting goals
- we might share goals without sharing values
- we might share values without sharing goals

"We cannot have attitudes toward anything without judging, without discriminating. When we discriminate, we are in effect saying this is good and that is bad; this is helpful; that is harmful; this is right and that is wrong. Our decisions are based on our values, and our values are never more on display than they are in our choices of the things we do to satisfy ourselves."*

WHO DECIDES WHAT VALUES YOU HAVE?

Have you ever heard anyone say, "I can't decide what is important to me"? If not, you have never been around teenagers. Not only teenagers but adults and society as a whole are trying to determine what their values are. We alone must decide on our values. Our biological, psychological and social structures will influence our decisions.

*Charles K. Brightbill, *The Challenge of Leisure*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., A Spectrum Book S-67, 1960.

Socialization affects values, too. For instance, some children struggle to finance a college education, while others of comparable incomes and intelligence are quite content to work in a local factory.

"Each family must establish its own set of values, not copy a good set. Who's to say what is good for each family? The family chooses a set which is suitable to it. If it clearly knows and believes in these values, then it can establish goals which are logical to it." Author unknown.

VALUES CHANGE

Our values are a bit like our waistlines and checkbooks — always changing. Even though we may tend to think the same things are always important, at least their order of importance changes.

Our resources, experiences, family compositions and environment all influence what we value.

The life cycle really affects values, too. Consider what you would have rated most important to you when you were graduating from high school compared to your rankings now.

GOALS

All of us need the purpose and sense of direction that goals provide. They are like landmarks. Each time we reach a landmark or goal, we set our sights higher.

People need short-range as well as long-range goals. For example, farmers were timed as they plowed a field. Each was timed again when he plowed another field the same size. The second field had a flag at the end of each row—red, when he headed north; green, when he plowed south. As you probably guessed, it took each less time to plow the second field.

It's not enough to plan on owning a house or farm. Smaller, short-term goals are needed.

"Family life could go on for years without anything being done about clarifying values or establishing goals. No landlord requires an accounting of them, no assessor lists them as he does taxable property. The Internal Revenue Service requires no annual report on them. But the family that decides which are important to and best for it and then works toward achieving these goals is the family most likely to get what it really wants from life." Author unknown.

Adapted from *Values and Goals*, Home Management Newsletter. Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. October, 1966.

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