

Core Value Statement

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When someone asks what you enjoy doing, most individuals can mindlessly rattle off a handful of activities that they find entertaining. But what would they come up with when asked to define their “core values”? Would their stated enjoyable activities and core values correlate with one another? Defining ones’ core values can be a rather intricate task of self-reflection and self-understanding. While sifting through the plentiful options of values you realize what you find to be greatly important, what you wish was important to you but do not currently practice, and what you find to be insignificant. After spending some time trying to determine which values I personally define to be my “core values”, I ended up with the following top eight, respectively: happiness, family/friendships, physical fitness & health, learning, loyalty, stability, nature, and humor. For the purpose of this short paper, I will be focusing only on my top four core values.

I believe that happiness is the most important thing that I value in my daily life. One of the reasons why I love “happiness” is because the definition of what makes one feel happy is so entirely dependent on the person defining it. For some individuals’ happiness comes so simply, but for others it can be harder to find. For me, happiness comes easy. Every day I find frequent bouts of happiness with small things such as taking a walk on a Fall day, sipping on a fresh cup of coffee, or even getting a one-word text from my grandpa. One thing that really fills me with happiness is sharing the feeling with someone else and knowing that you made their day more memorable. This can occur by doing something you both enjoy together or by doing an act of kindness for a friend, family member, or stranger. Happy people have a natural gravitational pull that makes other individuals want to be around them. Happiness is infectious and creates a better

atmosphere for all of those involved. I believe that if individuals found some form of simplistic happiness within their lives or if someone is present to give them that little spark, that everyone would have a better chance of leading a more enjoyable life.

Moving forward to my second core value of family and friendships, I had a hard time choosing which one should hold the higher value, so I decided to combine them as a sole core value. I greatly cherish both my family and friends equally and if it weren't for their great influence, I would not be where I am today. Truthfully, I hadn't realized how important these relationships were to me until a time of hardship. When my parents were getting divorced the Fall I began my undergraduate degree, it seemed as though my entire world was changing. I had just moved 4 hours away from home, was adjusting to dorm living and a new town, had new teammates and an intense sports travel schedule, had to meet new friends; truly, the list of change goes on and on. Nothing felt constant and stable. The hardest part of it all was the unknown. I didn't know what to expect when I would come home for holiday breaks because my home was no longer *my home*. I ended up staying with my grandparents for a few of the weekends I had returned, mainly because I didn't feel comfortable at my old house. I frequently called my close friends and other family members while I was away at school to express my frustration, feelings, and thoughts. It was at this time that I discovered how lucky I was to have such a strong support group to help guide me through this complicated and confusing time. Family and friends have been there for me at my best and worst. Honestly, I nearly think of these terms as interchangeable. My friends are part of my family and my family are also my friends.

Branching down my list of values, we come to number three: physical fitness & health. This value transforms with each passing year, creating new meanings, but has been something that has been important to me for a very long time. As a child in sports, I stayed active and fit. My mom instilled an active lifestyle by keeping my siblings and I outside and moving. As an avid athlete in high school and college I loved staying fit and eating healthy because I wanted to maximize performance. Now that I am a retired athlete, I still find great joy in running, resistance training, walking, biking, hiking; truly, I love anything that keeps me active. What I value most about physical fitness & health is that it is your own personal means of solely benefitting yourself. Taking care of your body via nutrition and physical activity improves longevity, mental health, and overall well-being; not to mention, it is a great means for social support. It is one thing that individuals have 100% control over because every day you have the choice to make wiser decisions; and I love having that power.

As we continue on, learning comes next as my fourth core value. I value learning and knowledge greatly and I firmly believe that it is the reason I have succeeded and progressed to get to the professional position I am in. Learning has become so increasingly important to me within the past couple of years because I've come to see its true value in life. When individuals are opposed to learning and expanding their knowledge I see it as a great hindrance to their personal growth. Being the only person in my immediate family to pursue or obtain an academic degree beyond a high school diploma, it wasn't the easiest task to navigate and set-up post-secondary education. If it weren't for my friends, I would've struggled with the process a lot more than I did. Honestly, if it weren't for an athletic drive to compete collegiately, I don't know if I would've continued on with post-secondary schooling because it was not a paved road within

my family. Looking back, I would never change my decision of continuing my education because I see who I have become thanks to pursuing learning. I am much better equipped to succeed in the professional world and have a greatly improved, balanced education.

Establishing my individual core values was a great task to discover what I find to be most significant within my life. Reasoning through why one should be placed higher than another was an extremely engaging task that really encouraged self-reflection to a much greater extent than I typically partake in. Upon my self-reflection, I found that happiness, family/friendships, physical fitness & health, and learning are very important values to me and rank as my top four core values. Although I was unable to elaborate on loyalty, stability, nature, and humor within this paper, I place great value in these as well. Determining what my core values are will help guide my future behaviors and actions as well as provide purpose in my daily actions.