

Basic Humanity

How Your Emotions Guard Your Core Value

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Compassion**POWER**

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Also by Steven Stosny

*You Don't Have to Take It Anymore: Turn Your
Resentful, Angry, or Emotionally Abusive Relationship into a
Compassionate, Loving One*

The Powerful Self

*Treating Attachment Abuse:
A Compassionate Approach*

Compassionate Parenting

Manual of the Core Value Workshop

Power Quest CD-ROM for adolescents

Core Value Eating CD-ROM

This booklet will help you discover the most important things about you as a person. It will lead you to a deeper understanding of what you *value* the most about yourself and the world around you.

Most of the time your feelings about yourself are controlled by how true you are to your deepest values. In general, when you are true to your deepest values you feel good, or at least you feel okay. But when you're not true to your deeper values, you feel bad. As you'll see in a few pages, almost all your emotions are about your values.

Note: In the parts of the booklet that ask you to write down an answer, try to answer *before* you read the hints on each page. If you need to, you can revise your answers after reading the hints. The purpose is not to get a right or wrong answer, but to get you in touch with the deepest and most important part of yourself. If you answer from deep within your heart, you will discover your **Core Value**.

What does *value* mean?

To value someone or something is to make that person or thing *important* to you and worthy of your *appreciation*, time, energy, and effort.

Value goes way beyond survival and convenience. For instance, you do not *value* eating, because you *must* do it to survive. But you *value* certain kinds of food. You don't *value* a bus ride to school, because it's *convenient*, but you *value* a ride to school with your friends, because your friends are important to you.

Most people value:

Special people e.g., parents and friends

Certain things e.g., works of art, their favorite songs, sunsets, the ocean

Certain ideas e.g., justice, equality, freedom

Certain personal qualities e.g., thoughtfulness, loyalty, honesty, hard-working

Certain behaviors e.g., helping, respecting, telling jokes.

Whatever you value requires that you make ***value-investments***.

What is *value-investment*?

Value-investment is spending time, energy, and effort to increase your appreciation of what is important to you. Practicing a sport, doing homework, listening to your favorite band, and finding out more about the musicians are all forms of value-investment.

Value-investment in people and animals requires that you protect their emotional and physical well-being. Taking the time to talk to your friends about something that bothers them is value-investment. So is taking your pet to the vet.

How do I invest value in the people who are most important to me? Answer:

How do I invest value in the things that are most important to me? Answer:

Are all values equal?

All values are definitely *not* equal. Values are hierarchical. That means that some things have to be more important than others.

For instance, it might be important to you to spend time with your friends, but it would be *more* important to visit your sick mother in the hospital.

In general, deeper values stir the strongest emotions. Your stronger negative emotions tell you that your deepest values are at risk or in conflict.

What do my emotions have to do with value?

All emotions either raise value or lower it. When you are **interested** in someone, you **raise** your value of that person. When you are **angry**, you **lower** someone's value, usually because you feel that he or she has lowered yours.

When you are **sad** or **disappointed**, you have **lost** something you value. When you are **happy**, you have **gained** something you value or raised your **appreciation** of something you already have.

When you're **nervous**, you're afraid of **losing** something you value. When confident, you feel that you will **keep** or **gain** value.

When you are **bored**, you are **not investing** value in anything. When **joyous**, you're **investing** a lot of value.

When you feel **guilty**, you are not investing enough in someone or something you value, e.g. ignoring a friend or not practicing your sport.

When you feel **shame**, you **do not value yourself**; as a result, feel **unworthy** of anyone else's value.

When you are **confused** or **upset**, things that you value are in **conflict**, as when two of your friends are mad at each other.

Think of a time when you were **sad** or **disappointed** to answer the following.

What did I lose of value?

What did I gain or appreciate to stop feeling sad or disappointed?

Think of a time when you were **nervous** to answer the following.

What was I afraid of losing?

What did I gain or appreciate to stop being nervous and become more confident?

Think of a time when you were **bored** to answer the following.

Why was I not investing value at that moment?

Would it have been better for me to get interested in something at and invest value?

Interest leads to value-investment. Your interest is the one thing in life that you control. It is a precious resource. If you find a way to get interested in things, especially in things you have to do, you will have greater value-investment and be much happier.

Think of a time when you felt **guilty** to answer the following.

What person or thing of value was I not investing in to stir feelings of guilt?

What did I do to raise my value-investment and relieve the feelings of guilt?

Think of a time when you felt **shame** to answer the following.

What happened to lower my self-value?

What did I do to raise my self-value and relieve the shame?

Think of a time when you felt **confused** or **upset** to answer the following.

Which of my values were in conflict?

What did I do to resolve the conflict?

What do I do about value conflicts?

Value conflicts happen all the time. They cause distress because some of your emotions are telling you to do one thing, while others are telling you to do the opposite.

Value conflicts must always be resolved in favor of the *deeper* value, because that will stir the strongest emotions.

For instance, if you hang with your friends instead of visiting your sick mother in the hospital, you might enjoy your friends at the time, but you will most likely feel guilty about it later. You might not notice the guilt because you may find a way to blame it on your mother — she nags too much or doesn't really understand you. But to avoid guilt with blame, you have to stay in a continual state of resentment or complaining, which certainly do not feel good.

Worst of all, while you're resentful or complaining, you can't do anything to make yourself feel better. Only acting on your deeper values will help.

How can I tell what my deeper values are?

Everything that lives has a genetic program to grow, learn, and develop its talents and skills. That program is strongest in humans, due to our high intelligence and creativity and to the large number of skills and talents we are able to develop.

Deeper values are those that involve your physical, mental, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual *growth* and *development*.

Humans also have a genetic program to attach to others. From birth, infants seek to attach to someone who will protect and nurture them. If they cannot attach to anyone — if they cannot love and be loved — they die, even if given food and water intravenously.

Our deepest values involve attaching to others. Therefore, our strongest positive emotions are about attachment and love, and our strongest negative emotions are about losing attachment and love.

Your deepest values are controlled by your **Core Value**, which is the most important thing about you.

What is my Core Value? Isn't it what I like and enjoy?

Most people change the things they like and enjoy hundreds of times in life, as they get tired of one thing and bored with the next. Many of the things you like to do now are very different from what you liked to do five years ago. But your **Core Value** changes very little throughout life.

Your **Core Value** is:

Your innate drive to invest value

Your deepest humanity – the most important thing about you as a person.

There are a lot of important things about you, but your **Core Value** is the *most* important. In fact, everything important about you comes from your **Core Value**. This quality is so basic to who you are as a person that if you didn't have it, you wouldn't recognize yourself.

To know what is most important to you, you need to know your **Core Value**.

Why do I have to *know* my Core Value? Can't I just be it?

Your **Core Value** makes you who you are as a person. When people *know* their **Core Value**, they usually stick to it. That gives them more energy and interest. They feel confident, even when others disagree with them. They feel *genuine*, even when they are sad or disappointed.

When people fail their **Core Value**, their own emotions go to war against them. Each failure causes *unconscious* guilt, shame, and nervousness, which usually get expressed as resentment, anger, or boredom. Too much of these keep you from feeling genuine.

If you fail your **Core Value**, you feel like a phony, like you're putting on an act. No one can see the real you.

How can I *fail* my Core Value?

Answer:

You can fail your **Core Value** in three ways, by:

1. Making too little investment of appreciation, time, and effort in what is most important to and about you
2. Doing what your heart tells you is wrong
3. Not doing what your heart tells you is right.

What does Core Value look like? What does it feel like?

It feels like the urge to build, fix, improve, rebuild, appreciate, understand, sympathize, cooperate, help, heal, empower, love.

It looks like compassion and tolerance.

How can I describe my Core Value?

Answer:

If you're having trouble thinking of what to write, see the next page.

Describing Your Core Value

It's not easy to describe **Core Value** because it is so *automatic* that we never think about it. The following might help you put it into words.

Write down *anything* that's important to you. Then ask, "Why is this important to me?" When you answer that question, ask, "Why is *that* important to me?" and so on, till you get to your deepest values.

Example: Having a really nice car is important to me. "Why?" Because it makes me feel good. "Why would that make me feel good?" People will respect me. "Why is that important?" They'll think I'm cool. "Why is that important?" Then they'll like me. "Why is it important for someone to like you?" Then it will be safe for me to like them.

Feeling worthy of giving and receiving compassion, trust, and love are our deepest values. We are born seeking them. They are the core of our humanity.

If I go around valuing other people, aren't they going to take advantage of me? Answer:

If you react to a jerk like a jerk, what does that make you? If people try to take advantage of you, they lower *their* **Core Value**, not yours. Your **Core Value** requires no defense because it is indestructible. No human being can lower your **Core Value**. When you act from your **Core Value**, you have the enormous strength of doing what is right, regardless of what anyone else does.

If I'm in a bad mood and think somebody's a jerk, isn't that part of my Core Value, at least my true "bad mood" nature? Answer:

Occasional bad moods are normal, but they do not *make* you devalue anybody. Rather, devaluing puts you in a bad mood. The bad mood is telling you to value more. It's warning you that you are disconnected from your **Core Value**. Investing more value is the only thing that will make you feel better and help you like yourself more at the moment. That almost always means recognizing other people's **Core Value**.

How can I recognize other people's Core Value?

Answer:

To recognize the **Core Value** of others you must appreciate that they have the capacity to build, fix, improve, rebuild, appreciate, understand, sympathize, cooperate, help, heal, empower, and love, even when they fail to do those things. Recognizing *their* **Core Value** increases *yours*. You can call this is the formula for **Basic Humanity**.

Does my Core Value tell me that I deserve other people's care, compassion, trust, and love?
Answer:

Your **Core Value** tells you to give these things to others, which is the only way you can feel *worthy* to get them from others.

Is Core Value really more important than intelligence, skills, and talent?

Answer:

Most people consider things like intelligence, talents, skills, determination, or hard work as their most important assets. While these are great qualities, they do not provide *motivation*. If not motivated by **Core Value**, these otherwise fine qualities can actually hurt you by getting you to act against your true nature and to fail your basic humanity.

Why do people fail their basic humanity?

Answer:

People fail their basic humanity when they get cut off from their **Core Value**. This causes **core hurts**.

Core Hurts

Disregarded

Unimportant

Guilty

Devalued

Rejected

Powerless

Inadequate

Unlovable

**So is it my true nature to fail my basic humanity
when I feel core hurts?**

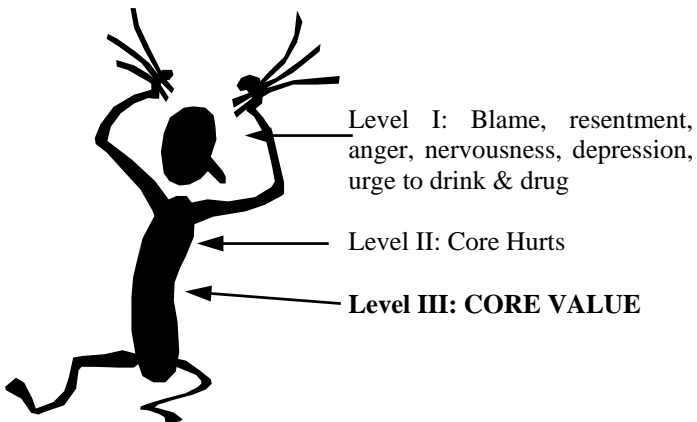
Answer:

If you feel unlovable, the most important thing to do is something that will make you feel lovable. Doing something that will make you feel worthy of love will put you back in touch with your **Core Value**.

What will make me feel worthy?

Answer:

Compassion. Try to see yourself and other people on the deeper levels of core hurts and Core Value. Don't react to Level I, sympathize with Level II and act on Level III.



Can other people lower or hurt my Core Value?

Answer:

No one can lower or harm your **Core Value**. (If they try, they only harm their own.) Your **Core Value** is invincible. Other people can cause you expense and inconvenience, they can hurt your feelings and even your body, but they cannot hurt your **Core Value**.

What happens to my Core Value when I am with friends who violate theirs?

Answer:

Emotions are extremely contagious. In groups, people easily get swept up in the current of emotion and sometimes betray themselves. That will not happen to you if you wear your **Core Value** like a medal of honor. Honor your **Core Value** by recognizing other people's. That means paying more attention to Level II and Level III (in the figure on the opposite page) and less attention to Level I.

Basic Humanity is Beneath the Surface

What is my Basic Humanity? Answer:

Basic Humanity is looking beneath your defenses and beneath the core hurts that cause them to see the light of your **Core Value**. It is looking beneath the defenses and core hurts of others, to see the light of their **Core Value**.

Basic Humanity connects the light one person to the light of others.

When I am *sad* or *disappointed*, this is what I will do to increase my *value-investment*:

When I am *nervous*, this is what I will do to increase my *value-investment*:

When I am *bored*, this is what I will do to increase my *value-investment*:

The foundation of value is interest. You get interested by paying attention to different aspects of things and by going beneath the surface to notice detail.

When I feel *guilty*, this is what I will do to increase my *value-investment* in the person or thing I have hurt or neglected.

Recognize the Core Value of the people you have hurt. Draw on your own Core Value — your natural motivation to improve, create, and appreciate — to invest in things you have neglected.

When I am *ashamed*, this is what I will do to increase my self-*value*:

Try to feel compassion for your core hurts, with an effort to improve, appreciate, connect, and protect.

When I am *confused* or *upset*, this is what I will do to resolve my value conflict:

Always ask, “What is the most important thing to me?”

Improving My Experience

Describe a bad situation you have experienced.

By respecting my **Core Value** and my **Basic Humanity**, this is how I could have improved my experience of the situation and I will improve similar ones in the future:

A bad situation:

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Basic Humanity Logs

List how many times you:

Day	Recognized my Core Value	Recognized Core Value of another	Understood my core hurts	Understood core hurts of another	Remained tolerant of differences
Sunday					
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					

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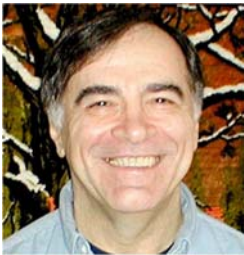
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Dr. Steven Stosny's most recent books is, *You Don't Have to Take It Anymore: Turn Your Resentful, Angry, or Emotionally Abusive Relationship into a Compassionate, Loving One*. He has appeared on "The Oprah Winfrey Show," "CBS Sunday Morning," and CNN's "Talkback Live" and "Anderson Cooper 360" and has been the subject of articles in, The New York Times, The Washington Post, U.S. News & World Report, The Wall Street Journal, Esquire, Cosmopolitan, O, Psychology Today, AP, Reuters, and USA Today. His website is <http://compassionpower.com>.