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Why People Feel the Way They Do

A deep understanding of your own and other people's values can improve your communications and build stronger relationships. Here are five tips on improving relationship compatibility.

Have you ever wondered why some people seem driven to make a lot of money while others honestly seem to be satisfied with just "getting by?"

Have you known people who do so much for others they become enablers and you think that's not a good thing? Or do you know people who seem so immersed in their own needs they don't do enough to help others?

If another person's beliefs and attitudes are diametrically opposed to yours, you'll have problems relating to that person and may have serious conflict because of your differences. Basically, the greater the gap between your values and someone else's, the more difficulty you'll have with that person.

Here are some tips on how to understand your own and other people's attitudes and improve your relationships with them.

Know Your Values

There are six values, first defined by psychologist Eduard Spranger, that we all have in varying degrees. They are:

- Theoretical (passion for knowledge)
- Utilitarian (passion for money and what is useful)
- Aesthetic (passion for beauty, balance, and harmony)
- Social (passion for service to others)
- Individualistic (passion for power and control)
- Traditional (passion for finding the highest meaning in life)

Your top two values are what drive you and must be fulfilled for you to achieve happiness in life.

The characteristics of people high in a particular values cluster go deep and are too numerous to mention here. But if you know and understand your own values, you'll have more clarity as to what you want to do with your life.

Know Others' Values

If your top value is someone else's lowest value, you're going to have misunderstandings and conflict with that person. I once had a client whose top two values were Social and Traditional. She and her daughter were having serious relationship problems. We discovered (with values assessments) that the daughter had her mother's top two values as numbers five and six. It was like Mother Teresa and an atheist trying to see eye to eye.

But once they understood where their conflict was coming from, they were able to improve their relationship considerably.

Understand Your Differences

Certain values clusters produce strong conflicts with others. For example, if you're high in the Theoretical attitude, you value knowledge. You take an analytical approach to solving problems and believe decisions must be rationally justified.

If the other person is high in the Aesthetic value, you'll conflict with the way you see things. High Aesthetic people value the artistic episodes of life and tend to make emotional decisions, based on the way they feel.

Whether we call this left brain vs. right brain or head vs. heart, the cause is differing values. Understanding values characteristics will take you a long way toward resolving your differences.

Let People Be Who They Are

Understand people have different passions that drive them to get what they want. As Anais Nin said, "We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are." If you can appreciate that values are neither good nor bad - just different, it can help you appreciate other people's point of view and be less judgmental toward them.

Set Clear Boundaries

Of course, in your efforts to improve relationships, you should never let people criticize you for being who you are, either. Generally, when people know you understand where they're "coming from," most will be more understanding with you.

It's important to make it clear to others how they may and may not treat you. I had a friend once who was high in the Theoretical value. She used to roll her eyes and get irritated with my "stupidity" for not knowing something she thought I should know. When I explained that I'm not stupid, that I graduated magna cum laude, second in my class in college and was uncomfortable with her attitude, she stopped treating me with disdain.

It's all about having self respect and respect for others. When you and another person know and understand your differing attitudes and why, communication improves and you can develop more relationship compatibility.

To improve your relationships, order Annette's ebook ***Why Can't You See it My Way? Resolving Values Conflicts at Work and Home*** at <http://www.resolveconflictnow.com>

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