

A watercolor painting of several red flowers with long, thin black stems. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing dark centers. The background is a light, textured wash of pink and white. The overall style is soft and artistic.

***What makes you  
YOU?***

***Clarify your Values  
Systems***

***Jolina Karen***

*Your life is an expression of your Values Systems.*

The word 'Values' gets bandied about a lot, but in ways that are often not particularly predictive of behavior. When asked what our values are, most of us say things like 'honesty', 'integrity', 'happiness' and so on, but this tells us very little about what is actually valuable to us.

I don't consider these qualities to be values at all. They are the traits that we will display, or not display, as we pursue our actual Values.

A much more useful, axiological, definition of Values is this:

- the THINGS and EXPERIENCES that we VALUE enough to dedicate our lives to realizing.

**Your Values are everything!**

They are the filters through which you take in information and give expression to your genius.

They are the lenses through which you view the world. They form the compass by which you navigate life. They are the magnets by which you are attracted to, or repulsed by, others.

Your Values Systems make you open up or shut down to people and events. They cause you to reach out, absorb information and create connections, or retreat, get bored and walk away.

Your Values Systems are your inner guidance mechanisms that are inexorably pulling you through life.

They shape every experience you have AND they are tragically misunderstood.

It has been estimated that 95% of all people do NOT KNOW their Values Systems.

Do you?

*Actions speak louder than words*

The only way to identify our authentic values is through observing our actions. The acronym STEM is useful, as it describes the 4 clearest indicators of our real Values:

**Space, Time, Energy and Money.**

Following are some worksheets and prompts for you to use in order to clarify your Values Systems.

It is essential to be honest with yourself and record only what you ACTUALLY spend STEM on. If you tell yourself 'I value being thin' but you do not take consistent ACTION towards that goal, then 'being thin' is NOT a high or real value to you. The same goes for 'being wealthy' and 'traveling'. (These crop up often)

Take time with this exploration. Become a curious observer of yourself.

Be gentle and suspend judgment as best you can.

Often, when we get real about what we are actually dedicating STEM to it, it can be uncomfortable.

Only when you see who you really are can you start to fall authentically in love with yourself.

*And you loving you is the very best thing you can do for everyone!*

Why?

Only when you love and appreciate yourself can you truly love and appreciate others. Only then can you connect and be fully present with them. When you do this, when you can give someone the experience of feeling seen and heard, understood and appreciated ....in other words, when you give the person an experience of being loved ....something inside them remembers that they are lovable. Something inside them begins to integrate. In this way you heal the world.

Let's get to it!

## 1. Space

**External space:** what things fill the places you inhabit (home, car, office etc)?

Photos - of what? Books and magazines - on what subjects? Sports equipment, cars, wine, food, clothes, art supplies, tools, musical instruments, plants etc. All your 'stuff' says something about what's meaningful and interesting to you.

**Internal Space:** what thoughts, ideas, dreams and aspirations consistently fill your mind?

What subjects consistently hold your attention? What TV programs consistently entertain you?

What does your internet search reveal about what is consistently interesting to you?

## **2. Time**

There are only so many hours in the day. In every moment you are making choices about how to spend your time. You will always make time for the things that are most valuable to you. You will procrastinate and delay doing things that are low on your hierarchy of values.

How do you consistently spend your time? What do you regularly make time for? Who do you make time for and why?

### 3. Energy

You will repeatedly find the energy to do things that are of high value to you. You will feel 'unmotivated' or like you don't have the energy for things that are not high value to you.

You will be self-directed and inspired to do things that are high value to you. You will need external motivation to do things that are not high value to you.

How do you spend your energy? Anything you consistently DO is something you are giving your energy to...so what do you consistently do, especially without someone 'forcing' you? What goals do you consistently take action towards? What activities do you reliably show up for, professionally and personally? With what activities or actions are you most organized and reliable? Who or what lights you up and why?

#### **4. Money**

One of the clearest indicators of your values is money.....specifically, what you do with it. You always spend and save money in accordance with your values.

What do your money habits indicate about what's important to you? For what do you consistently find money? Do you save money? If yes, for what? What does your check book indicate about what is important to you?

What are the themes that have emerged from your STEM observations? Go back through your lists: What things and activities show up most often? What show up next? What after that?

Link them to the 7 areas of Life.



Which areas of life have the most activity? Rank them:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

You should be easily able to see your top 3 areas. After that things will probably be vague.

How do you feel about what you observe? (If discomfort, shame or guilt comes up please email me – [jolina@jolinakaren.com](mailto:jolina@jolinakaren.com) – and I'll send you another exercise to address that!)



Why understanding Values Systems is so very important:

## **Physical health**

I have observed that there are 3 root causes of physical disease, and thus 3 levels of intervention. They are: macro, micro and meta-physical

- Macro-physical: this refers to the gross structures of the body – muscles, organs, tissue, cells etc. Macro traumas to these structures, like accidents and injuries, require macro-interventions (surgery, physical therapies, chiropractic adjustments etc)
- Micro-physical: this refers to the chemistry of the body. Nutrients, enzymes, hormones, hydration, pH etc need to be adequately balanced through diet, supplements and medications.
- Meta-physical: this is the realm of the mind – one’s mental-emotional experience. Values Systems are a crucial component here. How well we are doing at loving ourselves enough to live our lives consciously in accordance with our highest values dramatically impacts our physical health. At this level, disease in the body can be thought of as a messenger that we are holding on to unresolved emotions, limiting beliefs and not being true to ourselves. Disease is often the catalyst for healing relationships, freeing ourselves from activities or obligations that no longer feel meaningful to us, and giving ourselves permission to be and do what makes us feel most alive!

## **Mental abilities**

When we are clear on our authentic Values, and honoring ourselves enough to prioritize them consciously, we ignite our creativity and genius. We operate more consistently from the prefrontal cortex, which is the seat of complex thinking, problem solving, empathy, compassion and big-picture visioning.

## **Familial relationships**

Understanding Values Systems is essential if you want to create Caring relationships. There are three types of relationships: **Caring, Careless and Careful**. Most of us oscillate between Careless and Careful.

In *Careless relationships* we ignorantly believe that what we value is what others do or should value. We put ourselves on pedestals and others in the pit. We feel right about our priorities and can get frustrated or confused when others don’t value what we value. We try to change their values and make them see it our way. We care less about what’s important to them, and more about what’s important to us.

In *Careful relationships* we put others on pedestals, and ourselves in the pit. We then walk on eggshells as we try to be and do what we think they want us to be and do. We subordinate our Values to theirs, and can get frustrated with ourselves when we can’t be more like them.

*Caring relationships* have three parts:

i First and foremost we care enough about ourselves to figure out what is truly high Value to us, and we honor ourselves for this. We do not make ourselves wrong for valuing what we value.

ii We care enough about others to figure out what is high Value to them, and we honor them for valuing what they value. We do not make them wrong for being who they are.

iii We learn to communicate in terms of each other's Values Systems. Doing so helps both of us feel seen and heard, understood and appreciated for being exactly who we are.

### **Social life**

We tend to want to be friends with people who appear to share our Values, and avoid those who don't. We want to spend our Space, Time, Energy and Money with people who are doing the same. Not knowing and honoring our real Values often leads to us saying 'yes' to things we don't really want to out of a sense of obligation or guilt. This can lead to resentment and boredom. Understanding and honoring one's Values Systems makes it much easier to say 'no' to the people and activities that don't align with you, in order to say 'Yes' to those that do.

Having a good understanding of Values Systems and how they drive behavior has a profound effect on experiences of conflict. Without this lens it is so easy to devolve into taking conflicts personally and then go into name-calling, blaming, guilt and shaming. When you realize that most conflicts are nothing more than a difference of Values Systems, you become more masterful at navigating them towards win-win conclusions. Conflicts are actually fabulous opportunities to get really clear on the things and experiences that are truly important to you and others. This is essential information for great relationships, at home or at work.

### **Finances**

We all save and spend money in accordance with our highest Values. So many conflicts arise internally and externally around money. Many people in our Western society tie their sense of self-worth to their net-worth. Making money and saving money are two very different activities. Many people make a lot of money but don't save it. Some people make little money but have a high value on saving it. Everyone is interacting with money in accordance with their values. Understanding where money sits in your hierarchy of Values is key to developing the relationship with money that you want.

### **Vocational success**

If your work is an expression of your highest values, you are most likely to feel fulfilled and successful in this area of life. If you cannot see how your work is fulfilling your highest Values, you will struggle with boredom and resentment. It is wise to either find ways to do what you love (and get paid for it) or love what you do.

## Your spiritual quest

There is one universal value – the desire to Love and be loved.

Our purpose in life – our spiritual quest – is to Love ... ourselves and others. This can sound deceptively simple. It isn't. It is a life-long journey that *begins* with acknowledging our authentic Values Systems and honoring ourselves enough to prioritize them.

Each person's authentic Values System is unique. No two people value the same things in exactly the same way. Therefore, no two people live their lives in exactly the same way. Each of us lives our life in a way that is specific and meaningful to ourselves. Each of us is a unique expression of the divine, universal energy or spirit that gave rise to us all. Although we are the same in essence, we are all unique in expression. This is as it should be. The question is: can we love it?

Values Systems thinking provides a framework for understanding the similarities and difference between all of us that can lead to greater compassion, connection and appreciation.

Getting clear on yours is a powerful first step in becoming a more Self-aware and Self-loving individual.

And here's the thing, as you become more Self-Aware and Self-loving you automatically become more Other-aware and Other-loving. As you fall more in love with yourself, you become more and more capable of authentically loving others. As others have experiences of feeling loved by you – really seen and heard, understood and appreciated – something inside them remembers that they are lovable. Something inside them begins to awaken. Something inside them begins to heal.

*You loving you is what's best for everyone.*

I hope this information is useful to you. Identifying your authentic Values Systems, and honoring yourself enough to consciously align your life with them, is a one of the bravest acts of self-love that you can undertake.

I am here to assist you in whatever way I can.

Sincerely  
Jolina Karen