

# Chapter 2

## Values and Power Words

One of our most powerful motivation programs revolves around core values. Do you like to spend your time relating to people, being in a place, doing activities, learning knowledge, or getting, collecting or having things? What you value will determine how and where you spend your time. Values are what get you up in the morning and keep you going.

### Power Words

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What's important about a job, career, or work?
- What's important about a marriage or friendship?



# What's A Value?

*Nothing is intrinsically  
valuable; the value of  
everything is attributed to  
it, assigned to it from  
outside...by people.*

-John Barth



- What's important about where you live?
- What's important about the kind of car you drive?
- What's important about what you know or learn?

The exact words or phrases you use to answer these questions are the words you've mentally *attached* to your values. In the jargon of the Internet, they are hotlinked to your core values. These power words and phrases will get you motivated. Once someone knows your power words, all they have to do is use *your* power words to describe their product, service, job, or relationship, and you will find their offering much more desirable. In many ways you will feel *compelled* to get involved with their offering because it's part of who you are and what you want at the deepest level.

The question you can ask to discover anyone's values around a particular topic is:

What's important about *topic*?

Here *topic* can be job, marriage, relationships, friends, dogs, cats, music, cities, travel, sports, knowledge, learning, house, cars, jewelry, etc. Values can change dramatically from one context to the next.

The *exact words or phrases* a person uses to respond to your question tell you the words they associate with their values. In grade school we were taught *not* to use the same words, but rather to paraphrase the other person's words. If you want to motivate the other person, paraphrasing is a mistake; a similar word simply will not mean the same thing, it will not be "hot linked" to the same internal *values* as their word or phrase. So, if you want to motivate someone, use their power words, not your own.

# Questions & Answers

*Everything is worth  
what its purchaser  
will pay for it.*  
-Publilius Syrus

**Ask:** What's important to you ...?

**Listen:** Power Words and Phrases

**Connect:** Your project or issue with  
their power words or phrases

In some marketing circles, this is known as "cracking the code," because the ideal word or phrase to maximize response to an ad is often hard to discover. You're like a cryptographer decoding secret transmissions. In direct mail, one headline can pull twenty times more orders than another. Why? Because one cracks the code and one doesn't. Marketing guru Jay Abraham says that "we have no right to determine what the customer wants or is willing to pay for." We have to ask and test!

If you ask someone "what's important about your job?" they may reply:

- *challenge and opportunity*
- *safety and security*
- *working with people*
- *live where I want to live*
- *do what I want to do*
- *learn new skills and grow my abilities*
- *have the kind of house and life-style I want*

In each case, the words or phrases are directly linked to their core values around work. These words and phrases can then be used to motivate their involvement in work priorities:

- This project will be both *challenging* and a great *opportunity* for team members.
- This project will create the kind of *safety and security* the company needs for ongoing success.
- This project will involve *working with people*: clients, customers, suppliers, and leadership.

Notice how it's possible to use the other person's exact phrase in a sentence to connect their core values

# Life Values



*“Gentlemen, this is a power restaurant. If you must discuss your families, please keep your voices down.”*

with the new project. Once you do so, they are more inclined to want to do it because it matches their internal values (WIIFM), and you've motivated them to do what's best for the common good! Think back to your answers to the questions on the first page of this chapter. Which ones would get you inspired to take on this or any project?

## It Depends...

Occasionally, in response to the question "What's important about your job?" a person will answer: "It depends." When this happens, they've just told you that the context or situation you asked about isn't specific enough. So, ask: "What are the situations on your job where it's different?" They may respond: "When I'm with a customer it's important to help them solve problems, but when I'm with an employee it's important to coach them to solve their own problems." *It depends* will always tell you to dig deeper and get more specific.

## Core Values

The five most common answers to the "What's important about..." question fall into the broad categories of people, places, activities, knowledge, and things.



**"People"** people are most interested in their relationships. They prize friendship, family, and connection above everything else. They tend to get interested in going, getting, doing, being, learning, or having because of the people they know. They may find it hard to leave unsatisfactory relationships and jobs be-



# Values Move You

## What's important to you...?

1. People or relating
2. Places or being
3. Activities or doing
4. Knowledge or learning
5. Things or getting/having



cause of their respect for the people involved. Taken to extremes, they can become co-dependent and spend their lives solely in the service of others. They may do things contrary to their own good.



**"Places"** people are most concerned about where they live—near the mountains, the ocean, and so on—or just being. They have a strong sense of being grounded. At the extreme, these people will not relocate, even when staying will mean a drop in their standard of living and moving means an improvement in their life style.



**"Activity"** people are most interested in doing things. They plan their time around sports, exercise, hobbies, and other activities. They may belong to health clubs, engage in team or individual sports, or just work around the house. They like being in motion. At the extreme, they may overexert or overcommit themselves.



**"Knowledge"** people are most interested in what they can learn and know about the people, places, activities, and things in their lives. They tend to enjoy bookstores and libraries. They attend courses frequently. At the extreme, these people become professional students and never apply the knowledge they have learned.



**"Things"** people are most interested in what they get, have, own or collect--art, cars, homes, clothes, and so on. They love to shop. They like catalogs. They watch cable TV sales programs. They are driven to make money to acquire things. Taken to extremes, these people become shop-aholics. They will charge their credit cards up to the limit and keep them there.

Most values can be categorized in one of these five core values: people, places, activities, knowledge, or things.

## Values Question

Remember, the question to find out someone's values and the power words coupled to them is simple: "What's important about...?" Just fill in the blank with the area of life you'd like to understand more completely. Then write down the answer *exactly as you hear it*. You can also do this with your own life to find out what you value.

## Motivation

To motivate people using their values, all you have to do is use the power words or phrases they supply. Simply find a way to align your product, service, outcome, or mission to their values and it becomes much easier for them to get motivated to work on it with you. In the process, you'll also build better relationships, achieve more, learn more, and become more successful in all aspects of your life.