

Interaction Values and Beliefs: An Integration into Social Psychology

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C O N N E X I O N S

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Chapter 1

Value - Independence¹

It is the man who stands alone who excites our admiration.

Can independence be considered a value? Is independence a core belief? How can independence be defined?

Independence, as related to a persons social interactions, isn't referring to someone being materially independent and able to provide for themselves. It is referring to someone having an inner strength that allows them to be by themselves, mostly. Calling someone independent can mean a lot of things, on the surface it just means they like to be by themselves and rely less on others, but there are many other hidden subtleties of what this word means, all applicable.

Independence could be someones personal belief, they may believe themselves to be independent. That is one way to assess how independent someone is, by what their own belief of it is. It is possible that the person doesn't have any understanding of their own independence, however they are still very independent. Someones understanding could even be wrong, it is possible someone doesn't want to interact with people but really is actually heavily reliant on it.

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41575/1.2/>>.

Someone could value independence, believing greatly in their own strength, they could consider being independent to be very important, and that someone not independent is weak and frail. But then how could you say that this person likes interaction with people? If one believes so strongly in their own independence, then would they even like interpersonal interaction at all?

What if separation from people causes anxiety? Is someone weak if they need to be with other people in order to avoid pain? Does the emotion generated from interpersonal interaction make someone weak? What if the people you depended on didn't like you. You could need someone emotionally but not like them very much, though that wouldn't seem to make a lot of sense. It would seem that if you liked them more, they would generate more emotion and provide you more support.

Being invested in life isn't silly or stupid. Being invested in other people is, however because people cannot be relied upon, physically or to generate support and emotion for you. It isn't like other people are there just to provide you with support, people have their own lives and you are just one tiny aspect of that life. It is hard to assess even how much you enjoy interactions, though this could play a role in perceived independence.

People assess how much they enjoy interactions, it is automatic, you "know" if you like someone and you "know" if interacting with them is fun. Your unconscious understanding of how good a relationship is is much more complex than your conscious understanding. Consciously you only have a vague description of how good the relationship is. You might think, "this person is really important to me, he or she is really fun and supportive emotionally". But that is very vague, there are countless ways to measure how helpful various people are to you, yet consciously you can only describe a sentence or two with your idea of how good the relationships are.

How much you enjoy interactions, and how much you need them, is going to play a role in how independent you actually are. That is different from perceived independence, someone may look very independent but actually not be independent at all. How is it that your unconscious assessment of an interaction is much greater than your conscious one? All the emotional benefits of a relationship are felt unconsciously, you only have a simple understanding of how much fun it is, but in reality the emotion it generates is very complex and dynamic.

Chapter 2

Values - Tenderness and Passion¹

Tenderness is more important than passion in love.

Someone being tender or experiencing the emotion of tenderness is going to feel quite differently than when they are passionate or are experiencing the emotion of passion. Passion as an emotion could be sexual and stimulating in nature, or it could be an arousal, or a more intellectual passion.

An intellectual passion in love would be a strong appreciation for the target person that generates passion - you are passionate about the other person because you appreciate them for who they are. A sexual passion in love would be more stimulation based, you are passionate for the other person because they make you sexually stimulated. There might be a mix of these two things, in addition to the severity of each or both varying.

Tenderness, on the other hand, isn't either intellectual or stimulation based like passion. Tenderness is just emotional - passion or however emotional "being passionate" makes you comes from

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41576/1.2/>>.

stimulation or intellect, tenderness is something you feel that isn't a stimulation or something to be intellectually passionate about (which are the two things passion is - so passion is more stimulating or intellectual, and tenderness is more emotional and soft). It would be hard to get sexually aroused from tenderness considering that tenderness is, well, tender and not passionate and stimulating.

Therefore the statement, "tenderness is more important than passion in love" would seem to imply that love involves less sexual, stimulating, violent emotions and more calm, tender and caring ones. You could have a relationship with someone and not feel tenderness and not be in love, just be passionate about the other person. I guess you need to be tender and caring in order for the emotion of "love" to be evoked.

Chapter 3

Value - The Immaterial¹

The ultimate and true reality is above the senses; immaterial, spiritual, unchanging, and everlasting.

Valuing things that are "above the senses" shows a more intellectual type of value instead of a physical, pleasure based one. It is interesting that the "true reality" would be this intellectual, above the senses world because that is a world you cannot feel physically, so you would think that the true reality would be a world you can actually literally feel instead of one that you only feel with your mind and imagination. However, considering different viewpoints, it could be viewed that the world you create in your mind is the true reality instead of the world which you can only physically feel.

So things in the real world you can physically feel, and these give rise to pleasurable sensations. From this physical world you create your own rich inner world in your mind, one of thought, intellect, imagination, and senses you feel "in your head". This could mean that emotions and feelings are in your head and above the physical senses like that of touch. So you can still feel things in your mind, it just isn't as tangible as things related to the senses. Which world is more real? The world created in your mind (your thoughts, feelings

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41581/1.1/>>.

and emotions) or the world you experience with your senses (your physical reaction to the world)?

Of course there is a mix of emotion and physical, the two worlds combine in feeling. Stimulation is an example of that, if you are sexually aroused, it is a physical sensation but there are going to be associated emotions involved. Stimulation is like a combination of emotion and physical stimulus, which is a sensation. You could say there is at least a little physical sensation in any emotion. The world in which you feel attracted to other people is an emotional one, but there are also occasionally going to be physical sensations mixed in.

What about the immaterial being "spiritual, unchanging and everlasting"? The world of thought and intellect is one that stays in your mind forever. When you touch something, the physical feeling is there and then it goes away once you stop touching it. The feeling could be in your mind for recall, however it wouldn't be the real sensation. There is something wonderful about the world in your mind and how it is always there, surreal (spiritual) and constant (unchanging).

Chapter 4

Value - Honor¹

An insult to our honor should always be punished.

There is a difference between honor and glory (though they are similar). Glory is more like fame, you gloat in the admiration of other people - that is glory. Honor, on the other hand, is your own personal belief of how respected you are. That also includes your own respect for yourself, which is why honesty and integrity (and the belief you are like that) is another definition for honor.

It is possible that honor can be gained by achieving glory or fame, or having a high social status. Anything that increases the respect you have would increase your honor. Unless you consider it honorable to be disrespected, everyone could have their own definition of what is honorable to them, however there would probably be a similar ideal of an honorable person in each nation or culture group.

In fact, there could be many ways a society defines or appreciates what qualities would be honorable in a person. Possession of certain goods, doing certain activities, having a certain job might all contribute to the communities perception of how honorable or how

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41582/1.1/>>.

much glory a person would have. There are also certain people you might wish to present as honorable to more than others, such as your friends or family. Honor and glory could be extremely important to someone personally or to a society. They are worthy goals that might be very meaningful or fun to many different types of people.

The possession of material goods as well as pretty women can be indicators of status. The concepts of honor and glory are critical to understanding the motivation of the heroes in Homer's Iliad. Glory was gained by great, heroic actions and deeds and was conferred upon an individual by others who witnessed and acclaimed the glorious actions. Major battles provided an opportunity for many to find glory at once. Honor was similar to glory, but while the public had to view actions and deem them glorious, each individual maintained their own sense of personal honor which did not always coincide with honor as defined or perceived by the masses. Honor was gained through heroism in battle, but also through compelling speechmaking, loyalty and other noble qualities that a person might demonstrate.

Chapter 5

Value - Contemplation¹

Contemplation is the highest form of human activity.

Contemplation means thinking about something, paying attention to something (in a thoughtful manner), or basically just considering something. Saying that contemplation is the highest form of human activity is basically like saying that thought is the most important human activity, but not exactly. Contemplation includes an appreciation, an effort of paying attention to something that thought alone doesn't include.

If you contemplate something, you do more than just "think" about it - you focus on it, consider it, think about it carefully and attentively. So contemplation is just a higher form of thought. Saying it is a high form of human activity is placing intellect above other activities someone could do, such as a physical activity, a physical activity with little thought, or just thinking a little and not really being engaged with that thinking - not "contemplating".

So saying that contemplation is a high form of activity is showing how contemplation is similar to meditation, you are really focusing when you contemplate - showing care and really considering

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41583/1.1/>>.

something. However, just saying that the deepest, most significant aspect of contemplation is "just really considering something" is downplaying how significant people think deep contemplation can really be. The highest form of thought, which is basically contemplation, can be something the people consider to be very powerful, moving and (most importantly) intellectually significant. That is why contemplation is a word often used when referring to how someone could think about God, you can "contemplate" God and the meaning of life, this isn't a trivial activity, it is a high and meaningful form of thought.

Thought is very significant to human beings, so it makes sense that there would be a word for the highest form of thought and this word (contemplation) would be considered to be the highest form of human activity. It should be obvious why thought is important to human beings, without thought, humans would just be like other animals that aren't conscious as human are. Contemplation, being a high form of thought, demonstrates the power of the human mind.

Chapter 6

Value - Truth¹

In the ultimate test, truth only comes from inner experience - from inspiration, mystical union, revelation, or pure meditation.

The value statement above seems to suggest that truth only comes from within yourself and is something you really deeply understand to be true. The statement isn't referring to simple facts or opinions, but deep, complicated aspects of life that are so significant they must be "true". For instance, revelation implies you are reaching a great conclusion or discovery. Some examples of those discoveries might be an understanding of mystical union, inspiration, or pure meditation.

So basically, when something is "true" there is something really more powerful about how "truthful" it is, how it reveals something deep and complicated about life. This doesn't mean an advanced concept necessarily, it just means something that might reveal certain biases or false interpretations of the world. An example might be if someone was racist, but the truth was that all people are equal - then there might be a lot of information that comes with the revelation that all people are more or less equal - it is a statement of

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41584/1.1/>>.

truth. This statement is striking because of its complication and also its overcoming of biases at the same time. The "truth" might be something not only hard to understand, but something you were not willing to admit previously because of a bias in judgement.

That is why the words "inspiration", "mystical union", and "pure meditation" are used as well as the word "revelation" to describe truth. It is because something true might be something you really need to think deeply about in order to discover. It isn't just something complicated, but you might need to overcome emotional biases - something pure meditation might help with - in order to discover the truth.

In order to overcome an emotional bias, someone might really need to experience something that is powerful, such as inspiration or a mystical union. This is so because the nature of emotion is such that you can only think clearly if you are personally involved in a deep, "true", powerful and clear way. This heightened emotional experience might help you to see the "truth".

Chapter 7

Value - Individualism¹

The individualist is the man who is most likely to discover the best road to a new future.

Individualism is a social theory advocating the liberty, rights, or independent action of the individual. An individualist enters into society to further his or her own interests, or at least demands the right to serve his or her own interests, without taking the interests of society into consideration. The individualist does not lend credence to any philosophy that requires the sacrifice of the self-interest of the individual for any higher social causes.

Individualists are chiefly concerned with protecting individual autonomy against obligations imposed by social institutions (such as the state or religious morality). So what does this indicate the individual that believes in individualism is like? Would an individualist be someone more independent in general? Would an individualist therefore not like having strong social ties to people like friends? Probably not, but perhaps they would like less ties to the government.

With such a strong desire to achieve their own objectives, it makes

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41587/1.1/>>.

you wonder if an individualist cares about the needs of other people. By disregarding what society wants them to do, an individualist is disregarding what "most people" in the society believe life should be lived in that society. This doesn't necessarily mean that the person doesn't care about his or her society, maybe they believe that their way of doing things would be best for everyone, or maybe they think both people's objectives can be accomplished simultaneously.

Someone that doesn't care if society functions better as a whole, and instead just cares about him or her self or the individual, might believe that each person seeking out his or her own objectives is the best way a society should function. That is what capitalism is, competition makes the economy function more efficiently. But what if it was that the government functioned better trying to make life equal for everyone (such as a system like communism)? Someone that wouldn't believe in such a system would, to put it shortly, "have no heart".

Chapter 8

Value - Inner Experience¹

The most rewarding object of study any man can find is his own inner life.

People care mostly about themselves, so therefore they are going to be mostly interested in studying their own feelings and experience of the world, their "inner life". This concept is more complicated than it may seem - it is the entire concept of being aware of yourself and consciousness. How much about your own life do you actually understand? How can someone get a greater appreciation and understanding of themselves and their own life?

Many different types of reflection could help someone gain a greater understanding of their inner life. They can reflect on what they have done recently, simply think more about what is going on their lives. I don't know what the difference would be between saying you are "studying" you own life or just "thinking" more about it, however. People naturally think about their own lives and analyze what is going on their life all the time.

People actually engage in two different types of self-analysis: self-reflection (enjoying analyzing the self) and self-rumination (not

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41588/1.2/>>.

being able to shut off thoughts about the self). Self-awareness represents a higher form of consciousness which makes it possible for us humans to become the object of our own attention and to acknowledge our own existence. When self-aware we actively examine our personal characteristics, that is, our physical appearance, typical behaviors, emotions, motives, personality traits, values, attitudes, thoughts, sensations, etc.

Differences in levels of self-focused attention deeply affect our behavior. For example, past studies suggest that if you are highly self-aware you will know yourself better than less self-aware people, engage more effectively in self-regulation (i.e., monitoring and modifying your behavior), feel emotions more intensely, behave more consistently with your attitudes, conform less to social pressure, self-disclose more in intimate relationships, and react more strongly to social rejection.

Maybe you personally know people who spend a lot of time analyzing themselves—they seem to constantly be “beating around the bush”, re-evaluating themselves, always questioning their behavior and appearance, being unsure of themselves, nervous, etc. This is self-rumination: anxious attention paid to the self, where the person is afraid to fail and keeps wondering about his/her self-worth. Then maybe you have other acquaintances who are also highly self-aware, but instead of being anxious about themselves, they have wisdom they know themselves very well, are the “contemplating” type, feel secure, have depth, and are philosophical about their shortcomings. This is self-reflection: a genuine curiosity about the self, where the person is intrigued and interested in learning more about his/her emotions, values, thought processes, attitudes, etc. So we all analyze our inner thoughts and feelings (self-awareness), but some of us feel anxious about what we might discover about ourselves (self-rumination) while others feel intrigued and fascinated about ourselves (self-reflection).

Chapter 9

Value - Time¹

The past is no more, the future may never be, the present is all that we can be sure of.

How does someones sense of time function? Are people constantly hoping for the future, or constantly dwelling on the past? Is someones entire life simply them just "being in the present"? The present is certainly the strongest time period because that is what we are currently in all of the time. The past has already happened as well, and the future might not occur at all or if it does you wouldn't know now what is going to happen exactly anyway. Therefore the most important time period is the present.

On the other hand, there is a constant conscious and unconscious thought process that involves reflection on the past and future as well as what is going on in the present. If you think about it, all the emotional development you have incurred over your life and your memories all contribute to what you are thinking in the present, so whenever you think you are really reflecting on the past to a certain degree.

Similarly, you are also constantly planning for the future, even in a conversation you are going to be thinking about what to say next,

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41589/1.1/>>.

planning on how the conversation is going to be drawn out. You have an idea what is going to happen to you for the rest of the day, and this concept influences your behavior "in the present" for that entire day.

Also, someones sense of time can be moving slow, fast, or normal speed. If someone is experiencing pain then it seems like time is meaningless and there is no point in living, then time would probably be moving rather slow and in a painstaking fashion. Your sense of time probably varies all the time in complicated ways, it would be great if life was always fun and time drawn out in a way that was enjoyable - but I wouldn't think life is like that for anyone.

Chapter 10

Value - Boldness¹

Love action, and care little that others may think you rash.

This statement is rather straightforward, it is simply saying to be bold and not care if others think you are being careless. However, it seems to be suggesting something more significant, "love action" implies that you are really doing something great, not just simply bold. This makes a lot of sense, if someone wasn't proactive, trying to do things actively, then life for them would be pretty boring, they wouldn't be seeking adventure or being invested in life at all.

So the words "love action" imply that you are really getting into life, that you aren't going to be stagnant you are going to love being aggressive and a go-getter. You are being ambitious and caring about life, to the point that you don't care if others think you are being rash.

It makes sense that the adventurous person would be the ideal our imagination can create. How interesting would someone be if they just sat around and did nothing and wasn't bold at all? People look up to people that are powerful and interesting. Even if it isn't realistic, people love heroes as well. A hero couldn't be a hero unless he or she "loved action".

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41590/1.1/>>.

The statement doesn't refer to heroes, however, it refers to the common person. Therefore, the common person can attain the qualities of a hero by being forward, showing an interest in action, and even idolizing himself to the point where it wouldn't matter if he was "rash".

Chapter 11

Value - Love¹

There are no human problems that love cannot solve.

Love can be a means to achieve peace between two people. If they see that there is love, then they might see that they don't have to be hostile anymore. Love could be a goal that gives both parties something instead of being hostile, which might not give either party in an encounter something.

Why would love give both people or sides in an interaction something? Love generates positive feelings, that is why. If people are being hostile to each other, being hostile alone isn't going to generate positive feelings. It may achieve some other objective, but it isn't going to make either person feel good. That is perhaps why love can solve problems, because it has the power to make people happy.

This doesn't mean, that if there is an interaction, the two people fall in love with each other. It means that the two people experience positive emotions toward each other instead of hostile ones. Love, being the most extreme positive emotion, is just the emotion used to represent all the positive emotions because it is so powerful. So

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41592/1.1/>>.

when someone says, "just use love" they don't mean to actually fall in love, they mean use love to achieve a positive atmosphere or attitude and therefore experience the benefits of that, which are similar to the experience of love.

Why is love such a powerful positive emotion? If you think about it, just the emotion happiness isn't as powerful as love would be. Love is powerful because people really like romantic relationships, love represents the good and gentle aspect a romantic relationship could have, that is why it is so powerful.

Chapter 12

Value - Morals¹

There is no worthy purpose but the resolution to do right.

Morality (from the Latin *moralitas* "manner, character, proper behavior") is the differentiation among intentions, decisions, and actions between those that are good (or right) and bad (or wrong). So someone who might be considered to have morals would be someone who is considered to "do the right (not bad or wrong) things". What would this mean for that person's personality as a whole? Not every action someone does could possibly be the "right" thing to do. Even if that were the case, what would someone with perfect morals be like?

How do people define what the right and proper action is in a society? There are norms of what the right things to do are, certain behaviors are generally accepted in each society as either right or wrong. Therefore someone that always did what was considered to be "right" would just be an ideal citizen, because he or she only does what his or her society believes to be the correct thing. It isn't that straightforward, however, because while they might agree on a few behaviors, most people would disagree on what most of the right or wrong behaviors are.

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41600/1.1/>>.

For instance, most people would agree that murder is wrong, and something therefore someone without morals might do, or without morals for those types of behaviors, at least. However, what about most behaviors? Not all behaviors are either labeled as "right" or "wrong", though they could be. In someones opinion, they could label anything someone else does as either "right" or "wrong", though it would be hard to argue how something like choosing one profession over another could be the "wrong" thing to do. By using the label "right" or "wrong" it is implied that a "wrong" thing to do is really bad, that the person doing it is being evil or breaking some sort of moral code or societal standard of goodness.

For certain someone that does the proper right thing all the time would be looked up upon, probably because doing honorable actions is "good". People like people who are nice because it makes them feel good. Someone perfectly moral would be one of the nicer types of people because everything they did would be considered to be kind and good. It should be obvious why someone doing the right thing would be looked up upon, I don't know of anyone who would want someone to destroy society - it is something we all live in and everyone wants at least what is best for themselves.

Chapter 13

Value - Will Power¹

No weakness or difficulty can hold us back if we have enough will power.

Will power is the strength of will to carry out one's decisions, wishes, or plans. But what does that mean, the "strength of will"? It is referring how much power a person has over their own mind. If someone has power over their own mind, or a lot of self control and self-discipline, then they would have enough "strength" to carry out their own decisions, wishes and plans. Will power is used for those purposes, but that doesn't mean that the force of mind used in it is used only for those purposes (your own objectives). Someone could use their will, or we could just call it self-discipline - to do a lot of things in life. You could just say will-power is a focusing of sorts that enables you to perform certain mental actions that without such focus you wouldn't be able to do those actions, you need more "power" or "will power" in order to perform this activity.

It isn't referring to a physical power but a mental one. Someone might physically be capable of taking a walk, but they might not mentally be capable of it - maybe they are too lazy or troubled psychologically otherwise, or their mind isn't collected enough at

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41601/1.2/>>.

the moment for them to do such a directed activity. Will power is basically the force your mind has, it is a mental force just like walking is a physical force that your body can exert.

Will power can increase if someone simply tries harder, it is easy to not do any work and not think, but that wouldn't be showing any mental power or strength. Also, it is even harder to do mental work if you are in a negative emotional state, distracted, tired or otherwise troubled mentally somehow. Your ability to perform complicated mental tasks probably varies throughout the day, at any one time you might be more focused than at any other time.

The most important aspect of will power is that it usually is referring to a type of inner strength that people could have all the time. Its most important quality is that of discipline - in contrast to being lazy, will power shows the personal achievement of getting what you want or what you wanted to do when otherwise you were being too lazy or lacking focus. That is why will power usually refers to someone carrying out their own wishes, decisions and plans - because those things are the most common thing you would need or want to focus on to do.

Chapter 14

Values - Character and Honesty¹

Character and honesty will tell in the long run; most people get pretty much what they deserve.

Character traits describe ways of relating to people or reacting to situations or ways of being. A trait will bring together references to the person's moral system (whether dishonest, a cheat, or a liar), to his or her instinctual makeup (impulsive), basic temperament (cheerful, optimistic, or pessimistic), complex ego functions (humorous, perceptive, brilliant, or superstitious), and basic attitudes toward the world (kind, trustful, or skeptical) and him- or herself (hesitant). So someone could be responsible (instinctual makeup), giving (basic attitude toward the world), fearless (basic attitude toward him- or herself), mean (moral system) and skillful (complex ego function).

So honesty is a character trait. Character traits describe how good or bad a person is such as innocent, loving, rude, rough, arrogant, apologetic, anxious, and wicked. As well as what that person is like

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41604/1.2/>>.

(their temperament) such as warm, quiet, concerned, good, peaceful, pleasant. So character traits describe a lot about a person and what that person is really like. The simple way to describe character would be to ask, "is this person good or bad? What is their attitude towards the world or themselves? What is their demeanor and instincts? Are they gentle or dangerous?"

All of the character traits point to if someone is good or bad really, clearly their moral system does, but also their temperament (such as cheerful, optimistic, or pessimistic) and instinctual makeup (impulsive, responsible) do as well. Also clearly someone's attitude toward the world or themselves is going to determine if they are a good or bad person. Character traits are traits that show how a person relates to other people or their way of being, so clearly these descriptions are going to indicate how that person is perceived by other people.

Personality traits show what a person is like in general, character traits show how a person interacts and who they are such as attitude, instincts, intellect, kindness or cruelty. When you say, "this person has a great personality" you mean that as a whole who they are is great - they have a lot of complex, dynamic traits that can describe anything about who they are. Character traits, on the other hand, refer specifically to how a person interacts with other people or who they are - so it is completely different when you say that someone has a good character than when you say someone has a good personality. When you say someone has a good personality you mean everything about them, when you say someone has a good character you mean they interact well with other people and who they are is a good person.

Chapter 15

Value - Virtue¹

To starve is a small matter, to lose one's virtue is a great one.

Virtue (Latin: *virtus*, Greek: $\rho\epsilon\tau$ [U+03AE] "arete") is moral excellence. A virtue is a positive trait or quality subjectively deemed to be morally excellent and thus is valued as a foundation of principle and good moral being. Virtue is a behavior showing a high moral standard and is a pattern of thought and behavior based on high moral standards.

Anyone could have their own idea of which qualities are virtuous, or certain societies could have their own set of qualities which they might deem virtuous. Some Hindu virtues are restraint, altruism, honesty, cleanliness, and peace. Some roman virtues were dignity, discipline, tenacity, frugality, and gravity. It all depends what you consider to be very moral. And of course something considered to be very moral is something that would be judged as being a very good quality in terms of goodness - the right and proper thing to do.

People value virtues, you could say that virtues are values because they are qualities held in high esteem. Each individual has a core

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41606/1.1/>>.

of underlying values that contribute to his or her system of beliefs, ideas and/or opinions. Someone could value kindness, and since kindness is something which shows moral excellence, it would also be a virtue.

Why are some things considered to be virtues and others are not? Why does the person making the decision of what is a virtue matter so much? Everyone has their own ideas of what the "good" and "right" thing to do is. In fact, one person or culture might think something really terrible and evil (from one persons perspective) is the right thing to do and a virtue. One persons perception of what evil is could be very unique, he or she could be one out of a million people that has that perspective - that doesn't mean that the perspective is wrong, however.

How would one go about outlining what someone thought evil was? If you can explain what your idea of evil is, then it could help you to realize what you think are virtues because it would help your understanding of both good and evil (since good is the opposite of evil). You could list all the things you considered evil and all the things you considered to be "good" for starters.

Chapter 16

Belief - Purpose in Life¹

No time is better spent than that devoted to thinking about the ultimate purposes of life.

Everyone may seek their own meaning in life, if life had the exact same meaning for each person, then we would all be the same. The meaning and purpose of life could be outlined with a few descriptive words, describing the general main activities that people engage in, or it could be described in great detail, outlining the many things that people can do and the rewards they can get.

There are a great many activities that people can do, there are also a great number of intellectual and emotional pursuits people could have. People have motivations that are satisfied by the satisfaction of emotion, or intellectual needs that are satisfied by gaining wisdom. People could have fun and experience pleasure, or they could achieve some other goal that doesn't relate to emotional satisfaction, but an intellectual satisfaction such as doing good or the right thing or they could gain knowledge and wisdom.

People could also realize their potential and ideas, they could become the person they always wanted to be. This would be a type

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41607/1.1/>>.

of intellectual satisfaction, though it would only be achieved if certain types of emotional satisfaction were met. You could have an idea of what your life should be like emotionally, and when you understand that your life is like this then you would be intellectually satisfied.

How is it that just "becoming the person you wanted to be" can be so fulfilling? It is really just a short way of describing everything in life and everything you could gain from it - you could easily be just as happy without understanding that you wanted to be that way, you don't need to have goals in order to live a fulfilling life. I would say that the only thing understanding if you have become the person you want to be brings is a conscious understanding of how meaningful your life is, it is possible that you could have a meaningful life without understanding that.

Chapter 17

Values - Relish and Enthusiasm¹

Life is something to be enjoyed to the full, sensuously enjoyed with relish and enthusiasm.

Relish means to take pleasure in, and enthusiasm means a lively interest. These words have a much more complicated significance, however. You could describe someone who is enthusiastic as being over excited and irritable, instead of just having a healthy interest. Also, you could describe someone who is relishing something as being so actively interested in it that they might be acting off an impulse - an impulse is a wish or urge, particularly a sudden one. So I have shown that the words relish and enthusiasm could on one hand suggest that someone is just being interested in something or taking pleasure in something - which is pretty much what the words mean, or they could suggest a greater intensity, an obsession like interest and pleasure in something.

So someone relishing something could be enjoying it so much that it would be an impulse to get involved with it - that they have a sudden wish or urge to enjoy it. Or when you say, "this person is

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41613/1.3/>>.

relishing that" you could just mean what the word normally suggests, that they are taking pleasure in it, not suggesting that they have become so obsessed with it that they respond to it with an impulse.

When someone uses the word enthusiasm, they probably just mean a lively interest. "That person is enthusiastic about the sports game", they don't necessarily mean that this interest has gotten to a much higher level than that and the person is becoming over excited and irritable. It just goes to show that the words relish and enthusiasm could mean on one hand a mild interest and pleasure in something or on the other, an obsessive, violent, and impulsive interest and pleasure.

The value statement, however "life is something to be enjoyed to the full, sensuously enjoyed with relish and enthusiasm" doesn't imply that the person should become obsessed with life and start going crazy, getting over excited and irritable about it. The word sensuous is used, however which suggests that you really feel life in a pleasurable fashion through the senses. Maybe using the word sensuous to describe how life should be enjoyed suggests a violent level of interest in life, or maybe it simply suggests a mild interest.

Chapter 18

Value - Emotional Control¹

Man should control his bodily senses, his emotions, feelings, and wishes.

People want emotional control so they don't experience pain. If someone could control their emotions, then they would stop pain from occurring. That isn't completely true, however, since a negative emotion could serve a functional purpose. It could provide a source of stimulation or thought. High levels of distress might produce high levels of negative emotions. If someone is in distress, it would probably be harder to control your emotions since you are experiencing large amounts of the emotion pain - it would be hard to feel the experience of many other emotions at the same time.

There is some control that people can have over their emotions, irrational beliefs don't allow a person to be reasonable and express a situation as moderately negative. If someone is being irrational, they may think that something really bad is happening to them, and therefore feel strong negative emotions because they believe themselves to be in pain. Irrational beliefs are rigid, absolutistic beliefs, expressed in the form of "musts", "shoulds" and "oughts".

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m41614/1.1/>>.

Rational beliefs are based on flexible premises, being expressed as desires and preferences.

If you think about it, your desires and preferences alone could help direct a positive emotional experience. If you understand what is going on in your life or in the situation you are in and think about it positively in terms of your desires and preferences, then you might feel really good because you are thinking about the situation in a very positive light. It is like just repeating to yourself the positives in the situation and this may help you realize or be aware of your own positive emotions.

That being said, people mostly cannot control their emotions. If something happens to you then you are probably going to feel the appropriate emotion and there is nothing you are going to be able to do about it. No one knows how thought exactly influences what we feel, but for certain if you don't have irrational beliefs that make the situation look negative and you instead focus on your own desires and preferences you will probably feel better, in addition to being in a better position to change what happens in the situation, which would also probably make you feel better.

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The values people hold influence their social judgement and decision making process. Beliefs pertain to knowledge, how true a belief is can be verified by your knowledge, and how true your knowledge is can be verified by your beliefs (if the knowledge pertains to your beliefs). In any social encounter, people make evaluations of each others attitudes, opinions and beliefs (and, indirectly, their values). This book goes through and discusses various values and value statements and their relevance in a psychological context. The external web link on this page goes to this book on amazon.com ISBN-13: 978-1105254604

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