

# What do we value?

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I have never been fully satisfied with the options that society has presented me as a young adult. I always felt there were too many redundant rules, and much time wasted doing meaningless things. In today's modern society, with such a high level of technological capabilities, why must we work fixed hours, with a fixed number of holidays? Why must we compete with our peers to get a higher test score, to get a job, to get accepted into a school that only accepts a limited number of students? Why must we work in jobs we are not passionate about, in order to live in a society whose values we are not passionate about?

I want to talk deeper about the meaning of value. Society encourages us to value competition: to always strive to make it to the top and win. Whether it is sports, school life or work life, we compete with each other to be the best, and this is what society values in us. Another thing society encourages us to value is consumption. Consumption of more, more low quality, disposable things. More food and drugs (sugar, coffee, alcohol etc.). Consumption of low quality, disposable information like trivial TV, clickbait articles, and hype news with little or no value. We are distracted from the important things in life by these things.

Now, I want to share some of my values with you. I value community. Communities provided me with knowledge, opportunities, friends, places to live and food to eat. People living in communities share with each other so many things that we need to live healthily and happily. I want to value this sense of community in my daily life.

I value the natural environment. It consists of many amazingly balanced natural systems, working in harmony. The natural environment gives birth to life, to the human being, sustains me and all the plants that I eat. It creates clean water to drink, and trees that provide air to breathe and shade from the hot sun. The natural environment in its totality is beyond our comprehension, and it is valuable beyond measurement.

I value myself. I am unique and I have thoughts, dreams and potentialities that are far beyond anything I could put into words. I am open and honest with myself, and in doing so I have developed qualities that I feel are extremely precious in a human being. In treasuring myself, my thoughts, dreams and my creativity, I have enabled myself to be authentic, honest, humble, loving, powerful and free.

This piece of writing was inspired by a conversation I have had many times, often with people of my parents generation. The conversation is about how to make a living in this society. I am often asked, "Nathan, I see you are interested in growing your own food, in living self-sustainably. But how are you going to make money to live? You need money to travel, to go to the hospital if necessary, to buy food that you can't grow yourself, to buy a house... how are you going to make money?"

Before answering these questions, it is important to consider where these questions are coming from. The mind that these questions are coming from puts value on money, and on the things that money can buy. Now, I totally agree that money is a tool that can buy almost any "thing" that we may need "live" in modern society. But to me, those "things" that money can buy are absolutely meaningless without a healthy environment, a healthy community to live in, and a healthy relationship with the self.

When the question you most often ask your children is "how are you going to make money?", then you are ignoring, or being ignorant of, more vital questions, more important ones.

Therefore I say, before we begin to ask about "how are you going to make money?", ask "what can we do to create a sustainable society that is healthy and supportive for all life, at the level of the environment, the human community and the individual human being?". (Or something along those lines, these are just my thoughts at this present time. There are certainly even deeper questions than these).

I implore you to think deeply about values. Be wary of watered-down, meaningless values that are shovelled into your mind through media, schools and other brainwashed people around you. If you can, start talking about values with people to encourage real thinking about this topic. Also, keep your eyes and ears open for role models and good information from which you can learn good values. There are many good teachers out there, but you must be a diligent student to learn from them.