

# **POSITIVE VALUES THAT CREATE VITALITY TO SUSTAIN**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Every organization, no matter what its nature, whether educational, government, private enterprise, local club, or family forms in order to affect its area of influence in some meaningful way. (Wicks, 1998, p. 1) Organizations, governments, and institutions do not form to fail; they form to succeed and have an impact. What is it about some organizations that that allows a high level of sustainability while others flounder?

Take for example banking in the United States, 255 banks have failed nation-wide since 2008. (Wall Street Journal, 2010) In the same time, 251 banks have started up and by all accounts are thriving. (Harrison, 2009) So what makes the difference between failing banks and thriving banks? What makes the difference between a failing university and a thriving university? What makes the difference between a failing government and a thriving government?

Hosts of factors affect how well an organization succeeds and thrives. One of those factors, the focus of this paper, is values. Sustainability requires vitality and growth. What is it about positive values that draw people to leaders and influencers, creating vitality to move forward?

## 1.2 Purpose

Values are decidedly public while at the same time being intensely personal. There are literally hundreds of values that could be stated in some variation or another. The author will:

1. identify common values that are considered positive;
2. address the characteristics of values that can create vitality to sustain;
3. identify what motivates people to follow certain values;
4. identify how certain values can sustain organizations and institutions.

## 1.3 Definition of Terms

*Sustainability* – The continued use of resources, with the goal of lasting growth, so that the resource is not depleted or damaged. Resources can mean physical, economic or human resources.

Taken from the Strathmore University Ethics Conference executive summary, “Sustainability also embraces key elements without which a society cannot advance, such as constitutional provisions that respect and protect human dignity, a legislature understood as a true law-making arm, a sound judiciary system, social policy formulation and research, a value system that fosters virtuous leadership and other related subjects.” For the purpose of this paper, the author will focus on a value system that fosters virtuous leadership.

*Values* – Taken from Webster’s Dictionary, values mean “Something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable, having desirable or esteemed characteristics or qualities.” Values are understood to mean those qualities that are considered to be intrinsically (as opposed to merely instrumentally) valuable, worthy or desirable. (Schwartz, 2005, p. 31) It

is critical to understand that multiple subsets of values exist. There are family values, personal values, moral values, cultural values, corporate values, government values, and on.

*Virtue* – The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines virtue as conformity to a standard of right, a particular moral excellence. Aristotle goes further, defining a virtue as “that which makes its subject good.” For this paper, a virtue will be considered anything that makes its subject good.

*Vitality* – Most any definition of vitality implies that it distinguishes the living from the dead; we can accept this concept literally or metaphorically. Vitality for the purposes of this paper implies a capacity to live, develop and progress.

## **2. ABOUT VALUES**

### **2.1 Value and Fact**

The intrinsic nature of values can lead to difficulties in having conversation about values. Values are part of our essential nature and come from a lifetime of experiences and environment. Values are not easily lent to analysis or even consistent definition, so the tendency in conversation is frequently to contrast values with fact. (Carroll, 1996) An action or judgment based on values often ends up characterized as a “value judgment” when it does not line up with what one may perceive as fact. At the same time in these instances, the values are real just as facts are real, leaving the question, are value judgments worthy for consideration as facts.

This question is important to address in any conversation about values. Questions of fact hinge on evidence as do questions of value. In other words, we may call someone kind because there is evidence or fruit of kindness. On the other hand, we can tell if someone values their self

above others based on the kind of evidence we see through their actions, words and attitudes. Values are subject to change and different interpretations just like the king of fact-finding, science is subject to change and different interpretations.

One could argue that values fall short of fact because they are only reflected in outward behaviors and we can all modify our behavior to some extent. What we see on the outside is not necessarily what is happening on the inside. Science experiences the same phenomenon. We once thought the earth was the center of the universe, we now know it is not. We once thought the world was flat, we now know it is not. We once thought that Pluto was a planet, we now know it is not.

Fact relies not on a perception formed from a passing glance or chance encounter; it relies on continued examination and study. Determining one's values is no different. We cannot identify values based on a single event or chance encounter. As facts require continued study, values require continued relationship. We cannot know facts outside of study and likewise, we cannot know values outside of relationship. That said, we could reach a point where we are just as confident that someone, or some organization holds certain values and will act out of those values just as we can be sure of the fact that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Understanding the relationship between values and fact is important in order to establish that when we talk about values, we are not speaking theoretically. Values are real.

## 2.2 Identifying Values

A cursory web search of the term “ethics definition” returns over 8,000,000 results. In my experience working in the field of ethics and values, I have learned that most definitions of ethics contain language something like, “Ethics is a code of values which guides our choices and

actions and determines the purpose and course of our lives.” (Josephson, 2002) The core elements include values and choices. Through all these 8,000,000 possibilities to define ethics, the question still remains, what (or possibly whose) values do we allow to guide our choices and determine the course of our lives, our organizations, our institutions.

If we are to claim universal values, it is necessary to have guiding principles for identifying values that are positive across time and culture. We need a set of criteria for identifying universal values. There has been much research on normative values for corporate codes of ethics that have done well to create and categorize a framework of criteria for content of codes of ethics or values, analysis of these codes and critique of these codes. (Schwartz, 2005, p. 28) What Schwartz claims has been lacking however is the core values to fit in these codes. In other words, we have an acceptable framework in which we can insert values and call it a code of ethics, but we have yet to identify the universal values that fit into the framework.

### **2.3 Proposed Universal Values**

Over the last two decades, the importance of identifying universal moral norms has been highlighted, but there still is no standard set of values that are considered universal. (Schwartz, 2005, pp. 30-31) At this point, I offer a set of values for consideration as universal. Schwartz suggests criteria for identifying these values:

In other words, to the greatest extent possible, the selected moral values should retain their significance despite differences in culture, religion, time, and circumstance. The values should be accepted by a large and diversified number of individuals and social groups as being of fundamental importance in guiding or evaluating behavior, actions, or policies. In a sense, universal moral values might be considered similar to “hypernorms,” described by Donaldson and Dunfee as

“deep moral values” representing “...a convergence of religious, political, and philosophical thought.” Hypernorms are considered “so fundamental that, by definition, they serve to evaluate lower-order norms [while]... reaching to the root of what is ethical for humanity.” (Schwartz, p. 31)

The purpose of this paper is not to go into depth studying values and providing a philosophical justification, but rather to establish that some values can be considered, at least initially, legitimately universal. This is important in discussing values that create vitality. In his work, Schwartz used the strategy of identifying values that come from a number of different sources (Schwartz, p. 31) and have convergence among the values identified by the sources. Schwartz used three sources of values, ethics statements of companies, global codes of ethics, and business ethics literature. (Schwartz, pp. 32-35)

In 1992, the Josephson Institute of Ethics brought together 30 national leaders representing all types of organizations in the United States. Leaders from varying fields including schools, family support organizations, faith communities, youth service groups, ethics centers and character education experts gathered to identify and agree upon a list of core ethical values. This group met in Aspen, Colorado and identified core values that assumedly transcend cultural, religious and socioeconomic differences. The six core values identified by this group, called the *Aspen Declaration*, include these values: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. (Josephson, pp. 9-17) .

Leading up to 1993, a group involving theologians, scriptural scholars, bankers, business people and politicians met in Amman, Jordan with the objective of, “constructing a code of ethics for international business based on the ‘shared moral, ethical and spiritual values inherent in the common Abrahamic tradition’ embracing Judaism, Christianity and Islam.” (Dalla-Costa,

1998, p. 128) The result of this effort is the 1993 *Interfaith Declaration*. The *Interfaith Declaration* brings forth four key concepts relating to identifying values common among the three Abrahamic religions: justice, mutual respect, stewardship and honesty. (Dalla-Costa, 1998, p. 132)

In 2004, Carole Jurkiewicz and Robert Giacalone published the results of research on the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational performance. They conducted the research as a result of the changing dynamics of the role of the workplace in an individual's life. Jurkiewicz and Giacalone assert that work is becoming increasingly central to employees' personal growth. (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004, p. 129) Through this research, Jurkiewicz and Giacalone identified ten values common to workplace spirituality. The values include: benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility and trust.

Using Schwartz's method of convergence, it is reasonable to assume a set of values that can be considered as universal from these sources. This set of values includes:

1. Trustworthiness (Honesty, Integrity, Trust)
2. Respect (Mutual Respect, Humanism, Receptivity)
3. Fairness (Justice)
4. Responsibility (Stewardship)
5. Caring (Benevolence)
6. Mutuality (Citizenship)
7. Generativity

Of course, one cannot assert this list to be complete, but one can reasonably assert this list to be functional for discussing universal values and applying values to leadership.



## 2.4 Values that Create Vitality

Identifying universal values for leadership is somewhat different from identifying universal values for leadership that create vitality to sustain. There may be some convergence of these value sets, and one would expect to see values that sustain rise out of core a set of universal values. This may or may not be the case considering that the list of universal values may not be complete. An additional challenge is that a substantial amount of research on values that create vitality does not exist. The author's experience is that the body of research on sustainability centers primarily on environmental and economic concerns, incorporating little on personal values or potential organizational values that will create vitality to sustain an organization.

One common indicator for identifying countries or organizations in terms of vitality and sustainability is the presence of growth. Considering the definition of sustainability for this paper, growth is a valid criterion to use as a potential indicator of sustainability. The problem is that the criteria used to determine growth vary widely among sources.

For example, The CIA Factbook compares countries in six categories and identifies top (and assumedly sustainable) countries in terms of growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (United States Central Intelligence Agency) The top three countries in GDP growth are Macau, Qatar and Azerbaijan.

Transparency International issues a Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) that ranks countries in terms of corruptibility. (Transparency International) The author examined this resource with the assumption that more corruptible countries are less vital. Transparency International based the index on surveys from various sources, including citizens who have experienced dealings with governments. (Transparency International) The top three least corruptible countries according to the index are New Zealand, Denmark and Singapore.

An organization called Ethical Traveler made a ranking of the developing world's ten best ethical destinations based on a country's forward movement in three areas, environmental protection, social welfare, and human rights. (Greenwald & Hoover) The top three countries on this survey are Argentina, Belize and Chile.

Based on this survey, two issues with identifying global values for sustainability become evident. First, there is no global standard, making the concept of growth relative to whatever a country or organization or person values most at the time. This leads to a phenomenon where a country with a good economy but poor human rights record could claim growth when human rights efforts are increasing, even if the economy begins to recede.

Second, there is little consistency in comparing sources based on criteria. The author chose growth as a sample criterion and among three sources found nine different countries in the top three of each survey. One would assume that if growth were occurring in a healthy way that a truly vital country would show up in at least two of the lists. Furthermore, there is little commonality between the nine countries on the lists. For example, Azerbaijan is number three on the CIA Factbook list of growth in GDP and ties with two other countries for 143<sup>rd</sup> place out of 180 countries on the Transparency International CPI. Growth is not always tied to positive values and it is important to understand that positive values that create vitality need to be values that in themselves would not exist in a corrupt environment. Complicating this is the notion that corruption occurs in secret and is not directly observable. (Us-Swaleheen & Stansel)

According to an article written by G. Shabbir Cheema, a corrupt administration directly abuses the foundation of government (or perhaps any other kind of institution). Under corruption, an institution designed to govern relationships between citizens and itself is used instead for personal gain and provision of benefits, diverting them from the constituents to the

corrupt. Affects of corruption include loss of revenue, increased costs, misallocation of funds, strife, instability and stifling of growth. Cheema also claims that corruption stifles initiative and enterprise, (Cheema) both of these are necessary elements for vitality and sustainability.

Considering that any values that create vitality must exist apart from corruption, the author sought to identify values identified from people or organizations that desire to move away from an already existing corrupt system and those values held by people or organizations that employees or citizens desire to see from their leaders.

In 1996, retired Los Angeles Police Department Deputy Chief Robert Vernon started the Pointman Leadership Institute. Since that time, the Institute has presented over 775 seminars on responsible leadership and ethics in 55 countries, many of which are mandated to, or have a desire to move away from a corrupt system of government or towards a more democratic system of government. During those seminars, Vernon and other Pointman Leadership Institute speakers have asked what behavior traits followers appreciate in their leader. (Vernon, Minnesota Chiefs of Police Association Spring Institute) Working from those behaviors, the Pointman Leadership Institute has identified eight foundational character traits that support desired behaviors of leaders. The traits include: integrity, courage, discipline, loyalty, diligence, humility, optimism and conviction. (Vernon, *Character: The Foundation of Leadership*, pp. 47-119)

In his book, *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make*, Hans Finzel writes about avoiding leadership pitfalls. Along the way he identifies several values desirable in a leader. Finzel views leadership not as a position aspired to, but rather as a calling, something we are willing to do out of necessity. (Finzel, p. 12) Finzel is appropriate as a resource for identifying positive values that sustain by virtue of his definition of leadership. Finzel defines leadership with one word,

influence. He asserts that anyone who has influenced someone to do something has led that person. He offers a second option for a definition of leadership by asserting, “A leader takes people where they would never go on their own.” (Finzel, p. 16) This type of forward movement Finzel sees in leadership is characteristic of vitality and sustainability as people grow.

Through his description of capable leadership and its results on those led, Finzel identifies five values desirable in high influence leaders: relational capability, desire to regenerate, service mindedness, affirmation and humility. (Finzel, pp. 45-162)

In identifying values that create vitality, a closer look at Jurkiewicz and Giacalone’s work is warranted. Through their research, they recognized that spiritual values often transcend typical culture, leading to productivity and growth. In other words, organizations that embody transcendent goals as part of their culture are most productive and through that productivity, they confer organizational dominance in the marketplace. (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, p. 130) There is suggestion that the values Jurkiewicz and Giacalone identified are capable of leading to organizational transcendence, which implies growth, vitality and effective sustained effort.

Using Schwartz’s method of convergence, it is reasonable to assume a set of values from these sources that can be considered as having the potential to create vitality to sustain. This set of values includes:

1. Regeneration (Generativity)
2. Integrity
3. Humility (Service-Minded)
4. Optimism (Benevolence)
5. Receptivity (Relational, Affirming)
6. Responsibility (Diligence)

## 2.5 What the Six Values Mean

Each of these values deserves further description and a short summary statement of what the value looks like in action:

### Regeneration

Regeneration requires that a constant eye be kept on the future. Individuals who are high in regeneration are interested in leaving something behind for those who follow. Behaviors that mirror regenerative concerns such as mentoring show that it is positively correlated with career outcomes, role clarity, and job satisfaction. (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, p. 132) As leaders gain influence in an organization, they move past the authority granted by their positions and relational capabilities into the arena of results. People will first look at results a leader impacts for the organization, i.e. what is the leader doing to create a positive environment to succeed, then they will look for how they are better because of the leader. (Finzel, p. 34) Regeneration is a value that assures institutional success well into the future. When an organization or institution values growing people, vitality and growth occur.

*Regeneration looks like investment in people for the greater good.*

### Integrity

Ethical multiplicity, as Jurkiewicz and Giacalone describe it often precipitates a clash between employees' personal and organizational lives, leading to disconnect, disparity, and alienation from their work environments. These are hardly sustaining behaviors. Conversely, they assert that both organizations and individuals do well when their values are integral and aligned, and that employee commitment and productivity both increase as a result. (Jurkiewicz

& Giacolone, p. 133) Vernon describes integrity as the “cardinal factor” in leadership, in that it is basic to **sustained** (emphasis his) effective leadership. (Vernon, Character: The Foundation of Leadership, p. 51)

Jurkiewicz and Giacolone emphasize a 1994 study that suggests that leaders who view their work as a means to advance spiritually, at the individual or group level, instill a sense of integrity and lead the organization to higher levels of performance. (Jurkiewicz & Giacolone, p. 133) The link with spirituality is an important one. We consist of integral parts. Integrity is what keeps those integral parts whole. Wholeness can only be interpreted in comparison to something bigger than the self. The effect can never be greater than the cause. For many, the spiritual aspect of their lives offers an appropriate reference under which they can balance actions.

*Integrity looks like alignment with something greater than yourself and serving that greater good primarily.*

## Humility

Two aspects of humility make it important as a value for vitality. The first aspect is teachability. True humility makes someone teachable. (Vernon, Character: The Foundation of Leadership, p. 97) Valuing humility allows the holder of the value to have an open mind. With an open mind, the pressure to “know it all” is off, leaving room to look at life as an experience for continued learning. This attitude leaves us open to new ideas, different experiences, more rounded insight and an ability to listen to opposing opinions. These characteristics facilitate the value of receptivity.

Humility also lessens the necessity for blame. (Vernon, Character: The Foundation of Leadership, p. 105) It is usually difficult for people to accept responsibility for foolish decisions and actions. Those who value humility accept mishaps as part of taking risks and growing. Less emphasis is placed on blaming and more emphasis is placed on learning from the past rather than living in it.

People who value humility also tend not to view themselves as too good to help with the work of those below them positionally in the organization. People with a humble attitude are more service-minded and more willing to share in work. This leads to effective modeling and camaraderie in an organization. Humility leads to allegiance, resulting in single-mindedness. (Finzel, pp. 26-30)

*Humility looks like a desire to learn and to serve.*

### Optimism

Organizations are emotional arenas. Benevolent activities that engender positive emotions result in improved employee attitudes about work, which in turn translate into enhanced performance. Research has shown that employees who are shown organizational kindness are more motivated toward task accomplishment, and are significantly more productive than when in organizations where such kindness is not shown. When organizations promote hope and happiness, employees are better able to deal with stressors in the work environment, further contributing to organizational performance. (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, p. 132)

According to Vernon, people prefer following someone who demonstrates that they believe organizational objectives and long-term vision can and probably will be met. Contrarily, a leader who signals, even subtly, that objectives and vision cannot be met, demoralizes people.

Human nature is to put little effort into something that seems futile. (Vernon, Character: The Foundation of Leadership, p. 109) Optimism is an important value for vitality and sustainability not only for what defines it, but also for what defines its opposite, pessimism. Pessimism will kill vitality and sustainability.

*Optimism looks like a confident outlook of the best for the future.*

### Receptivity

Research has shown that threatening environments produce rigid and simplistic decision-making, while supportive and an open relationship with coworkers fosters productivity and creativity. (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, p. 133) Creative organizations, a key element in receptivity, are more fiscally healthy and therefore better able to grow and adapt to changing conditions.

A value like receptivity that exemplifies relationship and affirmation provides significant opportunity to influence and transform people. (Finzel, pp. 46-49) Receptivity implies direct contact and Finzel asserts that a person or number of key people with whom we have real life personal contact will serve as the primary change agents in our lives. (Finzel, p. 47) Considering that sustainability means lasting growth, receptivity is a significant value that creates the vitality of relationship and a significant potential for growth.

A key to receptivity is the Golden Rule, commonly stated in terms similar to, “Do unto others, as you would have done unto you.” The Golden Rule is considered a universal moral imperative (See Appendix A) and has been adopted as such by the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. (Parliament of the World's Religions, p. 7) As a teaching for the world’s major religions, the Golden Rule provides a common ground for receptivity.



*Receptivity looks like making time and room for people.*

## Responsibility

Essentially, responsibility is doing what you are supposed to do. When this happens, a history of reliability and dependability is established. As it relates to integrity, responsibility and diligence brings a sense of predictability and trust. When we act responsibly, other's confidence in us increases. Responsibility leads to organizational confidence. (Vernon, Character: The Foundation of Leadership, p. 50)

Responsibility and diligence also are the basis for pursuing excellence. When diligent pursuit of excellence is a core to an organization's culture, the result is high levels of accomplishment. As an organization recognizes its accomplishments, diligence and the pursuit of excellence becomes a way of life in the organization. Vernon quotes Theodore Martin, "Excellence in any art or profession is attained only by hard and persistent work." (Vernon, Character: The Foundation of Leadership, p. 92)

*Responsibility looks like a commitment to do your best and pursuing a high level of excellence.*

## **3. IDENTIFYING AND LIVING VALUES**

### **3.1 Identifying Values**

There are many methods that an organization or individual can use to identify values that range from choosing values from a desired list to conducting in-depth research that identifies core values that the organization, its formal leaders and its employees are already living.

Typically, in an organization, employees and formal leaders are already living out positive and negative values. The only task left in identifying organization values is to “mine” them from examining the experiences and stories of the people in the organization.

For example, in the author’s workplace, a police department in a city of 51,000, the management team set forth to identify a revised mission and values statement. The management group that consists of the police chief, divisional captains, sergeants and one civilian supervisor were left with orders to come to the next monthly staff meeting with a list of values for consideration to be adopted as part of the new values statement. This does not work well. The human tendency in this type of exercise is to pick values that sound good and will present a positive public image with little thought on whether they will be lived out. The result is a bland statement of values that are not the actual values lived out in the organization. People infer real values by experiencing and observing what people in the organization do, typically through means of reward and punishment. (Hultman)

Instead, the author suggested a month long exercise where department leadership spends time talking with employees about their experiences in the organization and listening to employees, hearing the stories they tell about their life in the organization. The result is a mission statement that states, “The mission of the Apple Valley Police Department is to protect our community and improve quality of life through service, education, and enforcement.” (City of Apple Valley Police Department) In addition to the mission statement, a set of core values was identified that includes: learning, service, integrity, honesty and professionalism. This is a statement based not on lofty ideals or feelings at a certain time, but based on who we are at the core.

### 3.2 **Fostering Values**

Once identified, there are a number of ways that an organization can foster values that create vitality to sustain. (Rae & Wong, p. 431) With no single ideal approach to fostering values, I offer these thoughts:

- It is important to have some sort of written credo or statement that identifies your organization's values. Dan Ariely is a professor of behavioral economics at Duke University in the United States. He had done research on cheating with college students. One control group had a moral reminder before taking a test that Ariely designed to be easy to cheat. He had the control group list as many of the Ten Commandments that they could remember. This control group cheated less than the other group that listed ten books they had read in high school. Ariely asserts that when our values or morals are in front of us this, "reminds us of who we are at the point it really matters." (Zetter)
- Top management must be committed. Senior managers, elected officials, and other administrators must set the tone for an organization to have a hope of effectively communicating values that create vitality to sustain. Bear in mind that research shows values are communicated through action more than words and workers are adept at finding differences in espoused and actual values.
- Developing a structure of communication of values is not sufficient by itself. Processes must accompany the communication structure. A value of relationships is already established as a value that creates vitality to sustain. Relationships are a key factor in communicating and enforcing desired values.

- Raising your organization's values consciousness is not easy. This takes time and often money. If you are in an environment that took years to get to a certain point morally, it is reasonable to assume that a turnaround could take a significant amount of time. Patience and faith for the future are essential.

## **4. VALUE AND VIRTUE**

### **4.1 The Problem with Values**

Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* once said, "We see the world not as it is but as we are." Often times, if not supported by a firm foundation, values can become subjective, measured only against the worldview of the person holding the values. When values cease to be measured against a solid foundational benchmark, the values stop serving the good of the people.

This is a natural human phenomenon. People are generally much less accurate when predicting their own behavior than predicting the behavior of others, overestimating the likelihood that they will act in a selfless and altruistic manner. We have a bias toward viewing ourselves in a positive light and justifying our own moral standing by underestimating the moral standing of others. (Epley & Dunning, p. 873) This is not a new phenomenon. In his gospel account, St. Luke portrays the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, as such:

"Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'" (Holy Bible, Luke 18:9-12, New Living Translation)

Rather than applying to the goodness and progress of the people, values can become a means of serving the self, with justification for actions not measured against foundational values, but rather against self-interest. One only needs to look as far as the 42,000,000 people killed by Joseph Stalin, or the 21,000,000 killed by Adolph Hitler, all in the name of the State, to see that without proper foundations, things done in the name of a set of values can go terribly wrong. A solid foundational benchmark for values is vital.

#### 4.2 The Necessity of Virtue

Virtue provides this benchmark. Thomas Aquinas said that things are either self-evident or evident through a higher science. (Fairweather, p. 38) We cannot count entirely on values being self-evident for the reasons given earlier; people are generally much less accurate when predicting their own behavior than predicting the behavior of others, overestimating the likelihood that they will act in a selfless and altruistic manner. Because of the phenomenon of moral estimation, we cannot hold values as truly self-evident. There must be some “higher science” as Aquinas put it, which allows us to evaluate values.

In a conversation between Socrates and Menos, Menos asked Socrates whether virtue comes to one from teaching, practice, naturally, or by some other means. As the conversation continued with Socrates turning the question back to Menos, Menos became frustrated, eventually telling his teacher, “When I ask you for one virtue, you present me with a swarm of them.” (Ladd, p. 190) Virtue comes in different names and forms. The classic cardinal virtues include prudence, courage, self-control and justice. Theological virtues include faith, hope, love, mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Other classical virtues include loyalty, benevolence, magnanimity, humility, wisdom, courage, self-control and fortitude. Each of these

virtues is worthy of study and desire, but what one virtue embraces and guarantees all the other moral excellences of the virtuous person? Ladd argues that there is no such lone virtue. (Ladd, p. 192)

In the absence of an overriding virtue, what is it about virtues that cause them to make their subject good? The answer lies not in the virtues themselves, but in their purpose – that we grow through virtuous habit.

#### 4.3 **Growth and Virtue**

I have defined virtue in Aristotle's terms as that which makes its subject good. A cardinal characteristic of virtue is that it is a habitual form of conduct, which ultimately distinguishes good action from bad action:

Habitual forms of conduct, which distinguish good men, from bad men; or, the qualities which when expressed in the conduct of life realize the conception of the nobler and better self. (Ladd, p. 159)

A cardinal characteristic of virtue is that it moves us from one state of character and conduct to another higher state of character and conduct.

The end of practical knowledge is some sort of action. What we know is secondary, what we do with what we know is primary. As Thomas Aquinas said, "A tree is known by the fruit it bears, so are we." Values are called good or bad, valid or invalid by their fruit, a fruit born of virtue. In the end, a person's values will be judged by the benchmark of virtues that transcend time, culture and circumstance in the growth of habit. In our quest for moral virtues, both individually and corporately the law of progress is one of gradual perfection.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

The research on values that create vitality to sustain lead to the following conclusions:

Common thought is that values are separate from fact and for that reason they take a secondary position to facts in terms of evaluating thoughts, ideas, strategies, etc. In fact, values are no less real than many other things that have been accepted over time as fact. Values have validity as the basis for decision-making and strategizing.

Research is emerging that attempts to establish the existence of values that are universal in nature. Certain criteria do exist to help identify whether we can reasonably consider a value universal or not. In light of this, research is revealing sets of potentially universal values. This is significant for holding the conversation about values especially cross culturally and across the globe.

Using the same thought process, we can identify a set of values that holds potential to create vitality to sustain an organization, institution, government or country. The values hold similar characteristics in that they provide for transformation and growth in both people and organizations. These or any values for that matter can be identified through observing, listening and relating to stakeholders both inside and outside the organization.

Validation of values happens through virtuous behavior that is identified through the fruit of our actions, both as individuals and corporately. Values are beneficial when they move people, governments and organizations from one state of character and conduct to another higher state of character and conduct.

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## APPENDIX A

The Golden Rule in Different World Faiths: (Baha'i Faith -- Universal House of Justice, 2007)

### *AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION:*

"A SAGE is ingenuous and leads his life after comprehending the parity of the killed and the killer. THEREFORE, neither does he cause violence to others nor does he make others do so."

(Yoruba Proverb, Nigeria)

"One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts."

(Yoruba Proverb, Nigeria)

### *BAHA'I WORLD FAITH:*

"Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself."

(Baha'u'llah, Tablets, p. 71)

"Lay not on any soul a load which ye would not wish to be laid on you, and desire not for any one the things ye would not desire for yourselves."

(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings LXVI, p. 128)

"Ascribe not to any soul that which thou wouldst not have ascribed to thee, and say not that which thou doest not. This is my command unto thee, do thou observe it."

(Baha'u'llah, The Hidden Words, Arabic # 29)

"Choose for thy neighbor that which thou choosest for thyself."

(Baha'u'llah, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 30)

### *BAHA'U'LLAH:*

"O son of man! If thine eyes be turned towards mercy, forsake the things that profit thee and cleave unto that which will profit mankind. And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbour that which thou choosest for thyself."

(Baha'u'llah, The third Leaf of the Most Exalted Paradise, Tablets, p. 64)

### *BUDDHISM:*

"Hurt not others with that which pains yourself or in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. One should seek for others the happiness one desires for one's self"

(Udana-Varqa, 5:18)

### *CHRISTIANITY:*

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

(Matthew 7:12)

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."  
(Luke 6:31)

### *CONFUCIANISM:*

"Do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you."  
(Analects, 15:23)

"If one strives to treat others as he would be treated by them, he will come near the perfect life."  
(Book of Meng Tzu)

### *HINDUISM:*

"This is the sum of duty: do naught unto others that which would cause pain if done unto you."  
(Mahabharata 5:1517)

"Do not to others what ye do not wish done to yourself; and wish for others too, what ye desire and long for, for yourself. This is the whole of Dharma, heed it well."  
(The Celestial Song, 2:65)

### *ISLAM:*

"Not one of you is a believer until he desires for another that which he desires for himself."  
(Muhammad, 40 Hadith of an-Nawawi 13)

"Do unto all men as you would they should do unto you, and reject for them that which you would reject for yourself."  
(Mishkat-el-Masabih)

### *ISLAM:*

"Not one of you is a believer until he desires for another that which he desires for himself."  
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(Mishkat-el-Masabih)

### *JAINIST:*

"A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated."  
(Sutrakritanga 1.11.33)

### *JUDAISM:*

"What is hateful to you, DO NOT to your fellow man. That is the law: all the rest is commentary."  
(Talmud, Shabbat 31a)

"Thou shalt LOVE thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD."  
(Moses, Leviticus 19:18)

#### *NATIVE AMERICAN:*

"Love your friend and never desert him. If you see him surrounded by the enemy do not run away; go to him, and if you cannot save him, be killed together and let your bones lie side by side."  
(Sur-AR-Ale-Shar, The Lessons of the Lone Chief)

"Do not kill or injure your neighbor, for it is not him that you injure, you injure yourself. But do good to him, therefore add to his days of happiness as you add to your own. Do not wrong or hate your neighbor, for it is not him that you wrong, you wrong yourself. But love him, for The Great Spirit (Moneto) loves him also as he loves you."  
(Shawnee)

"Respect for all life is the foundation."  
(The Great Law of Peace)

#### *SIKH:*

"Precious like jewels are the minds of all. To hurt them is not at all good. If thou desirest thy Beloved, then hurt thou not anyone's heart."  
(Guru Aranj Devji 259, Guru Granth Sahib)

#### *TAO:*

"Pity the misfortunes of others; rejoice in the well-being of others; help those who are in want; save men in danger; rejoice at the success of others; and sympathise with their reverses, even as though YOU WERE in their place."

"The sage has no interests of his own, but regards the interests of the people as his own. He is kind to the kind, he is also kind to the unkind: for virtue is kind."  
(T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien)

#### *WESTERN SCHOOLS:*

"What you wish your neighbors to be to you, such be also to them."  
(Pythagorean)

"We should conduct ourselves toward others as we would have them act toward us."  
(Aristotle, from Plato and Socrates)

"Avoid doing what you would blame others for doing."  
(Thales)

"Do not to your neighbor what you would take ill from him."  
(Pittacus)

"Cherish reciprocal benevolence, which will make you as anxious for another's welfare as your own"  
(Aristippus of Cyrene).

"Act toward others as you desire them to act toward you"  
(Isocrates)

### ***ZOROASTRIANISM:***

"That nature ONLY is good when it shall NOT DO unto another whatever is not good for its own self."  
(Dadistan-i-Dinik, 94:5)

"Whatsoever is disagreeable to yourself do not do unto others."  
(Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29)

That which is good for all and any one, for whomsoever - that is good for me. What I hold good for self, I should for all. Only Law Universal, is true Law."  
(Zoroaster, Yasana-Gathas)