

“Connect and Reflect” – A Values Clarification Exercise

Think of someone you care about and like to spend time with: a friend, child, partner, parent, relative, co-worker; could even be a team mate in your sports team, or a teacher or coach or mentor. *(If you can't think of anyone currently, then pick someone you used to like spending time with in the past).*

Remember a time – recent or distant – where you were with that person, doing something that you like. It may be a very intimate/loving/sensual memory that involves hugging, cuddling, kissing etc. – or it may be just having some fun, playing a game, joking around – or perhaps doing some creative or sporting activity – or maybe just sharing a meal or going for a walk or watching a movie together, or simply having a good chat about something.

Make this memory as vivid as possible. Relive it. Feel it emotionally.

Look out from behind your own eyes in this memory. Notice what you can see, hear, touch, taste, smell, think, feel and do (in this memory). If you are in physical contact with the other person, feel their body against yours.

What does it feel like to be doing this activity with this person you care about? Let yourself feel it, and appreciate it. Savour the moment.

Now step back and look at the memory as if watching it on a TV screen. And focus on yourself. In this memory:

- What are you saying and doing?
- How are you interacting with the other person; treating them; responding to them?
- What qualities are you showing in this memory?

See if you can come up with 2 or 3 words to describe these qualities. For example, are you being open, engaged, interested, loving, kind, fun-loving, playful, connected, engaged, interested, appreciative, honest, real, courageous, intimate?

What does this tell you or remind you of in terms of:

- the sort of person you want to be?
- the way you want to treat yourself and others?
- the sort of relationships you want to build?
- how you want to spend your time?

Finally, consider: how can you apply these insights in the week ahead? What social interactions are going to occur in the next few days – at home, school, work, out and about? What are two or three values you can ‘sprinkle’ into these social interactions, to give them some extra flavour? For example, would you like to sprinkle in some kindness or caring or courage or interest or playfulness?

When you ‘flavour’ your social interactions with your values, take a moment to ‘savour’ the experience: What is it like for you to be acting in this way? What difference does it make?

Find as many opportunities for ‘flavouring and savouring’ as you can, and notice the impact it has on your life.