

how to be

# RICH and HAPPY

Whatever you want,  
Whenever you want.



by John P. Strelecky  
and Tim Brownson

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Out of respect for the privacy of the individuals whose stories are explained in the book, some names and extraneous details have at times been changed.

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“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate  
– our deepest fear is that we’re powerful beyond  
measure.”

—Marianne Williamson

Congratulations on taking one of the most important steps you've ever taken in your life. You've decided to decide. You've chosen to choose versus live a life that others chose for you. That right there makes you one of a select group of people.

If you read the information in this book, and apply it in your life, you will be part of an even more exclusive group- those who are Rich and Happy.

As you embark on this adventure, you may be wondering how this book came to be. How and why do a #1 Best-Selling inspirational author whose works are in nineteen languages (John) and a renegade life coach with one of the most left-field thinking and successful life coaching blogs on the Internet (Tim) pair up to write a book called *How to be Rich and Happy*?

The answer is actually pretty straight forward. Part of it you'll find in the personal story described in the the opening chapter. That will explain our own motivation for discovering the formula for being Rich and Happy. The other part, which is why write the book now, is simply because we listened to what people are asking for.

We have been friends for a number of years. A friendship that began because although we operate in different arenas (Tim in life coaching and online blogging and John as an author and speaker) and we have very different styles (Tim relies on a very British sense of humor, where John is more serious and inspirational) we have a similar life purpose, which is to help people.

And when we would get together for a round of golf, or grab lunch, and discuss how things were going and what people were telling us, it kept coming back to the same answer- people are really struggling. We knew from our interactions

with them, and through our own life experiences, that even when they couldn't actually name it, what they wanted was to be Rich and Happy.

Tim was seeing it through his work with individual clients, and via his blog, and John was seeing it at his events when he was speaking to large audiences. So when people asked us what we were working on next, we started telling them we were working on a book called "How to be Rich and Happy." And literally every single person responded with something close to "That's the book I need."

If you are familiar with John's previous books; *The Why Cafe*, *Life Safari*, and *The Big Five for Life- Leadership's Greatest Secret*, this will be a very different type of read. Those works are fictional stories with inspirational messages.

This is a non-fiction, tell it like it is book. That said, the underlying focus is still the same - **help people live the life they want to live.**

Although the book is written by both of us, for ease of reading, you'll see that it reads as if there is just one author. The word "I" is the collective I of both of us. Think of us as science experiment gone mad, where two people's brains and life experiences have been merged into one.

Or, just realize that it is a heck of a lot easier to explain the stories and material the way it's written, than for us to keep clarifying who is saying what.

And now, let's move you forward with what you want and deserve- to be Rich and Happy.

*John and Tim*

# introduction

Throughout each piece of this book, you will find reference to the formula that has made thousands of people I've analyzed over the course of almost twenty years, not only rich, but Rich AND Happy!

The staying power of this formula is evidenced in that it was first introduced to me through the life story of Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, who lived more than two hundred years ago. It is the same formula that Bill Gates, currently the wealthiest man in the world, a man whose net worth exceeds twenty three billion dollars, a man who dropped out of college, began applying when he was just a boy of 13.

When I first began to discover the pieces of the formula, they left such an indelible impression on me that I was left inspired to ponder them, reflect on them, seek examples of them in everyone I met, and of course, use them.

Through my research and through my own experiences with the formula, I have come to realize that it is the difference between those individuals who live a Rich and Happy life, and those who do not. Knowledge and use of it makes all the difference.

This book explains the formula and how it has been the defining factor in the lives of people from all varieties of backgrounds, races, and geographies. Thousands have applied it and reaped the benefits.

Having seen the impact this information has on young people from around the world, I am confident that if this were taught to youth early in their life, we would see a future of innovation, cooperation, and satisfaction with life, like the human race has never before experienced.

Perhaps you, like many others have already, will find yourself a catalyst for making that happen after you read this book and enjoy what the formula enables.

As you read the information, you will learn why this formula for success will work for everyone who uses it. How a man named Eiffel put it to work and watched it generate millions of dollars in wealth as he forever carved his place in history by doing something he loved.

All the truths you will find in this book will illustrate what the use of the formula can mean in your life. The leap from the life you have, to the life you want. Thousands of men and women have applied it and received the benefits it enables.

For one young man that meant traveling throughout Asia for two years while his bank account grew on its own. He was operating in what you'll soon discover is called zone three of the Rich and Happy Matrix.

For another it meant buying a mountain in Costa Rica and spending his afternoons surfing and playing at the beach with his family.

Martin Strel, a self-taught swimmer used it to set a Guinness record by becoming the first man to swim the entire length of the Amazon River, an accomplishment that netted him worldwide acclaim, a book about his adventures, extensive speaking opportunities, and became the basis for an award winning film.

Sam Horn, author consultant extraordinaire used it to establish a life where her hourly salary now exceeds what used to be her annual salary. All while doing something that makes her happy, and has brought joy to literally tens of millions of people around the globe.

Within these pages the Rich and Happy formula is referred to almost constantly. If you are looking, and ready to benefit from it, it is out there in the open, plain to see. All that is required is to use it.

If your life has taken you on a journey that has left you tired, and perhaps feeling hopeless, if you feel that the challenges you have faced, or perhaps are facing are obstacles too big to overcome, then drink from the examples in here and let them be the nourishment you seek in the midst of your exhaustion.

The formula enabled a single woman from a small African village to rise against the tyranny that surrounded her and create a movement of followers who collectively planted more than thirty million trees and reforested an entire nation. The Nobel Peace Prize she received, including its more than one and a half million dollar award, were the first ever awarded to an African woman.

The formula has been the significant element in thousands of others like her who have gone beyond tragedies to not just survive, but to thrive.

A unique characteristic of the formula is upon discovering and applying it, people realize they are literally cascaded toward a Rich and Happy life. Like a brilliantly colored leaf in the midst of a fast moving stream, they are swept along in a current of their own definition of success.

One of the uniqueness of the formula is that those who are not looking for it or not ready for it, don't see it. I know this on a personal level, because as you will read in the next chapter, until one momentous morning, I didn't see it, even though it had been there the entire time.

If you are a person of limited education, don't worry. The diversity of people who have benefited from the formula proves that formal schooling is not a requirement for its use. It works as effectively for someone of little education as it does for someone who has spent years in academic institutions.

Many who have become Rich and Happy come from very modest educational backgrounds.

How can I state all of this with such certainty? That will become clear as you read through this book. There will be a moment when it all clicks in your mind, and you just get it.

It might be in one of the early chapters as you learn about the power of beliefs. Or perhaps it will be through one of the final stories. Just know that if you read with an open mind, and a pure intent, it will happen.

Over the course of almost twenty years, I have researched thousands of men and women who have achieved the state of Rich and Happy. While they each have their own unique story, the formula is a common thread that connects their success.

These individuals are a fraction of the people world-wide whose results verify that knowledge and use of the formula is the key to being Rich and Happy. In truth, I have never met, or researched a single person who understood and applied the formula who then did not go on to become Rich and Happy. I have also never found someone who achieved a state of Rich and Happy, who didn't follow the formula. That is how important it is.

As you go through these pages, the formula will leap from the words and you will feel as if your whole world has shifted in a positive direction— if you are open to the possibility! At those moments, and you will know it when they happen, close your eyes, smile, and take a long, deep breath. For they will mark defining moments in your existence.

Knowledge learned is an asset that can provide benefits for your entire existence, and no-one can ever take it from you.

Keep ever-present in your mind that what is written here is the known, not an opinion.

### **It is truth, not fiction.**

It exists in this form so that you and all who are open to it can discover the formula for being Rich and Happy, including the motivation to put the formula to work.

One last comment ahead of your journey into the first chapter. Every Rich and Happy moment occurring now and at any time throughout history has had its origin in a single thought- “I want to be Rich and Happy.” If you have that desire, and are open to what it can bring, then you are half-way there. The rest waits for you to discover it in these pages.

# Chapter 1 - My Car is On Fire

**“My car is on fire. Oh my god, my car IS ON FIRE!”**

**E**ach person who discovers the Rich and Happy formula has a defining moment that launches them upon their adventure with it. A beginning that is often very memorable. Mine happened on Interstate 88 West, heading out from Chicago. I was twenty-one years old and barely surviving at the edge of the poverty level.

It was a very cold day in February and I was driving to work. I waited tables for \$2.01 per hour, plus tips, at a restaurant chain called Bennigans. I, as a member of the wait staff, was a “Bennigans Blues Buster.” What a joke. My salary for that year was just over seven thousand dollars. I couldn’t even bust my own blues.

One of the perks of the job was that for lunch you could order off the employee menu for free. There were eight items. Most people ordered one. I would order and eat one of everything. That was pretty much my food for the day.

But back to the burning car.

At the first realization of flames coming up from under the hood, I expressed the phrase that now holds many happy memories because of what it launched, but which then was filled with panic— “My car is on fire. Oh my god, *my car* IS ON FIRE!”

Then I slowed from the seventy-five miles per hour I had been driving at and pulled over onto the shoulder.

After hitting the latch to open the hood, I jumped out of the car. Traffic was whizzing by and people were honking. No-one stopped, they just honked. Apparently they wanted me to know my car was on fire. As if somehow I would have missed that.

I ran to the front of the car and lifted up the hood. So that’s what all the honking is about, my car is on fire. I ran to the trunk to look for water. There was none, so in my state of panic, I reasoned that anti-freeze, being a liquid, would make a suitable alternative to put the flames out.

This proved to be a poor decision. Antifreeze has quite a large concentration of alcohol in it, which as I learned moments after pouring it on the fire, has the exact opposite effect of putting fire out.

“Dirt,” I thought. “I need dirt to throw on the fire.” The anti-freeze enhanced inferno was now burning the engine block. February in the Chicago area tends to leave the ground rather frozen, and as I tried to grab some dirt from the side of the road, I encountered little success. So I grabbed all the rocks and gravel, and the little amount of dirt that was on the cement shoulder, and threw that on the fire— about twenty times. And wouldn’t you know it, it worked.

With the flames out, I stood there shivering in the wind and unsure of what to do. I had no cell phone, the temperature was 19 degrees below freezing, and

I was two miles from the next exit, which was the one I needed to get off at to go to work.

### **And that, was my defining moment.**

Standing on the side of the expressway, looking at my burned out car, was the instant when I decided something was going to change in my life. *Not that I'd like something to change, or it would be nice if things would change.* No, something was *going* to change. And that's when the formula found me.

From that day until today, I have been a student of the way the formula works. I have interviewed and analyzed thousands of people to discover its nuances, threads, and facets.

The rest of these pages are dedicated to sharing those findings with you.

“Why?” you might be thinking. “Why write about the formula? Why not just use it for your own benefit?”

Well, first of all, trust me, I have used it for my own benefit. On the day the formula found me, when my car caught on fire, I was twenty-one years old, living at the poverty level, and overcome with hopelessness.

**I was about as far away from Rich and Happy as you can be.**

Thanks to the formula I retired from the nine to five rat race more than thirty years ahead of schedule, and will never have to go back.

Through the use of its wisdom, I have traveled the world, spending as much as nine months at a time out exploring all that this amazing planet has to offer; the Amazon, the Great Wall of China, the rain forests of Costa Rica and Brazil, the Coliseum in Rome, the Parthenon in Greece, the plains of Africa... .

It is what enabled me to become a #1 Best-Selling author and be invited to share my thoughts and ideas with audiences around the world.

Perhaps most important, and for some reading this, most relevant to their personal situation, after standing on the side of that road, and feeling the cumulative hopelessness and depression that had become my life, **thanks to the formula, I learned how to live in a state of genuine happiness.**

So yes, I have most certainly used the formula for my own benefit.

I made the decision to put my almost twenty years worth of findings about the formula into a book for one simple reason. I know what it feels like to be twenty-one years old, standing on the side of the road as your car is burning, and feeling about as low in the world as you can possibly feel; hopeless, alone, like you'll never get ahead, like you'll never be happy.

Once you know the formula, all of that changes. I put together this book to help people know that. Because right now especially, there are a lot of people who feel like I felt when I was standing on the side of the road.

Realize that some parts of the formula will be totally new to you. That means you will have to read with an open mind if you are going to benefit from them. Albert Einstein once said, “The definition of insanity is doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results.”

**Most people spend their life perfecting insanity. Rich and Happy people do not.**

Other parts of the formula may be similar to things you’ve uncovered in other books. That shouldn’t be surprising. Neither I, nor the people I’ve interviewed and researched, are the only ones who have achieved the state of Rich and Happy.

It’s a big planet with a lot of history and there are lots of people on it. Those other Rich and Happy people may have been kind enough to share their learnings through books as well. As a matter of fact, some of the people I’ve interviewed and researched have written their own books.

Since you cannot achieve Rich and Happy without knowing the formula, then not surprisingly, although their terminology may be different, the books speak a common language.

That’s OK. As a matter of fact, it’s a good thing. Not everyone will read the same book, and not every book impacts each reader the same way. The more options people have for finding insights into the formula the better.

**I encourage you to approach each page with an open mind. If you don’t, the formula will elude you.**

You have never been at this exact stage in your life before. So although it may seem familiar, in truth, every single thing you read will be new to you as it relates to your life right now.

Let me caution you against one character flaw which more than any other, can keep you from your Rich and Happy pursuits.

I know it well because for a long time I possessed it, focused on it, and let it hold me back in life. It’s the *everyone* flaw.

It works like this. You hear or read something that is an empowering statement and immediately you start trying to find the one possible scenario in which it isn’t true. I know this well.

I would hear a speaker, engage in a conversation with someone who was Rich and Happy, or read a passage in a book that said something was possible, and instantly my entire focus would shift to trying to find the one scenario in which what they said, couldn’t be true.

For example, the empowering statement might be something like- “A state of Rich and Happy is possible for anyone who wants it.”

And instantly I’d be thinking, “Oh yeah, well what about a yak herder who lives at the top of a remote region in the Himalayas, who just fell off a cliff and broken both his legs, and his yaks have abandoned him, and his water bottle broke when he fell, and...”

I think you get the picture. The examples I would come up with were always so far removed from reality it was ridiculous. What was not ridiculous though, was that this habit kept me from focusing my time and energy on what was important- the lessons to be learned.

**It doesn’t matter if what you read is applicable to every person in every situation.**

The question you need to be asking, which is the one all Rich and Happy people have asked, and I finally learned to ask as well, is can this work for me?

Don’t worry about everyone else. They will take care of themselves.

So let’s get you started on the path to Rich and Happy!

# Chapter 2 - If You Don't Know, You Don't Get

**“Follow your bliss, & the universe will open doors where there were only walls.”**

**–Joseph Campbell**

**D**uring my almost twenty years of research, I've uncovered a common definition for being Rich and Happy. Despite its simplicity, awareness of this definition has proven to be a critical part of the formula for those able to achieve a Rich and Happy state.

**Rich and Happy is the ability to do whatever you want, whenever you want.**

The specific elements of *Whatever* and *Whenever* vary by person. The definition though, is almost a one hundred percent constant. You'll notice that the definition says nothing about money. That's because for the vast majority of Rich and Happy people, money itself is not the goal. Money is just one of the vehicles they use to pay for whatever they want, whenever they want it.

If you find yourself doubting that money isn't the goal, think of the following scenario.

Someone gives you twenty million dollars and you don't even have to pay taxes on it. It's all yours. How do you feel about that? Rich? Happy?

What if you can't spend, invest, loan against, tell anyone about, or do anything with the twenty million dollars,

except look at it. And when you die, you can't leave it to someone else. The person who gave it to you gets it back. Now how do you feel?

Suddenly having money isn't all that big of a deal is it? That's the point.

**To be Rich and Happy you have to be able to look beyond the physical money, to what it is you want to do during your time on this planet.**

Even for those rare people where money is part of the scorecard they use for their personal definition of Rich and Happy, there is always something behind the accumulation of wealth.

Warren Buffet, the multi-billionaire investor, is an example of this. While making money is a component of the “Whatever” he wants to do, in many interviews he has given, he's talked about how the accumulation of money is really just a game.

It's part of what makes life fun and interesting for him. The prize for the game, or the way to tell if he's winning, just happens to be money. This is evidenced in that the process of spending money, unless it's to purchase parts of, or entire businesses, doesn't do much for him.

So why is it so important to understand that the definition of Rich and Happy is the ability to do whatever you want, whenever you want? Why is it such a key piece of the formula?

**Because before you can be Rich and Happy, you have to define what Rich and Happy means for you. You have to know your “Whatever.”**

Within that statement lies a profound insight— despite what the luxury automotive advertisers would lead you to believe, Rich and Happy is not the same for all people. Until you know what it is for you, you can't be it. That's just the way it works.

Think of being Rich and Happy as the vacation of your dreams. One day a sort-of- famous celebrity turned spokesperson comes knocking on your door. When you answer, you are handed one of those giant five foot checks and the good news that you have just won the vacation of your dreams. Pack your bags, the plane leaves in three hours.

Before you can even get out a thank you, and ask where the celebrity has been the last fifteen years since he was on your favorite TV show, the van he arrived in is gone, and you are left standing on the front porch.

You race inside, open the suitcase, and then realize you have no idea what to pack. Should the clothes be formal or casual, swimsuit or ski-pants, hiking boots or running shoes? You don't know what to do. You don't know how to decide what to do. You're stuck in a state of perpetual confusion.

That's the way most people go through life. That's a big part of the reason why they aren't Rich and Happy.

In some cases, it's actually possible to have everything you need to be Rich and Happy and not even know it, because you don't know your “Whatever.” Sound crazy? Hardly the case. Here's an example.

*While traveling through Costa Rica a few years back, I met Tony. Tony was from San Jose, California and was now living with his wife and two daughters in a beautiful place called Manuel Antonio. He spent his days relaxing, reading, and pursuing his multiple hobbies including playing the guitar and learning the Spanish language.*

*Two years earlier, at the age of 48, Tony was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He and his wife worked fourteen hour days, one in high-tech and one in bio-tech. They saw their girls for brief intervals on week-nights and occasionally on the weekends if they weren't working. Then one day Tony's heart decided to send him a reminder that he wasn't immortal.*

*In the recovery room after his heart surgery, Tony and his wife had a long discussion about what a Rich and Happy life would look like.*

*Three months later they had sold their house, cashed in all their stock options, pooled every single asset they owned, and with the four hundred thousand dollars that netted, they bought a mountain in Manuel Antonio. Their mountain sloped down to the beach, and each evening they would head down a few hours prior to sunset and play some family volleyball with the locals, which is what they now were. That's where I met them.*

In my conversations with Tony, I learned that he could have done what he did many years earlier. His financial position had actually declined as his company was going through ups and downs during the previous years.

But it wasn't until his trip to the hospital that he and his wife took the time to figure out what they really wanted— what Rich and Happy looked like, felt like, consisted of, for them.

In an attempt to save you a trip to the emergency room, let me be very clear.

**People who are Rich and Happy get that way by knowing what it means to them. They know it in their mind before they become it in their life.**

Now you may not have four hundred thousand dollars in total assets, or maybe even four hundred dollars in total assets. But you also might not view Rich and Happy as owning a mountain in Costa Rica. Plus, as you'll learn later in the book, assets come in all shapes and sizes, and I guarantee that you have ones you don't even realize, and they are worth a lot!

The important lesson for you to learn now, is that the first step in the Rich and Happy formula, is to define what Rich and Happy means to you. If this seems daunting, don't worry. The information in the next group of chapters will help you figure it out.

Let me throw you one piece of advice before we get there though.

When it comes to the Rich and Happy formula, I have learned that all the steps are important. Think of it like making a frozen pizza. For the pizza there are four steps: #1. Turn on oven, #2. Un-wrap pizza from plastic wrapper, #3. Put pizza in oven for 12-16 minutes, #4. Remove pizza from oven and eat it.

If you're not sure each of the steps is that important, try leaving out #1. Turn on oven. How would your pizza taste. Or leave out #2. Un-wrap pizza from plastic wrapper. If you try that one, make sure to turn off the oven once the smell of burning plastic has forever etched in your mind that each step is important.

**What that means for you, is that in order for the Rich and Happy formula to work in your life, you need to be serious about using each piece of it.**

And that includes taking action. If you want a perfect, hot and ready to eat, delicious tasting pizza— at some point you have to put it in the oven and cook it. Reading and even knowing the instructions aren't enough. You have to take an active role in the process.

The same goes for being Rich and Happy. One of the common characteristics of Rich and Happy people is that they don't just know the steps in the Rich and Happy formula - they do them.

I once heard a funny albeit sad story about an intriguing occurrence at a self-development seminar. The person giving the talk asked how many people had read Napoleon Hill's classic book *Think And Grow Rich*?

Almost every hand went up. He then asked how many people believed in the principles in the book. Again, almost every hand went up. Finally he asked how many people put the lessons into practice. One hand went up and that was the guy on the platform.

Early in my Rich and Happy journey, I was guilty many times of learning a piece of the formula, and then not putting it to work. Of course I always intended to, I just knew that I would go back to it later.

That behavior keeps the Rich and Happy life you want just out of reach.

Keep that in mind as you go through this book, starting with completing the exercise you'll find in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3 - What Would You Be Willing To Die For?

### What would you be willing to die for?

**A** provocative question isn't it? It's also a great way to help discover your "Whatever."

You see, that question opens your mind to discover the core essence of what you hold most important in life. It helps you discover your internal compass, the guiding forces that tells you whether to turn left, right, go forward, or turn back in life.

It helps you discover- your values.

To help you understand the importance of this information, know that you cannot be Rich and Happy if you don't know what your values are. And you cannot be Rich and Happy if you try to live in conflict with your values. There are no exceptions to these rules.

In other words, they are a critical part of the Rich and Happy formula.

If you wonder whether or not you are currently living in alignment with your values, then ask yourself- Am I Rich and Happy? Am I doing whatever I want, whenever I want? If the answer is no, then you aren't living in alignment with all your values. The good news is, if you keep reading, you'll learn how to fix that.

The book *Flow*, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is subtitled 'The Psychology of Optimal Experience' and Csikszentmihalyi called it that for a good reason. Flow is the

condition that you find yourself in at least occasionally, in which everything seems to happen without effort.

Suddenly, and after paddling furiously against the stream for a while, it feels like somebody has kindly turned your canoe around and you are now flowing with the river instead of against it, and are using the power of nature and momentum to propel you along. It's a great feeling, or to use Csikszentmihalyi's words, an optimal experience.

The feeling can occur while you are working on a project, playing sports (where it is often called being "in the zone"), interacting with others or any number of different situations. In whatever scenario it strikes, the common characteristic is you are enveloped in a feeling of ease.

**That feeling is the same experience as when you are in alignment with your values.**

To the contrary, think of times where when you were procrastinating, bored, miserable, stressed or anxious. How many of those times do you think you were living in accordance your values? Let me help save you some energy by telling you. The answer is none.

Would you like to be able tap into that "optimal experience" feeling any time you want? That state of flow? Rich and Happy people can do it. Once you understand the importance of your values and move into alignment with them, you'll be able to also.

I have no doubt that at some point in your life you've asked yourself "What's important to me?" or something similar. That's a great start in the direction of finding your values.

**To get there you keep heading in that same direction, you just go way farther down the road- all the way to the core of your identity.**

Sound interesting? Just wait, it's going to get even better.

The following two charts contain a list of values and also something called anti-values. For now, just glance at these so you have them as a frame of reference.

After giving you some need to know information about how values impact your life, I'll explain how to figure out which ones of the values and anti-values below are yours, and how that impacts the Rich and Happy life you want and deserve.

VALUES				
Adventure	Connection	Fun	Honesty	Nurturing
Authenticity	Courage	Gratitude	Integrity	Oneness
Beauty	Creativity	Growth	Justice	Open-mindedness
Clarity	Discipline	Happiness	kindness	Passion
Comfort	Diversity	Health	Knowledge	Peace
Commitment	Excellence	Humor	Leadership	Persistence
Community	Freedom	Humility	Love	
Positivity	Significance			
Power	Security			
Recognition	Spirituality			
Prudence	Stability			
Self-awareness	Trust			
Self-control	Truth			
Service	Wealth			
Sincerity	Wisdom			

ANTI-VALUES (ALSO KNOWN AS AWAY FROM VALUES)				
Aggression	Cynicism	Hypocrisy	Pain	
Anger	Death	Ill Health	Pomposity	
Anxiety	Dishonesty	Infidelity	Poverty	
Apathy	Disgust	Immortality	Procrastination	
Arrogance	Fear	Injustice	Stress	
Conflict	Frivolity	Isolation	Suspicion	
Contempt	Greed	Jealousy	Worry	
	Hate	Laziness		

Values are not beliefs. We'll cover beliefs later in the book. For now, know that values are often built upon and intertwined with your beliefs, but they have a tendency to be more static and more powerful than beliefs.

Your values are determined over many years and like beliefs are influenced by countless things including your family (or even lack of family), your friends, television, politicians, Church leaders, cultural influences, books you have read, incidents (both positive and negative) you've seen or been involved in, conversations you have had and much more.

That less than exhaustive list still easily demonstrates why even close siblings and twins can have many different values and character traits.

**No two people and that includes co-joined twins are exposed to exactly the same environmental conditioning and therefore, no two people have exactly the same values.**

Your values tend not to shift too much when you get past your mid-twenties. The main reason for that, is because you have a tendency to look for information that cements the values you already possess and filter out information to the contrary. That said, things can change radically under certain circumstances.

Perhaps you never had 'Health' as an important value because you've always been fit and healthy. Then you

discover you have a serious illness that requires your immediate focus. Health will now find its way to the top of your list very quickly, irrespective of where it had previously been.

Similarly, if you were in what you thought was a great relationship and then you found out your partner was having an affair, trust may become incredibly important to you. In fact, most people I have worked with who had 'Infidelity' as an anti-value had been through or witnessed first hand (often their parents) an unfaithful relationship.

There are no right or wrong values. There are only values that are right or wrong for YOU! And nobody's values are better or worse than anybody else's.

When you judge somebody you are judging them based on your own values and the belief that if they do not have the same values as you, then there is something wrong with them.

This is ridiculous, because if you had their genes and their upbringing you would have their values. So when you judge someone else, what you are really saying is they were wrong to be born into that household, to those parents, and to have had their life experiences- which doesn't make much sense when you think about it.

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*John and Tim*