

# What Are You “Worth”? Go Figure!

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IN A SPIRITUAL OR HUMANISTIC philosophic sense, every individual human being is understood to be an absolutely unique, irreplaceable, and a miraculously elegant creature. In that context, one can say that each one of us is of immense, inestimable worth. But on a practical level, the “worth” of individuals as members of human society is frequently, if not continually, estimated, and there seem to various scales upon which those estimations are calculated.

WORTH MEANS VALUE. It is also a slippery concept. We use the word a lot, so it seems as though we understand it clearly.

In some ways, the meaning is pretty straightforward:

- The accountant calculates your “net *worth*”: your unencumbered assets.
- Some things are “*worth* doing” and others aren’t.
- A person can be worthy (*worth-y*) of something or someone, or not.

BUT WHEN IT COMES TO *VALUING* HUMAN BEINGS, how do we make that determination? Are they of value: to whom? To others? To yourself? To society at large? And who gets to measure it: you or someone else? How does one person estimate the “value” of another? How do I precisely calculate—or even crudely estimate—my own worth?

What it all boils down to seems to be something like this:

- The “worth” of a person or object is relative, and so it needs to be determined by an “other.”
- Some objective scheme of measurement needs to be used, in order to make an assessment.

This means that, if you are to determine your own private, personal “worth,” you must do two things:

- First, mentally “step outside yourself” and have a good, hard, frank, look at what you see. Part of you becomes an observer of you.
- Next, ask yourself: What am I doing:
  - *To myself? For myself?*
  - *To others? For others?*
  - *To the environment? For the environment?*
- Finally, use some objective criteria to make your assessment. Such as:
  - Does what I am doing have positive value or not, and how much.
  - Is what I am doing enhancing, neutral, or damaging to me, others, the planet?
  - How much good or harm am I doing?
  - Based on how others react to my behaviors, how do they seem to be assessing my *worth*?
  - What does it say about me if I’m not “getting as well as I’m giving” or “giving as well as I am getting”?

YOU CAN GO THROUGH THESE STEPS as a comprehensive evaluation of all the variables of your life—work, family, friends, etc.—asking yourself how you rate in all those areas in terms of any or all of your behaviors. You can also do this as a quick-check of specific aspects of your life, such as determining your worth as an employee to your boss, you co-workers, or your company. You can start anywhere

Doing this kind of self-evaluation can have huge payoffs! If your value rating is lower than you would like in any given area, you can now easily identify the behavior, work to change it, and raise your value. You are, after all, your own most important investment!

If, on the other hand, you discover you do certain kinds of *worth-y* things repeatedly, frequently and effectively, you can apply and exercise them with pride!

THESE BEHAVIORS ARE YOUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS. They comprise the core of your personal worth. They are part of *your* unique identity as a contributing and valuable member of society. Celebrate, enjoy, and continue cultivating them—and let others know that they are “*worth a lot*” to you! When you do, you will probably notice that people treat you differently. It is very likely that they will react in ways that show they see, feel and appreciate your *worth*.

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