

Knowing vs. Understanding

An excerpt from - *Good to the Core*

On the surface, the concept of core values seems easy to comprehend. So easy that we think we understand what they are all about. The concept seems to be blindingly obvious. ***But maybe not.*** I think, for most of us, we understand the concept of core values. But that doesn't mean we understand our own core values. We have to be careful in what we assume ... both individually and within the organization in which we work.

Core values are like seeds. They must be tended and cared for to meet their full potential. They flourish when they are planted in soil that is watered, fertilized and periodically weeded. I have a friend who is diligent about watering the garden of potted plants on his condo balcony. But the magic of his garden lies in his Miracle-gro® fertilizer he mixes into the water. His garden flourishes. And with a miracle mix, our personal and organizational core values can flourish as well.

Values are most alive when we have specific words to describe them, and when we remain intentionally connected to them. It sounds simple, but in reality, few of us make a practice of routinely making this connection.

It is the difference between cognitively knowing and genuinely understanding.

It is not the concept of values that is so difficult. The difficulty comes in the day-to-day world where we have to live them. We live in a world that is moving faster each day. This causes us to constantly make decisions ... usually very quickly

Ultimately, what is important is how our understanding translates into our decisions, actions and interactions. *Our values must be lived in order for us to flourish. They are our "miracle grow."*

In the end, it is the difference of **living reactively vs. living intentionally**. The value of values begins to exponentially increase when we are living them consciously, intentionally and concretely.

Remember ... be careful of what you assume you know. Knowledge is only a tool.

Core challenge

1. How consciously, intentionally and concretely are you connected to your own values? Do you think you are truly living your values?
2. How consciously, intentionally and completely are you connected to the values of the organization where you work? Do you think you are living your organization's values? Does the leadership of your organization live your organization's values?