

Throughout my life, I have grown into many values that I hold dear today. I feel that overall, I am a happy person thanks to the way I utilize these values to guide my daily interactions. In an in-depth analysis of those values which I hold in the highest regard, I came to the conclusion that appreciation, truth, harmony, service, and enthusiasm were ranked at the top of the list. Specifically, my most important value is appreciation. I believe that fundamentally, nothing in our lives is given to us. Rather, everything we have, concrete or otherwise, was worked for by someone at some point in time. Therefore, it is imperative to be grateful for everything - as human beings, we are not entitled to anything. With this belief in my heart, I have formed a habit of thanking people for even the smallest of deeds. Throughout my high school career, I made an effort to thank those who were blatantly underappreciated - janitors, cafeteria staff, and administrators. At the end of my senior year, several adults spoke to me and thanked me for my persistent gratitude. This is a small example of gratitude radiating happiness, which is the best thing one person can do for another.

Second on my list, but no less important, was truth; the belief that all actions must be taken justly and with honesty. During high school, I served as the Student Council and Senior Class President, overseeing committees that planned events like Homecoming, Prom, and fundraisers throughout the year. In our final year, a new administrative team and a set of new school guidelines made planning events difficult. Normally, each action taken by the Student Council required the approval of an administrator; however, many students wanted to shortcut these guidelines and act without approval. While this would have made our planning process run much more smoothly, it was not the just course and therefore I advised against it. This is another situation in which my values went against that which was popular; instead, focusing on what was central to my beliefs.

These are just two small examples of how I try to live my life every day - with actions that are specific to my values and that allow me to become a better person.