



Wellbeing Insight

Values

“Man is pushed by drives, but he is pulled by values.” Viktor Frankl, quoted by Ryan Holiday in, *Ego is the Enemy*.

“Let values lead. Understand your emotions without letting them direct the dialogue.” Susan David, *Emotional Agility*.

“Healthy values help us to connect with a zoomed-out view of our lives, because they orient us to what is good for us in the long run.” Justin Robinson, *My Manifesto*.

Viktor Frankl’s insight is such a rich one; his distinction between ‘drives’ and ‘values,’ is to me the distinction between what is corporal and what is divine in being human and as such is simple and compelling. Being ‘pushed’ has connotations of being propelled by undeniable factors. Being ‘pulled’ has connotations of attraction and agency. Abraham Lincoln’s ‘better angels’ comes to mind. Our values, that which are of worth and significance to us, offer a reason to make the choices we do, a framework from within which to live truly.

Susan David adds the element of ‘emotions’ to the discussion. Again, there is congruence between her insight and Frankl’s. Values provide the vanguard of human behaviour, the best in us which will take us to the highest even the noble in possible actions. Emotions arise unbidden and instinctually, and are to be enjoyed, sometimes endured, and always examined. To allow them to freely range, to not regulate them with reason, is to enter a kind of enslavement to self.

Justin’s perspective in our book, *My Manifesto* is also productive; he adds ‘healthy’ to values. He makes the distinction between ‘unhealthy or destructive values that are harmful to yourself and others,’ and ‘healthy and constructive values’ that are the focus of our book. The congruency between our perspective and David’s and Frankl’s is there again: we are speaking of values providing the big picture view, the ‘zoomed out view of our lives’ which draws us to the actualisation of our best selves and our best lives.

Ask yourself the question, “Are your values pulling you, leading you, and healthy?”