

Values through Storytelling

Introduction

What is it?

Identifying Values through Storytelling is an activity to share our values by thinking about objects or artifacts you've collected and the stories behind them.

Why use it?

Our values may evolve or change as we engage in experiences and relationships throughout our lives. One way to understand the why behind our values is through storytelling and the artifacts we have collected throughout our lives that represent the meaningful experiences that have shaped who we are and what's important to us. Use this activity with either a group or on your own to explore, interact and reflect on the lived experiences that have shaped your values and the values of others.



20-30 minutes

What you need:

- An object you have collected. It could be personal, or part of a collection of things important to you.
- 2 or more people
- The attached instructions

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Instructions

Step 1: Immerse

Many of us fill our homes with items that are meaningful to us. It could be photos, letters, a souvenir that we bought on a special trip or occasion, a rock we picked up on a walk, or many other things that seem ordinary to others, but actually hold meaningful history and significance for us.

- Look around your space for an artifact that is meaningful to you.
- Now take some time to remember the story behind this object. You can quietly reflect, write about it in your journal, or share the story with a partner.
 - How did you come to own it?
 - What is the story behind it?
 - Where is it from?
 - Who was with you when you acquired it?
 - Was it a gift?
 - Why is this object meaningful and what does it represent to you?

Step 2: Reflect

Take time to explore the following questions either with a group, a partner, or on your own.

- How did the experience associated with the object contribute to or reflect a core value that you hold?
- Is this a value that you recognized is important to you?
- How does this value show up in your daily life?
- How do you use this value to guide your decisions and actions?
- Can you think of a time when this value did not guide your decisions? What did that feel like? What was the outcome of the experience? How might the outcome have changed if the value was guiding your decisions and actions?
- Are there others in your group that hold similar values to you? How are your reasons for holding the value similar? How are they different?
- How might understanding values help you to maintain awareness of assumptions or judgements you might make about others? About yourself?
- What have you learned about yourself and others through listening to these stories?

Step 3: Act

Consider the following questions:

- How might you use this new understanding of your own values and the values of others to guide your decisions and actions?
- How might you support learners to identify their own values and use them to guide their decisions and actions?
- Does your organization have a set of core values that guides your work and culture? How might you introduce a conversation about values in your classroom, with your team, or in your organization?

One idea you might consider is creating a [“museum of values”](#) in your classroom or on your organization's website. Include photos of the object and either a written or recorded story that accompanies it that shares about the value the artifact represents.

