

IDEAS 96

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 96th INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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MARRYING INTO THE BIG WORLD

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Be a big fish in a small pond. That quote was something I heard in a movie long ago, and it has stuck to me ever since. As explained in Yahoo! Answers the phrase means being able to excel at something and become recognized for what you have within the limited scope you may be in. (<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20080924153001AAs7lRt>)

Small fish have the ability to become big fish. However, let us not allow the 'pond' we inhabit to limit us. When we conquer the world we belong to, we also have a potential to create inroads in another world.

Take for example the many among us who were not just contented being inhabitants of the small ponds that they had belonged to. We have international artists and athletes, people who, by dint of hard work and perseverance, saw a horizon that burned brighter with bigger possibilities and benefits for themselves. We have overseas contract workers who, in their quest to overcome poverty on the home front and to find a better future for their families, have braved depression, danger and unspoken risks to their safety by working abroad. We have fellow countrymen who have made foreign shores their destination for establishing their own identities, away from all they hold dear and the people they love the most in order to find a stage where they will be recognized for their talent and skills, where they can intermarry with other races and eventually raise offspring who are products of incorporated beliefs and values from two diverse races.

It can be a challenge to decide to take on another culture that's distinct from one's own. Yet many among us have succeeded at demonstrating that it can be done. The delicate-and oftentimes complex-balancing act that those people need to perform is commendable in that they bravely face whatever consequences there may be and still come out with their personal set of values intact. While carefully paying respect to the novel values they are introduced to, these individuals are still able to maintain a sense of sanity and clarity as to where they belong. Without losing their identity, they learn that other cultures have their own sets of values that must be respected and upheld.

In our daily lives, let us include such people in our prayers. They are fitting forms of inspiration for us who choose to be big fish in our little pond. These individuals have apparently outgrown their ponds and have decided to swim into the churning waters of a much bigger pond. Let us look up to them as role models so that we may get inspired enough to find bigger ponds for ourselves. It is not the small pond that must scare us, but rather the limitation that such a small pond ultimately represents.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are the values you personally adhere to?
2. How do you stick to those values? Be as specific as needed.
3. Is it easy to marry into another race? Why or why not?
4. What are the possible sources of conflict in an interracial relationship?
5. Is there a particular nation that you admire for its people's set of values? Be able to talk about that country and its people's values.



OF THE VALUE AND VALUES WE KEEP

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In the singular, VALUE is defined as the regard that we have for something. To illustrate, we hold the support that we get from other people of great value simply means we hold of high esteem whatever assistance or help that is extended to us by others. We also value the friendships we have by keeping those relationships mutually responsive and attentive to both our and other people's needs.

In the plural form, values represent the ideals that we adhere to, the very concepts or principles that can very well serve as our guidelines for living various phases of our lives. Personal values help us become participative members of our society and they keep us well-attuned to what society deems as morally or ethically correct and upright. Our moral values are reflected in the manner with which we live our quotidian lives. Our parents have taught us the values that we may or may not hold on to in the present time, thus their role in shaping our values is tremendous. Our upbringing, the very way we have been raised speaks much of the values that our own parents subscribe to. Those values have also been shaped by our won grandparents before. In other words, our values are but an integration of the values that our ancestors before us held dear to them.

We openly talk about taking people or things at face value, or that which is more or less superficial and as <http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/take+at+face+value> defines, is taking things just as they are. In this case, we do not attach any other significance to something or someone other than what is presented to us on a physical level. What we see is for us what we take, and it doesn't matter whether that is how something or someone is to be taken on a different context. It's refreshing to find people who give us what we see; they are what they are on the outside and there's hardly any difference in what they show and what people get, if there's any difference at all to report. Despite the hypocrisy and veiled hostility that can manifest in so many people nowadays, seeing something or someone we can simply take as they are might be a rare, if not altogether missing, element in the world.

It is essential that we undertake to keep our values as pure and commendable as possible. It is difficult to be perfect all the time. But it is our inherent duty to try to stick as close to perfection as possible. No matter how next-to-impossible that is, once we get our values straightened out and our goals clear, then what we stand for and against can readily be delineated. That is as close to perfection as we can get.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. How do you personally value the relationships you have?
2. What are the old-fashioned values that you wish people in the present age always adhered to?
3. Why is it difficult to stick to a definite set of values?
4. How do people judge us by the values we keep? Cite examples, as needed.
5. What specific values would you teach to your own children?



MONEY SHRINKS EVERYDAY

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Two days ago, my mother and I were discussing current prices for basic commodities in the market. When she was just starting out as an elementary school teacher in a mountainous region of our province, Mama received roughly \$6.25 for her monthly salary. That was in 1968. Nowadays, that amount is not even enough for a decent two-day allowance for a student in a public university in my province.

The discussion stemmed from a little argument I had with my oldest daughter. I had asked my son in high school if he had been saving a small amount from his daily allowance for emergencies. But my older daughter remarked, "Mama, what you give him is really insufficient, if you consider everything." I was offended. It got my hackles up.

My first impulse was to give a stinging retort to keep them quiet. I had always encouraged my children to speak their minds whenever the situation warranted. But to lay out in the open how my efforts to give them decent daily financial support had been inadequate, can be rather straining. To be honest, I berated my daughter for what I felt was a direct assault to my ability as their mother. But on second thought, I held myself in check, the fact of their daily allowances not being enough is not a fault that's all their own.

The cost of everything these days has gone up in direct disproportion to what salaried people make. The value of my country's currency has fallen as taken back-to-back with the almighty dollar. There were days back when my country's currency rallied strong against the US dollar, but that changed a week or so ago. Our currency is affected by market prices of oil and other factors. I am not a financial expert, so I do not have much to share on market forces and other elements. But I do know that when petrol prices go up on the pump, the money I have gets less and less powerful.

I explained to my children that no matter how big their daily allowances become (and goodness knows I can not do too many adjustments at any one time!), it will always be insufficient. Why? Because their buying power increases, making the things they want costlier and unreachable. The more money they get, the more things they ultimately want to buy. Take it from me, I told them. An employee's salary will always turn out not enough for their wants, but if things are carefully weighed, it will always be enough for their basic needs.

What is essential, I stated, is that my children distinguish what it is they want and what it is they need. That will go a long way towards stretching the value of every peso they have.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Why does the value of money prove unsteady? Research on the factors that affect the value of your currency.
2. What does buying power have to do with how much we make? How can we ever be able to reconcile these two elements?
3. What do you think of a universal currency? Will that work to uplift all the economies of the world?
4. What foreign country would you like to live in? Why is that country your choice?
5. Can money buy happiness? Why or why not?



LASTING VALUES

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Our values are what make us as a person valuable but what are the real lasting values that we value most in our life? Our values actually form our character and it makes us the kind of person that we want to be. They shape us and these are what make us a memorable person. Values are what give our life a meaning, a purpose and a direction. It is pivotal to all the choices and decisions that we make in our life. So, who says values are trivial?

We definitely value our job, money and possessions but we must admit that these things add spice to our life. These are the tangible things that we have. On the other hand, we have the intangibles that are more important like: love, friendships, relationships, service, kindness, spirituality, just to name a few. There are a lot more than we can think of. What do we really take as the most significant value in our life?

Apparently, we all live a unique life but it is for us to decide on what values give true importance and what do we really embrace and use as a guiding principle in our life? Aside from our values, we all have our beliefs and morals in life. We have accumulated our values from childhood and we can say that it is based on the teachings and observations of our parents, leaders and other influential and powerful people. People use values as the principles used when distinguishing right from wrong and good from bad. Examples of values are: honesty, integrity, courage, compassion, kindness, fairness and many other things that we can think of.

Maybe we can be reminded of some of the values that are worth considering like valuing yourself. People will value you as a person if you give value to yourself. We have got to know our weaknesses so we could find ways on how to improve ourselves. As Albert Einstein puts it, "Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value." We should also value compassion and think of how we could lessen the suffering of others by merely doing our share in our own way. We should always begin with our self, our family, our friends and fellow workers especially to the strangers that we encounter.

We should value passion, not unbridled passion, because this energizes our life. We should value knowledge too by applying what we have learned and approach every subject with honest skepticism. We can make a difference and have a big contribution in this world if we value kindness for this warms the hearts of others, making them feel valuable. Apparently, we influence other people so we should also value mentoring. Let us be a source of encouragement and inspiration to make this world a better place to live in.

Most importantly, we should value time, for time lost is lost forever! Therefore, we should put it into good use. When we center our life on values, we become valuable. Wealth is not riches, but the lasting values are those that bring meaning and purpose to our life so we could go and direct our lives in the right path.

Questions for discussion:

1. What do you truly value in life? Why?
2. What do you consider as lasting values in your life? Explain your answer.
3. Would you prefer to be a man of value rather than a man of success? Justify your answer.
4. How much do you value your time? Elaborate on your answer.
5. Give other examples of lasting values. Do you practice them and apply it in your life? How true is it?





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