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7 Practical Ways To Value Yourself

By Tanya Curren

The phone rings. You already have a million other things going on, yet you put them down to dash over and pick it up, knowing that it will make you late...again.

Your boss pops in right before you're about to leave to go to your child's game. Instead of asking for an extension or getting to the new task first thing in the morning, you miss your child's event...again.

Your friend needs a favor...again. You have given and given, and yet they need more.

It's the end of the day. You've worked hard and are ready to sit down and rest, but someone or something continues to pull on you, so you go to bed late and miss more sleep...again.

Do any of these sound familiar? Sure they do. That's because life happens, and we can't control every scenario and every part of our day. We can start out our day with a great plan but the reality is that as soon as our children get up or we get to work, more and more things pull on us and change the outcome of what we thought our day would be. Some of this is normal and has to be expected. But quite often we allow too many of these distractions and changes into our day. This isn't just a sign of loose boundaries, this is a sign that you value others more than you value yourself.

This can be a tricky concept to grasp because there is a fine line between valuing yourself too little, versus valuing yourself to the point of being a narcissist. If you find that you put others and their needs before you and yours to the point of your detriment, this article is for you. This is exactly what happened to me, and I didn't even realize it until I stepped back and tried to figure out how to stop it.

Usually valuing others comes from a pure heart. Perhaps you were taught to love others as you love yourself, which is a beautiful thing that Jesus taught us in the Bible. (Matthew 22:39/Mark 12:31/John 15:12/Galatians 5:14/James 2:8) Maybe you are a people pleaser, and it makes you genuinely happy to see others get what they need. Or, perhaps you are a performance based person, and you feel valued from the feedback and praise that others give you when you are able to help them.

Even if your motives come from a good place, the outcome can still have a negative for YOU. Every time you value someone else's time/circumstance/need over your own, you decrease the value and importance of yourself. You are showing yourself and others that your time/circumstance/need can be placed on hold while you fulfill theirs, and this is not healthy for you in the long run.

Again, I'm not talking about loving your neighbor or changing your schedule to help someone. I'm talking about continual patterns of exhaustion and frustration, where you feel pulled in a million directions by the

end of the day. This is not how God wants you to live, and it isn't healthy for anyone to give to the point of having nothing left for yourself.

PRACTICAL THINGS TO REMEMBER TO VALUE YOURSELF

MOST IMPORTANTLY, ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW MUCH GOD VALUES YOU. Jesus says in Matthew 10:29-31, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

Listen to this great commentary that the Bible gives for these verses above: "Jesus said that God is aware of everything that happens even to sparrows, and you are FAR more valuable to Him than they are. You are so valuable that God sent His only Son to die for you (John 3:16). Because God places such value on you, you need never fear personal threats or difficult trials. These can't shake God's love or dislodge His Spirit from within you."

I love this! What a great reminder of how much God loves and values us. Too many people are walking through our world full of self-loathing and hatred. They view themselves as worthless and unimportant. We need to always remember that in a world of billions, God knows us so intimately that He knows the exact number of hairs on our head. The visual of that just blows me away. I can't even remember what I ate for breakfast, much less try to even guess how much hair I'm sporting!

One of the very important jobs we have as Christians is to share the massive love of Christ with others so they will have be able to live in freedom and value themselves as God does!

LEARN THE ART OF SAYING NO. Being able to decline someone or something truly is art form, and it takes time to develop. As with many things, I am still in the process of developing this art in myself. It used to be so extremely hard for me to say "no" to anyone or anything because I truly wanted to help. But what I found was that I gave to the point of feeling stretched like a rubber band, and often my needs were put so far on the back burner that they were not being met.

If you are experiencing these feelings, I want you to start practicing saying no to things that pull on you the most. Heads up, it is hard to do when you first start and people may be shocked. But it the reality is that it will bring you freedom and peace when you are able to set that boundary and protect your time.

TAKE CONTROL OF WHAT YOU CAN. So much of life is out of our control. The state of the economy, employers that are overbearing, choices others make that negatively affect you, and pressures and trials that inevitably come as a part of life. But I don't want you to focus on those things. Look at your life each day and see what decisions you can make that will control the outcome of your day. Then, make sure you are valuing your time and needs just as much as you value those around you.

This is where the concept of viewing the glass half full versus half empty comes from. You have to daily view your life from a positive perspective and make choices that empower you and bring you peace. If you are constantly a "glass half full" person, you will only see the negative things that are out of your control. This will never bring you peace.

DON'T PUT YOURSELF LAST. You shouldn't be at the bottom of the proverbial totem pole. Again, you don't have to be at the tip top, bordering on self-love, but there should be a distinct balance between protecting yourself and giving to others. People who put themselves last, even if it is out of love for others or self-sacrifice, end up becoming jaded, tired and bitter. Yes, you should pour out your love and abilities to others. No, you should not live your life as an empty vessel with nothing else to give. There is a BIG difference, and God's desire is for you to have enough left of you to have a long and effective life here on earth.

WATCH OUT FOR MANIPULATORS. Manipulators are good...really good. They've learned that they get what they want in life by trying to make others feel guilty. They persuade you to do what they want out of a fear that they will be unhappy with you if you don't give them what they are asking for.

My answer to this type of manipulation is, "So what?" So you don't get the money or item they are dangling over your head. So you hear about how unhappy they are that you didn't do what they wanted. So they don't call you as much because they are displeased with your new choices. **SO WHAT???** This isn't being rude, this is recognizing that their manipulative behavior is destructive and you no longer need to allow it to persuade you.

Usually, the worst thing that happens with a manipulating person is that they get mad at you. Again...so what? Unless they pay all of your bills and are threatening to take that away, then you usually don't have to worry about standing up for yourself. (By the way, if you are in a situation where someone is completely controlling you, then you need to look for immediate ways to get out and change your life. Life is way too short to be continually controlled by another human being.)

If you have a manipulating person in your life, ask God to give you wisdom and the words to say no to them. This isn't about hurting them or having some kind of macho stand-off. This is about viewing yourself worthy enough to not be taken advantage of. Put yourself, your time, and your circumstances on an equal playing field as theirs. Value yourself as much as you value them. This will help give you a stronger mindset as you say no and set healthy boundaries around that relationship.

DO NOT BE A DOOR MAT. Jesus called us to turn the other cheek in Matthew 5:39, but there is nowhere in the Bible that tells us to be a doormat and allow others to walk all over us. When you don't value yourself or your time, you are easily walked on by others – especially others with strong personalities. No matter what your personality type is, know your voice and the person that God created you to be.

Never underestimate your position in this world based on a mild mannered personality, a lower paying job, your height or weight...nothing! God created you uniquely and to do amazing and wonderful things during your lifetime. Nothing should cause you to feel inferior to someone else, nor should you feel less powerful because of your circumstances. When you view yourself on a level playing field as others, you view yourself stronger. This, coupled with the power of the Holy Spirit, gives you the capability of standing up for yourself.

TACKLE THINGS AS YOU CAN. I am a tackler. If I see something that I can improve, I go all out and want to work on it immediately. However, I understand that each one of us responds to things differently.

So, I want you to focus on tackling life's issues the most effective way for you and in your timeframe.

It might take you a lot of prayer, thinking and slow action before you are able to set new boundaries and view yourself as valuable. That's ok. With God's help you will be able to do everything you need to do to improve your life!

Whatever your style or pace is, just remember that every improvement you make in your life brings more peace and freedom.

Valuing yourself is one of the keys to living a life without regret, so make this a high priority as you focus on living a confident, happy life!

In Him,

Tanya



Tanya Curren is the co-founder of Boundless Limits International, a ministry of encouragement and empowerment. In 2004 Tanya Curren was in a life threatening coma for 8 days as a deadly infection ravaged her body. Given two hours to live, she survived only to face the ordeal of a painful three year recovery. She is the author of *Broken Places*, *The Proverbs Devotion Guide*, *Embracing Change & Conflict*, and several other CD's. In her conferences and seminars, Tanya shares with others the life-lessons she learned through her journey to restoration. Tanya travels and speaks at local, regional and international venues, and is passionate about guiding others to have a personal, real relationship with Jesus Christ.