

Title:  
Significance

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Summary:  
The following is based on an essay by Denny Howe at the University of Pennsylvania.

Our core values give us personal focus, strength, resilience, and meaning when the outside world doesn't always give us what we think we need or want. One of the challenges in maintaining behavior consistent with our core values is the perception of significance. How significant something becomes is directly proportional to the amount of emotional energy we give it.

When you feel balan...

Keywords:  
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Article Body:  
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Our core values give us personal focus, strength, resilience, and meaning when the outside world doesn't always give us what we think we need or want. One of the challenges in maintaining behavior consistent with our core values is the perception of significance. How significant something becomes is directly proportional to the amount of emotional energy we give it.

When you feel balanced and secure, more aligned with your core values, you naturally respond in a more balanced and appropriate way. But, when you are operating at a mental or emotional deficit, your actions and reactions to people and events can easily become magnified, distorted and misguided.

This can cause you to continue to replay events, second guess your decisions, and work yourself into greater emotional turmoil. This is emotionally exhausting and it's unproductive. All because of the extra significance you've given it, not necessarily founded on the reality of the event or situation.

The issue at hand may indeed be important, but stop and sincerely ask yourself is the emotional energy investment worth the drain? From a balanced, heart-driven perspective we can choose more easily how much/little of our own energy to give to each daily event.

Consider two things:

1. If you over-invest in something or make a big deal out of it, you expend costly amounts of your precious energy and leave yourself drained and victimized by your own emotion. It is no coincidence that people who do well long-term, and can handle pressure effectively, are often more even keeled, and are efficient in assigning significance to a thing, person, or event. They don't make everything momentous. We can all learn to take the significance out of things that don't need it so we save our emotional energy for the things that really do require it. Taking significance out of situations is a major force for building sustainable energy reserves.

2. There is a fine line between an attitude of irresponsibility or simply brushing things off as opposed to intelligently constraining the significance of life's tricky events. This kind of discrimination is intuitive intelligence in action; to know how much of your emotional energy to give or not to give to something.

As you go forward, especially in situations where you feel your energies being drained or challenged, take the time to apply the tools of emotional intelligence and ask your heart for a balanced look and evaluate how significant the situation/event really is. When you can keep unnecessary importance to a minimum, you don't get drained and you have the energy reserves to adapt, flex, and innovate.