

Just Like Me???

Brenda Porter, WVU Extension Agent, Cabell County
Kerri Wade, WVU Extension Agent, Kanawha County

*Individuals
and groups
do not
always fit
neatly into
categories.*

Values are the beliefs and practices in your life that are very important to you. So many things can influence your values – your parents, other family members, friends, your religion, things you read, and experiences you have. Over time, your values may change – as you learn

and experience new things. Each of us holds our values very dear – our values determine how we spend our money, how we spend our time, how we select our relationships, and how we rear our children. Although some values remain constant over time and culture – honesty,

integrity, respect – some values change with time and events. Such things as the definition of family, religious practices, and the effects of socioeconomic status have been altered over time and are viewed differently by each generation.



Debrief with your group the three scenarios listed below. As you read them, consider the words of Jewish historian Yehuda Bauer, “Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be an oppressor. But most of all, thou shalt not be a bystander.”

Scenario #1

A club member goes to see her new family physician, Dr. Wallace, a recent graduate from the state’s medical school. The doctor states that his wife is interested in joining your club. She saw in the paper how the group is supporting breast cancer awareness, and she is very interested in helping with this cause. She also thinks this will help her to make new friends in the community. Delighted, the club member provides the time and date of the next meeting. Right before the meeting begins, Mrs. Wallace arrives. She is a young Muslim woman wearing an hijab (a scarf covering her head). She stays

– continued –

through the meeting, politely talking to the members. Everyone finds her pleasant and intriguing. Month after month, the members expect to see Mrs. Wallace, but she never comes back. Upon a return visit to Dr. Wallace, the member asks where his wife has been. He says, “She really didn’t want me to tell you this, but she was uncomfortable with the Club Collect and the meditation. She really liked the ladies and was interested in the community service projects, but she felt uncomfortable with the references to Christianity.”

Question: What are your thoughts on losing Mrs. Wallace as a potential member?

Scenario #2

Your club is presenting a diabetes education program at the local health fair. Along with distributing information about diabetes, the club is handing out information on how to join. Carolyn stops at the booth and expresses her interest in joining. She finds out when the next meeting is and attends. During the meeting, they review with Carolyn all their practices: everyone brings a covered dish to each meeting, members take turns hosting at their house, and her membership fee would be due at the next meeting. Weeks go by and one of the club members runs into Carolyn as she is volunteering at a blood drive. The member asks Carolyn why she hasn’t joined the organization. Carolyn responds, “I wouldn’t be able to do the covered dishes every meeting, pay the dues, and I KNOW that you ladies wouldn’t want to come to my house for a meeting. I live in the housing project right in the middle of town.” Stunned, the member walks away.

Question: Do you agree or disagree with Carolyn?

Scenario #3

Your club has one black member, named Shirley. At the yearly planning meeting, the president looks at Shirley and says, “What do black people think about doing community

service?” The members were shocked when Shirley cut the conversation short and tried to leave as soon as possible.

Question: Why was Shirley offended?

“The Golden Rule” is a teaching that is restated in many religions. Each religion seems quite different – however, they share similar ideals. Maybe in some ways, they really are, “Just like me”!

Buddhism: “Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

Judaism: “What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law, all the rest is commentary.”

Islam: “No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. “

Christianity: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Baha’i Faith: “Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”

Web Resources

www.teachingtolerance.org
www.learningdiversity.com
www.ahaprocess.com

2008

Programs and activities offered by the West Virginia University Extension Service are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin, and marital or family status. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Director, Cooperative Extension Service, West Virginia University. FH08-218

