

## **Values**

Sarah A. Dean

Department of Psychology, Old Dominion University

PSYC 420

Prof. Jennifer Muth

2/14/2021

## Values

L. Robert Kohls's article "Values Americans Live By" describes thirteen values common to Americans in 1984. These values still ring true. Some of the values that stood out were "Time and its control," "Action work orientation" and, "Practicality and efficiency." These values demonstrate the fast-paced and hardworking narrative of the United States. They speak on the capitalist nature of the United States. The importance of time and using it wisely to make money and not paying attention to anything that does not progress oneself are core values of America.

The value that stood out the most was "Time and its control." Kohls (1984) described "Time and its control" as Americans' need to accomplish and waste not even a single second. I have seen this value many times in my life. "Time and its control" was taught to me by parents and teachers. This value can put a lot of pressure and expectations on some people. It has been impactful in my life.

One example of "Time and its control" in my personal life was in my high school marching band. The band instructor emphasized time. Timing is vital to music, but he wanted to stress the importance of punctuality. On the first day of band camp, he taught us the history and values of the band program. He reiterated, "If you early, you're on time. If you're on time, you're late. And if you're late, you're dead." If practice started at four o'clock, then we better be there at three-thirty and three-fifty at the latest. We were given this expectation on day one, and all but a few followed it consistently. There were few complaints, but there was a general acceptance of this value amongst the whole band.

Another example of "Time and its control" from my personal life is when I worked at Tropical Smoothie. I could not clock until five minutes before my designated start time, but it reflected poorly on me if I arrived even a minute late for work. Since I was getting paid hourly,

how much time I spent there mattered to the owners. If someone appeared to be doing nothing or it was a slow day, they would send someone home. Time was money, so if someone wasted their time, they got sent home.

“Time and its control” has also been present in school. Since preschool, every subject that needed to be taught had a given duration each day. As I progressed from grade to grade, the time spent on each subject was more strict. Once entering middle school, we had a block schedule, so each teacher got a designated time with their students based on what day it was. There were consequences if you did not get to class on time. Teachers would make sure to use up every single second that they have. They would lecture any student who starts to pack up before the bell has rung.

Kohls (1984) stated that the counterpart to "Time and its control" was "Human interaction." These two are stated as counterparts to one another because when there is a focus on time there is less focus on the individuals involved. This value might be perceived by other cultures as inconsiderate. In my experience, there is a negative consequence if one is not on time. Not only is there the negative consequence, but there is little care as to why the person might have been late. Sometimes there is such a high value on time that no excuse is justifiable for being late. When something like this would occur, someone from a culture that does not hold time as high would find it inconsiderate of an American for not hearing out their explanation.

They might also think it is rude because little time might be given to them, and or they might be rushed. This idea relates to "Time and its control" as a counterpart of "Human interaction." It is possible for there to be so much anticipation for the next planned event that someone does not actively and fully participate in the current activity. Emphasizing time takes

away from being present and developing real connections. Lack of time to do this could seem rude to someone who prefers to create these connections.

### Reference

Kohls, L. R. (1984). *The values Americans live by*. Washington, DC: Meridian House International.