



Living Values™
Education



DISTANCE ONLINE COURSES



Living Values Education Distance
Distance Facilitator Training
Study Group Guidelines



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Starting Your Own Study Group

If you are ready to begin and have the desire to bring the power of LIVING VALUES into your life you will find the programme fun, easy and very simple to follow. The personal **Self Reflection values** questions together with '**Living Values Education - Values Activities**' provide you with the focus and techniques to create the momentum that allows change to take place both in yourself and others with whom you share. As you embrace the ideals presented, you literally empower every facet of your life.

Ghandi said:

“We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body.

If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him.

This is the mystery supreme. A wonderful thing it is and the source of our happiness. We need not wait to see what others may do.”

Through bringing together a group of friends or like-minded people from your community you can host your own 12 week **Living Values Study Group**, playing together each week with the 'Value of the Week'.

The benefit from exploring these Values together in a group is the wonderful transformation you witness that occurs when people acknowledge and are empowered by their Values and begin to live their lives through them. By sharing with one another we grow much quicker and the interactive nature of the Course takes on a whole new dimension. When each of us becomes willing to be the extension of the Living Values and demonstrate that to others in our day to day lives we become the incentive for them to change their way of seeing their world. This becomes particularly obvious in family dynamics and intimate relationships.

While this can be done on your own, the very best way to come to fully embrace and bring this material into your life is to share. You can offer a 'closed circle' for a special set of family or friends or you can be bold and offer an 'open circle' to a wider group of people in your community.

Whether you offer a group in your home on a casual basis or develop a more active role in your community you are providing the 'Gift of Service' that opens doorways for the soul to pass through.

If you choose to entertain the StudyGroup concept—you don't have to reinvent the wheel. We have much experience on how to set up and manage a small group gathering on a regular basis and we are pleased to offer our '**Guidelines for an Effective Group**' below that have proven successful for others in the past.

In the wider community we feel it is important to create awareness for your group through a professional representation defining the purpose and benefits.

To help with this we offer a Living Values **Study Group flyer** to promote your activity in your community. The flyer, a Word document, is a standard design with option for you to add your venue location, date and times, photocopy and distribute in your local area, among friends and colleagues. For a different language you are invited to translate by using Google translate, it may need a little polishing though.

Your group and its development are important to us. While there is no teacher or teaching required for Living Values there are some recommended ways of successfully running your group, we call that 'facilitating the group'. Your role is not as a teacher for you engage exactly as part of the group, it is more to show the way, to invite responses, to encourage and allow each to share their own unique experience.

If this is your first experience of bringing a group together you will find it very enjoyable. You

are working with the group; there is no 'way-shower'. You need to know nothing more than what all the participants know. That you are inclusive would be good to share in humility from the out-set, however it is vital that no one distracts the group from the Course as it is established, that is your guiding contribution.

We would encourage you to read the article from a Study Group facilitator towards the back of the booklet: *My Living Values Study Group Experience* by Paula Bendel.

It provides a great insight.

Starting Your Group

Helpful Hints for Hosts

If you are ready to begin and have the desire to bring the power of LIVING VALUES into your life you will find our Study Group fun, easy and very simple to host.

We will list your contact details in the Study Group website directory. In the future we envisage a blog site whereby hosts can share experiences and activities that they have found most beneficial; see Paula's group experience further in these pages.

Values based atmosphere

You are about to start creating a **Values based atmosphere**, this is very significant and will set the dynamic which becomes the place of safety, openness, a chance to be heard, be understood and respected for each participant -

as such it is ***the most important aspect*** of any group experience, the energy your group will enjoy and want to come back to.

We recommend that you review this **Values based atmosphere**, get to know it, imagine how it might feel and collectively invite it into the group at the beginning of each meeting.

Visit: www.livingvalues.net/values-based-atmosphere/

Planning your Study Group

We ask you to understand the concept of the **LVE Values based atmosphere** because as you start to promote, to share with people what you are seeking to do, this energy of how your Study group will be, the safe environment from which it is offered will be

of key importance to acceptance by venue owners, newspaper journalists, community and business leaders and the general public.

It is people who on hearing or reviewing your brochure, flyers, or your introduction will share with others what they have heard, read or seen and their support will be based on their expectation on the energy that you, yourself have already instilled in your proposed Study Group.

Everything you do from now on is about creating awareness for Living Values, the concept, the benefits, not only for others, the benefit from living in the values which you as a facilitator has to do is life-changing. Be willing, open to learn and experience. You will change and your life will be amazing.

Organising the Meeting

Decide on the type of group you want to assist: What age group, where they live, how will they

benefit, what is your focus, your 'theme'? Only when you know this can you start the search for a suitable venue.

Venue

Best to find somewhere that most participants will know, have heard of, can find easily. How much does it cost, can the Venue assist in your promotion, are they or their staff interested in participating, does it offer easy access, parking availability, will they give you keys if after working hours. Check out the room, is it too small, too big, comfortable seating, outdoor access, space for both collective circle group gathering and one-on-one breakout groups? Is it airy with good lighting, air conditioning and heating? Is it private, can you play music, sing and laugh?

Getting the word out

Once you set your date, the time, the venue, you can create your flyer. We suggest full colour A4 page for big notice boards, and

a small '3up' – three narrow leaflets on one A4 sheet of paper. Don't forget the LVE logo. You need to build credibility. Make the invitation wording friendly, casual, and lighthearted. Highlight the benefits, what's in it for them, why they should participate, don't over promise, it their experience not yours, whether there is a cost or if free of charge. Don't be shy, include your name with a small head and shoulders picture of you smiling and of course, a phone contact number and email address.

Partnering for promotion

Firstly, if you are not getting paid from doing this, helping to relieve some pressure and pain in the community, you deserve to be supported. It's time to make friends, tell people what you doing and why and how you, through Living Values might be able to make a difference.

*Do not be afraid
to ask for help*



Values family - now we know you

Local radio, newspapers; go and see them, make an appointment – meet with them personally, a friendly DJ or announcer, local news reporter, tell them who you are, what you represent, why you are doing it (growing local crime, disrespect, entitlement, young people in trouble, drugs in the community), what specifically you are focusing on. Be careful not to lock yourself into being only for one specific group – children, parents, business, community leaders your event is applicable to all.

Share where LVE, though you, might be making a difference in how people live their lives, creating some positive change in families and the community. You need their support to tell other people about Living Values and what it and you are offering, if your event is free or by donation be sure to tell them.

People are suspicious, assure them that LVE is a global voluntary organization, and you are part of that. Invite them to visit the LVE website to validate you and the event.

Is there a sponsor for your event?

Ideally, consider who might be a sponsor for your event, someone who could benefit directly by being involved with you, what you are doing. It might be a local philanthropic businessman, community support organization, church, the community council may be willing to support your effort with sponsorship, perhaps giving you a meeting room for free, offering money to cover your costs, or sending staff, or simply allowing you to put flyers on their counter, coffee table or, in shop window. Be passionate about this event, tell everyone, attend and share with social club meetings – give a talk about LVE at Rotary, Lions, the businessman's, businesswomen's breakfast or lunch meetings.

Hand out and leave flyers everywhere

Give people you meet your business cards, you don't know who might decide LVE can help

them in a week, month or next year, with their staff, business or, even family issues.

Timing is everything

Plan ahead at least one month, so your promotion can gain momentum. How many people do you need? If you get too many, can you do a second group in the near future? Have a second date set aside, if you don't get enough will you delay till more come or go ahead? Some people are not available for your event right now, maybe in the following month, take contact names and email addresses, ask; *"Can I keep in touch, place you on my mailing list?"* Start to build your data base.

Look to the future

You might have such a success with your first event you may offer a follow-up with different values themes bringing together some past participants and merging them with new ones. Perhaps some in your group are inspired to consider running their

own LVE Study Group, or even taking over yours allowing you to move another community.

Activities for the Meeting

LVE Values Activities

Your work book with all the Values explained for you to discover. Some audio files are available to download and play with some specified activities. Each meeting's theme is based on the **Self Reflection 'Value of the Week'**.

Select two LVE Values Activities

Select two values activities of the weekly value from the LVE Values Activities for each meeting.

It is vital that you research your chosen Value activity BEFORE the meeting. Choose what you feel are the two most interesting, challenging activities. Always have a spare activity or two available for emergencies.

Materials you will need

- Chairs, invite people to bring their own cushion, some activities are good sitting on the floor. A room with clean, carpet is better than tiles. A portable CD or MP3 player and some fun music.
- While LVE is not a New Age experience, some contemplation music is OK during reflection, imagining or to play in artwork time.
- A white board with coloured pens and duster is good for writing up what people share so that the visual aspect of cognition is covered, easier to remember and relate to.
- Have sets of coloured pens

and art paper to use with some activities, some pins or tape to put artwork up on display if appropriate.

Materials participants will need

Have them each download and print themselves a copy of the ***Personal Journal***, or you could have printed for them and charge for the cost. This is vital as the Journal is designed to be used in tandem with the LVE Values Activities providing not only a record of what people find in themselves but also pages to use for artwork and ideas as you each work through the Values activities.



This is a major benefit providing the record of each meeting's focus; reinforcing and building momentum that assists change to take place as you explore each Value.

*As you embrace
the ideals presented you
literally empower every
facet of your life.*

Your role

There is nothing to teach, only the Values to experience. Explain to your group that your role is to host and coordinate providing the structure and that wherever possible you will include yourself in the activities.

- Explain there is no authority other than the mutual agreement between the group. There are no teachers of Living Values Education, you are the Study Group host and that you participate along with your friends.

- First off, you do need an agreement from the group for some “ground rules”.

Here are some suggestions:

~ One person speaks at a time

~ Raise your hand if you have something to say or use a 'talking stick and is passed to next person wanting to speak. There is no contradiction to the one speaking.

~ Listen to what other people are saying

~ No mocking or attacking other people's ideas

~ Be on time coming back from breaks (if it's a long meeting)

~ Respect each other.

You may encounter someone who wants to take over and introduce their ideas, do things their way. LVE is already designed so that everyone can 'play' without a teacher or guru. There is nothing to learn only something within to awaken. This is truly a do-it-yourself experience.

Do not allow deviation from your LVE schedule to embrace another's 'better' ideas.

Answering questions: The best way to handle questions is to ask, "What do you think or feel is right?" – hand it back. If appropriate let others, one at a time, comment.

Remember, if in doubt, refer back to the Values, if still having trouble, email your support for suggestions.

Study schedule

Our experience shows that the most successful Study Groups have a fixed schedule lasting no more than 2.5 hours and that everyone is aware of what happens during each meeting. During the scheduled Values Awareness time there should be no other interaction, storytelling, or personal one on one conversation unless the Values activity suggests it.

Private talk fests should be done before and after the meeting. It would be good to get agreement for this from everyone before you start your very first meeting, if people cannot resist the temptation to distract you can politely refer to this prior agreement. Always start and finish on time thereby honouring the Value of Respect.

Your schedule

(suggestion) Please ensure that you start on time – do not wait for late comers, they can slide in without fuss.

PART 1 - 60 minutes:

- 5 mins. Welcome - Start with quiet time, ask the group to contemplate their experience with the previous meeting's Value.
- 15 mins. Invite three people who would like to share their personal experience with the Group, what they discovered about the previous meeting's Value.

- 15 mins. Self-Reflection – responding to the questions for the new Value of the Week.
- 25 mins for the **first activity** you have chosen.
- Make sure you have whatever special materials to hand before you start the meeting; coloured pens, balloons, art paper, cushions, etc. Remember, this is *‘fun playtime’*.

PART 2 - 60 minutes:

- 10 min. break
- 25 mins. Offer the **second activity** you have chosen (make sure the activities require movement and/or small one on one breakouts.
- 15 mins. Personal experience – what did people feel about the two activities.
- 10 mins. Closing – give ‘homework’ for self-reflection; Value of the week ‘Evaluation questions’ from Journal.
- Following conclusion allow 15 -30 mins socializing is worth encouraging – maybe offer some refreshments.

Note: You can google ‘fill-ins’ or ‘ice breakers’ for ideas.

You can be creative so long as it revolves around the quality of that Value; an example; Each Value has one line reflection points at the beginning, you could write those out and hand one asking each person to read out theirs and share for five minutes on that quotation, what does it mean, what are the implications, how does it appear in their life etc.

It’s good to have a few small ‘easy to do’ ideas up your sleeve if an activity is required.

Frequency

Once a week is the required time frame to keep in time with the weekly changing values. If people miss some they can, but you have to still maintain your momentum. We suggest during the time between meetings you offer simple homework by contemplating the Values Evaluations questions offered at the end of each Value and that it is expected that during the week

they refer back to their original responses in **‘Self-Reflection’**. Quite often we will have new thoughts, perhaps deeper responses. It’s good to ask the self the question, “is what I have said really true?”

Your group numbers

Any number works from two up to eight. Discovering values is a very personal experience and people do need to have the opportunity to express and share their experiences of how the Values interact with feelings and behaviours.

The venue

You will need private space ensuring that you will have no interruption, your own home maybe perfect for a small group or, you may have to borrow or rent a small conveniently located meeting place.

Cost and fees

We suggest you ask the group if they are able to donate

something towards the cost of some light refreshment. If you have to pay for the venue, discuss the shared cost, get acceptance from the group. You deserve to be reimbursed for any expenditure. You are a participant too.

The benefits

The benefit from exploring these Values together is the wonderful transformation as you witness that occurs when people acknowledge and are empowered by their Values. Through the group dynamic, sharing with one another we have the opportunity to grow much quicker.

Important notice for LVE Study Group participants

Study Group Participants who have completed the 12 weeks engagement in Self Reflection of the 12 Values and recorded their findings in their booklet, and have also engaged the two LVE activities each week and recorded those in their Personal Journal are eligible to apply for the LVE

Distance Facilitator Training (DFT) by submitting their workbooks together with their LVE Study Group participant's certificate. Subject to the evaluation of their workbooks they are deemed to have completed Level One of the DFT Course and can immediately begin Level Two – Facilitator Training.

After a satisfactory evaluation of their Level Two exercises, they may receive their LVE Distance Facilitator Training Certificate. They are not required to do Level Three – LVE Study Groups, They can then join the many LVE facilitators around the world in actively presenting LVE activities and can hold their own LVE Study Groups for others.

As each of us becomes the extension of the Living Values and demonstrates this to others we provide the encouragement for others to change their way of seeing their world.

Information to help you

The following information provided by a very well respected life coach and teacher, offers helpful advice in establishing a successful community group activity.

“As a man changes his own nature so does the attitude of the world change towards him.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Guidelines for an effective Living Values Education group

Overview provided by Phil Golding

Psychotherapist, Healer, Life-Coach, Author, Philosopher

Setting up and hosting a regular small group meeting with the intention of expanding Values Awareness is a wonderful ideal, which deserves to be supported. The very interaction with the Values has the potential for changing one's attitude and behaviour in life.

Creating group energy and maintaining it for an indefinite period is an art that requires a good deal of personal development and understanding. While this does not mean that we need a PhD. before we can start such a group, it does mean you need to understand that by starting such a group, you are placing yourself on a definite path of awakening, and the responsibility to make the effort to undertake this awakening needs to be accepted

and taken seriously.

Take for granted that you are going to make mistakes, that you are going to have many false starts, and that you are going to be confronted with the complex realities of group dynamics.

As always, the ideal is always difficult to achieve, so while endeavouring to achieve this ideal we get more opportunity to gain self-awareness and learn about acceptance!

Below are some guidelines for your Living Values study group you may find useful.

Keep the group grounded

We all like to chase the big ideal and the far-out experiences, but success lies in your everyday

personal affairs. That is where your personal Values growth opportunities are.

Bringing the principles down into the ups and downs of your daily life is the best way I know to sustain a continual personal growth.

People are always coming and going in my group, but the ones who are ready to get real and till the soil of their own personal issues are the ones who stay and grow.

There will always be some who come for a look out of curiosity or those who cannot commit long term to a situation, they will come and go. There is usually an underlying emotional reason in them for this, so do not be tempted to blame yourself for this. I have also experienced both sides of this myself. It is a stage we all go through. We don't really know what for, but we think it has to be easy and instant.

It is important to set a regular date and get the commitment from people to attend on this date and at an agreed specific time. Always

start on that time. For the 12 week program I have found a 2 to 3 hour session every week is able to maintain momentum without straining relationships.

*We do not yet realise
that the ease comes from
accepting the reality
of the path and
surrendering to it.*

A successful group is not a numbers game

Most people who inquire about my group for the first time ask me how many people attend my group as though the number is relevant to something. Some of the best groups I have attended have consisted of me and just one other person. Our ego thinks there is something wrong if that is all there is.

Two people who are truly committed create far more power than a dozen idealists. In fact, a group starts with just one

person. If you are truly serious, committed and willing to learn, you have already entered a hall of great Souls who are working hard and continuously on your behalf. Have faith and keep working on yourself.

We are of equal worth, but we don't have equal capabilities

Even though a Living Values group is a group of equals, it will often benefit by having a facilitator who is there to provide hard won strength of character, experience and wisdom. Such a person may be skilled in group facilitation or aspiring to be a Living Values accredited facilitator and may be a little further down the track than most of the group, even though the difference in integration is usually not that great between the members of such a group.

There will always be those who we can reach forward to whilst at the same time reaching back to those walking the path behind us. Humility tells us how to recognize the words of someone wiser and

more experienced, and how to help someone less experienced. This is a dynamic that exists in every group of learning and has its rightful place, being a reality of the evolutionary process.

A facilitator therefore needs to be given the lead. Be patient. A good facilitator will try to strike a balance between structure and any sharing from the group. The facilitator is the focal point, guardian, and director of the group energy and never in Living Values, the teacher.

We are all equal in value but not necessarily in ability.

Maintain a consistent purposeful group structure

A certain amount of structure is necessary within a sharing group to maintain pure, positive and focused energy, and here are some useful guide-lines that help maintain the right energy flow of

the type of mutual sharing group that I am referring to. For me, the most important are:

Respect the role of the facilitator

For the purpose of maintaining a clear strong energy in a group, every group needs a facilitator, even if it is just someone from the group volunteering for that session. Their style of facilitating may not be exactly yours, but it may work well anyway. Give the person the benefit of the doubt. However, once you have given the person a chance; by all means give suggestions for improvement, preferably in a non-attached and constructive way. Remember the principle of goodwill and cooperation. Remember that Living Values must be applied to everything – in particular, to the study group environment.

Setting the group guidelines is very important at the outset. These need to come from the group and be agreed to verbally.

Once established this list should always be displayed.

Such points might be: Punctuality, Starting and finishing on time, Only one person speaking at a time, Confidentiality, No ‘fixing’, No advice, Keep to the point, No stories, No teaching.... etc.

Allow each person their turn to share, without interruption or cross talk

This may seem a bit rigid and there is room for some flexibility, but I have found that the energy level is best maintained this way. This counteracts the urge to jump in and “fix” people just because they are expressing their feelings.

We are not in the group to psycho-analyse one another or, to fix anyone. We can actually do that better for ourselves as we are talking. This is because there is a certain power about honestly and openly sharing in such a group, which enables each speaker to gain access to their own intuition. As sharers, we actually gain insight as we speak.

Such a structure also helps us to learn how to truly listen and connect with other people, rather than only being focused on what we want to jump in and say next. Interruptions interfere with this inner-connection.

As the sharing continues around the group, each member picks up on the other members' sharing, and the insights gained collectively raise the energy of the group. Some people like to jot down thoughts and insights so they don't forget them when it comes to their turn to speak. Others prefer to take it as it comes. Either way, the sharing is basically free and spontaneous, within this guiding structure. Once the sharer has finished talking, other members can ask the sharer questions to clarify their own understanding, which in turn helps the whole group. But remember, it is not about giving advice or saving one another.

As a member is speaking, those who are listening can consciously send energy in the form of positive thought to this person,

encouraging them to think from their highest available state of consciousness.

This is just another way of sending them love. Also, while we are doing this we are less likely to jump in with our five cents worth! This helps to focus the healing and transformative energies of the group even more, plus energize ourselves in the process.

Be Real

None of us are perfect communicators. Being sincere means we have a go, we just do our best on the day. The ideal is to speak intelligently from the heart, which means maintaining a connection between heart, head, and Soul.

Most important is to create a Values based atmosphere

This enables us to be emotionally honest in our sharing without having to push our emotions

down, or push them onto others. We are able to speak with sincerity, and if there is a tear that needs to be shed, then the atmosphere is there for it to flow freely. By 'having a go' we soon get the feel for it.

This is how we grow. Learning about Values and Ideals is only a small part of what it takes to expand our consciousness. The heart only needs enough knowledge to enable it to make the next small jump. Many small steps make a journey.

Respect the collective wisdom of the group

Decisions affecting the group as a whole need to be made democratically by the group. If you don't agree with the final decision, just wait and see. Rarely is there a decision, made by an intelligent group of people that is so wrong. Often we get too attached to our own personal issues, which is another good reason why the collective wisdom of the group is better. In the same vein, it is important to be vigilant

when someone is imposing their will on the group.

Often we don't like to speak up for fear of conflict. Dealing with issues quickly, honestly in the moment, even if we have to gently insist on it, is better for all concerned in the long run.

If ever in doubt, go back to the Values for guidance

At each meeting, maintain focus on the Values

Each meeting should contain; a circle feedback on the week's experience of what was discovered living in the last Value, followed by exploring the next designated Value by collectively participating in one of the new Value's activities, finish by asking what each person discovered through the activity, and ensuring everyone is willing to take that Value as the focus of their week. Do not allow the group to become

a chat-fest or a gossip session, the energy focus breaks up, the link with the group Soul is lost, and the focus is once again limited to the ego personality.

Respect confidentiality

This type of group is about being real, about facing the truth about ourselves and most importantly, building an atmosphere of caring and acceptance whilst awakening to Living Values. What is spoken about privately at a meeting, regarding members personally, stays at that meeting.

General issues can certainly be talked about afterwards, but gossip and personal criticism is avoided, which is a fundamental cornerstone to the principle of goodwill and cooperation.

Summary

Abiding by the suggestions above together with the embracement of the essence of each of the Values can only ensure success for you personally and your group participants. Taking positive steps to live in the Values, becoming aware when issues come up in your own life and within the group as they must, becomes a wonderful gift because each Value individually and collectively form the perfect direction and resolution to resolve any difficulties we encounter in our lives. Our willingness to live in Values awareness can be the deciding factor.



Heart sharing - this is how I feel

My Living Values Study Group Experience

by Paula Bendel

The “Ah-ha” Moments

As a group we had many ah-ha moments as a result of doing the LVE Values Activities program, so I’ve written about the three most powerful ones. The first one is the groups ah-ha, the second one is mine and the third one is collective.

This first ah-ha moment belongs to the group. While we were exploring the value of Simplicity and discussing the reflection points, we arrived at the subject of mindfulness, one of my favourite subjects and as a group I felt that our consciousness was raised to a point where we really threw away those masks, we meant business. We were talking about how we have read all the books, gone to all the metaphysical

mastery courses, been attuned to this that and the other but all agreed that NOW was the time to be completely serious about the application of that knowledge.

Yes, knowledge is power but not if you don’t do anything about it. We all agreed that we are at a critical juncture of life on this planet. It seems to us that the world is on fire and so are the hearts of men, inflamed with fear and uncertainty because we find it so difficult to stay in the now. As the reflection point reads:

Simplicity is staying in the present and not making things complicated.

What an absolute gem of a statement and so powerful. Being human we always have a choice in this regard. We can be either passively carried along by forces and habits that remain stubbornly unexamined and imprison us by distorting our dreams and becoming potential nightmares. Or we can engage in our life by waking up to them and participating fully in their unfolding whether we like it or not, it's only when we wake up and stay in the present that we can address whatever is happening in our lives.

Only when we wake up do our lives become real and have the chance of being liberated by our own individual and collective delusions, diseases and suffering.

How we see ourselves in the world at this juncture will make a huge impact in the way things unfold, what emerges for us as individuals and as a society for future moments will be shaped and measured on how we make use of our innate capacity for awareness in this moment. It will

be shaped by what we choose to do.

LVE Values Activities and that particular discussion on staying in the present to create simplicity brought awareness to how Living Values gain access to those dimensions that are presently hidden from us because we are not present, because we are seduced, trained, mesmerised and frightened into the future and into the past.

We allow ourselves to be carried along in the stream of events and the weather patterns of our own reactions and numbness, we obsess about what we artificially deem urgent and lose touch at the same time with what is actually important, what is vital for our own wellbeing, for our sanity and for our very survival.

We have made absorption in the past and in the future such an overriding habit that much of the time we have no awareness of the present moment at all and thus feel that we have very little control over it.

We all felt liberated after exploring the value of Simplicity and discussing it's benefits. A new mindset unfolded as we released holding onto what was so we could be present for what is.

The Second "ah-ha" is mine

Continuing on with the week and immersing myself in the value of Simplicity I sank deeper and deeper into the value, I don't really think of having favourite values because clearly they all interact and all are equally important but having said that I have to say I love the value of Simplicity. As I mentioned earlier in the first ah-ha the group really got into a great in depth discussion on simplicity and arrived at

some powerful revelations, we discussed how critical it is right now for us to take action on what is important to us and how basically we are sleep walking and how now is the time to wake up. We talked about the choices we have and how mindfulness can help us to slow down and be present, thus choosing more creatively between a stimulus and a response. And here's my "ah- ha".

While I was thinking deeply on this I realised that when you truly are present, you can sense a witness, a sense that you are being watched, when you slow down, when you stop, relax and breathe you connect with your Creator, call it what you want, the God Force, the Universe or God, what you have connected with is Love and when you connect to love you become love and therefore there is no need to even choose between the stimulus and the response because you have connected to love and what would love do, it would only ever do what love does, love.

That's all it knows.

I was excited to share this with my group the next week, a couple connected, the other two not so much but as a facilitator it was important to appreciate that everyone is where they are and it is all perfect no matter what.

The Third “ah-ha” was one we all connected with

We were discussing the value of Responsibility and while we were defining the meaning as a group we discussed how we felt when we pulled a card with the word Responsibility on it when we chose from the Value cards (available from website). We all agreed that our energy sank because of the meaning that we had previously ascribed to it. So we took a few moments, closed our eyes and went inside to discover what responsibility really meant because if the value of Responsibility is innate it should not have that kind of energy.

What we arrived at was a complete turnaround; we all came up with a new meaning for Responsibility, all with different words and labels but all with the same feeling for the word. We all felt that being responsible was an absolute gift because when you are responsible your focus involves others so you are more connected and united, and as human beings are social creatures that's nice to know, nothing much surpasses the feeling of being connected to someone else.

We also all felt that when you are being responsible you are genuine and to be genuine you can't really be wearing those hideous masks. So being responsible really is an ally in removing the masks and a sneaky one at that.

We loved it.

Something I want to share with you

After exploring the value of Simplicity as many times as I have now, I have a more direct

and impactful purpose for my life. I believe that the purpose of my life is to experience peace and my mission to accomplish this is to connect and share with people my message of creating more peace in the world. I achieve this by continually educating myself, practicing mindfulness and raising my awareness to BE the change I want to see.

So it's no accident that the Living Values Education program showed up right on cue for me - Divine timing. I felt peace as a result of attending the program, Living Values give you the permission to be who you really are, to discover and explore your love and light, to step out of the illusion and gently remove your masks.

Then embarking upon the LVE Values Activities I experienced this peace week by week by exploring each value on a deeper level and striking a greater balance of bliss within my own life. Each week I looked forward with excitement to find what other keys there were to unlock more peace and balance.

The real gift was experiencing the facilitation process of the LVE Values Activities with my group.

The program is about the participant and as the facilitator I had the privilege of witnessing the uncovering of the values to reveal the truth and beauty inside of everyone; a magical experience..

My LVE Values Activities Group incorporated games, metaphors, artwork, group discussions, visualisations and song and while I found that the games brought the most happiness and balance almost instantly, all the other means of exploring the values had their own way of seeping into the consciousness of the group both collectively and individually.

For example, when discussing the definition of a value the group always arrived at the feeling of

the value, the very essence of the value, what it meant to each other when discussed using labels and words led to a more in depth realisation at the end of the discussion allowing that feeling of the value to be tangible. As the facilitator I often witnessed the group like a verbal mind map, all the banter and bouncing around of an idea, some pondering, some thinking deeply, and being part of the group myself and experiencing the level of trust growing all attributed to the group feeling more peaceful, balanced and complete.

We are allowed to take up space here on earth and more than that make the most of the space we have while we still have our lives to live.

What worked

At the first Study group I decided to go with something that I had done at other times and that was to have each participant light a candle and set an intention, I also asked them to invite in any form of energy if they wished.

Not exactly LVE but it could be. An intention as you know is a force in nature and having the group put it out there just seemed right. You know, just something along the lines of, it's my intention this evening to focus and find peace. Each week I cleared the room with incense, and drew symbols in that represented courage, balance and whatever I thought pertained to the particular value on the night, I believe they work very well together.

And surprisingly or not so surprisingly, I'd have the group share if they wished on occasions and when they did probably seven times out of ten the intention they set coincided with the value for the evening. That magic never ceases to amaze me.

As a group we also cleared the space when we set the ground rules, it worked well, clearing the space simply means voicing anything that has the capacity to take you away from the present moment by voicing it briefly you bring yourself back into the present and into a positive frame of mind.

What else?

The stories as you are aware are always insightful and very powerful. Knowing that a story or a metaphor is the best way to lead someone to an “ah-ha”, and doing it in an inductive way, as opposed to just flat out telling them or explaining something, was great.

There are some powerful stories in the LVE books and LVE Values Activities.

As a facilitator I saw what characters they connected to for the lessons they needed. And as the group was small only four participants, I could remember certain things about a previous group discussion around a story or metaphor and it gave me the opportunity to connect the previous value into the current value.

One of the examples was while we were doing Cooperation I read the childrens story of the Giant

Turnip, it was suggested in one of the LVE books and the connection that one of the participants made was also very relevant when we came to do Responsibility and I could tie it all in and I believe the light to the dark place was all the brighter for that participant.

I never said anything about most of the stories being children’s but I did pre-frame by explaining Dr Morris Masseys’ development stages. 0-7 years old: the imprint period, 7-14 years old: the modelling period, 14-21 years old: the socialisation period and 21 to 35 the development of the business persona and how, *when you are stressed or afraid you slip back into these stages and react as you would when you were that age as a result of conditioning and events during that period.* I also mentioned the stages of adult evolution to assist as well.

What do you tell your group if you are challenged as to why we read children’s stories?

At the completion of each value, at the end of each week, I set homeplay for the group, the

evaluation questions at the end of each value in the LVE Values Activities Program. I suppose I had a 75% average success rate with them on that. Sometimes all of them didn't do their homework citing being too busy as the excuse. So I suggested that they take one of the questions each morning and ponder throughout the day upon the meaning it holds for them and it would be easier to write about it or to comment on it when next at the group. Some found that advice useful.

Starting at Peace and ending with Unity definitely had a natural flow, all the other values tied in perfectly in the middle.

Towards the end the group had a real feel for peace and balance which is what I believe LVE is all about. They would make statements throughout the program such as, *“that’s a lot like the value of Humility”* or

“didn’t we discuss that when we did Respect?” As a facilitator I thought that was great because I knew we hadn’t discussed that specifically, I knew what they were referring to with regards to the other values and could sense that they were eliciting the feeling of the value and had gone deep enough to feel that the values at their deepest level pretty much had the same feeling.

Testimony

Prior to completing the Living Values Education Program, the LVE Values Activities and the facilitation of my Study Group I felt that I didn’t have the time to do all the things that I needed to let alone do the things that I wanted to so I felt time poor. I also felt that I had so many choices, so much information all extremely good as I have immersed myself in personal development and spirituality forever but I was overwhelmed by which direction was the best direction for me to take.

Which direction was best for my life's purpose, which direction was going to illuminate my path? I knew that I wanted peace and balance and I was on a mission to find the best way to achieve that.

During the LVE Values Activities and the facilitation of my Study Group I discovered and felt at a much deeper level what the value of Simplicity can really mean. I think in a nutshell I would have to quote 'the real question has been said, it's not the future of humanity but the presence of eternity.' And thought the exercises, metaphors and group discussions on the subject of Simplicity the depths that we reached as a group and the importance of it shifted my consciousness to a brighter place.

I was able to remove the masks that I so diligently wear and be myself with confidence, peace and balance. It's not until I did the program that I realised how many masks I was wearing and to find out that I don't have to wear them is empowering to say the

least. Not only is it empowering I realised how hideous some of them were. I was somehow given permission to be who I really am.

My biggest "ah-ha" was to just slow down, and ironically I now know to get things done, I must slow down.

*It is my intention that
as many people as
possible receive this gift.*

When I'm in a place of balance I have so much more energy and clarity and doing the LVE Values Activities and facilitating my Study Group allowed me to find that balance. I had so many break through moments far too many to share here, there are twelve values in the Living Values Program and I'm only addressing two of them. I want to mention Responsibility here because I wonder how many people know that their rights actually come with responsibilities and I wonder

how many people feel their energy sink at the mere mention of the word. I know mine did until I investigated what Responsibility really meant to me and found out how what a gift Responsibility really is.

So as a result of completing the LVE Values Activities and facilitating my Study Group I feel peaceful, balanced and on purpose. I am waking from a convenient and familiar slumber, I am no longer on auto pilot, and I no longer flit from task to task without being mindful. I practice mindfulness and live the values.

What an honour to have this information. I still haven't caught up but I have made peace with that as I know that I'll never get it done and I'll never get it right or wrong thus is the nature of our ever expanding universe. I know on a deeper level that everything is indeed happening at the right time and in the right place and to quote again, this time from T.S. Elliot;

We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the very first time.'

~ T. S. Elliot

Paula Bendel,
LVE Australia Facilitator and
Group Study Leader



Living Values™
Education

This Certificate is awarded to

for participation in the Living Values Study Group 12 Week Study Course

Commenced:

Completed:

The Self Reflection Study is a Values based Personal Development programme designed to create recognition of our present relationship with Values, to instill awareness that there is an opportunity to change our lives and be open to the desire to see life differently through embracing *Living in our Values*.

Living Values Education (LVE) is a comprehensive values education. The implementation of Living Values Education is coordinated by the Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE International), a non-profit-making association of values educators around the world. It was part of the global movement for a culture of peace in the framework of the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World.

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We thank you for your interest in
Living Values Education Distance.

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