



Celebrating the Outstanding Work of our Students

“Family Values”
by Jonah Garnick
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In life every single human being has a set of values. When you are born you instantly start learning and developing different values. Even though I’m still pretty young and my values might change between now and when I’m older, I think most of my main values will stick with me for life. To find these values I asked my Mom, Dad, Grandparents, and other relatives for some stories. From those stories I’ve been able to extract a list of my top values.

My main value is family, *meesh-pa-cha*. I love them, I relate to them and I always have a great time with them. Most important, they’re always there for me no matter what.

Values are not upheld individually, they work together to form an internal compass that helps to guide you. Family and charity come together as a tradition of helping and being there. This was started by my great-grandfather George. He is my great-grandfather on my mother’s side and is my Poppy’s father. Up front, George seemed like an okay guy, but secretly he was unbelievably charitable. Since he was the head of the family and was the oldest, he felt it was his responsibility to bring the family together.

He paid to bring all of his family from Europe and he also paid to bring his wife’s side of the family together from all over the world as well. Family meant so much to him, if he had an immigrant working for him, he’d even pay to bring their family to the U.S. To me, my family is my set of special friends. I can’t ever stay mad at them for too long.

My great-grandfather’s value of supporting the family has been passed onto my generation. My family always gets together for the holidays. They come in for Thanksgiving. We get together for Chanukah, Passover, birthdays, special events and just because we want to have a little fun.

My family is not only very close, but also very humorous. This leads me to my next value, humor, *hu-mor*. Bill Cosby once said that, “Through humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers.” My family isn’t made up of famous comedians but we certainly know how to laugh-and mostly at ourselves.

A great example of our family’s humor happens like clockwork on Thanksgiving when my mom cooks her infamous turkey. One time we left a non-oven thermometer in the turkey and cooked the turkey with the thermometer only to discover that non-oven thermometers melt when cooked. We laughed at the idea of mercury poisoning and ate the turkey anyway. We all survived. Another Thanksgiving the turkey wouldn’t defrost, when in the first place we ordered a fresh turkey!!!! Instead of freaking out and complaining that we didn’t have a good Thanksgiving, we imagined a hysterical drive-by turkey toss through Citerella’s window with Meme, my grandmother, being the pitcher. So I guess you could say that we made the best out of a bad situation.

I'm always laughing about something with either a friend or family. I'm mean look at me, I'm here today having my bar mitzvah at a comedy club. It can be anything from bad delivery food, to a smelly cab ride, or even a screaming crazy person on the bus. Mostly, I've really learned how to find the humor within any unpleasant situation.

A lot of comedians are pretty smart people so that often leads to their success. This brings me to my next important value, entrepreneurialism or the value of taking initiative, *yoza-ma*. An entrepreneur is defined by dictionary.com as "a person who organizes and manages any enterprise, especially a business, usually with considerable initiative and risk." This value of being an entrepreneur runs widely on both sides of my family.

I have a great-great-uncle named Sam Getz who was a building developer, who built many of the high-rise apartments on the Rockaway Peninsula. I have another great uncle, Joe Garnick, who had a successful metal fastener business, which he relocated to Dallas Texas, from Connecticut, in the early 1960's. There weren't a lot of businesses owned by Jewish people in Texas at the time. Which made him very unique.

On my mom's side of the family, I have my uncle Todd, and my uncle Adam. My Uncle Todd had a big position at a big corporation, with good pay and good benefits. But he *left* it to start his own business. He always wanted to open up a hotdog store. So that's what he did. He now is the proud owner of the very successful Jonnies Hotdogs, in Wayne, Pennsylvania. He started off with one store and now has a franchise business.

My uncle Adam started his own business. His company helps set up safeguards for other businesses in potential danger. They have lists of emergency contacts, they schedule when for a company to back up its files, and they also work in project management. And circling back to my great-grandfather George, he was enormously successful in the garment industry. As his business grew he gave jobs to his brothers in his business, dress manufacturing. They sold and manufactured all of the dresses at his factory. And coincidentally, Meme's grandfather even worked for Poppy's father! Later, her father became very successful in the garment industry as well.

My family's success in life tempered with personal hardships have inspired them to give to people the support that we have created within our own family. Let's just say, we like to share the pleasure we created and are privileged to have. This brings me to my next value, compassion, *rach-a-meem*.

Great-grandfather George brought his family from Europe then assisted his employees to bring their families together. My Uncle Adam is on the board of the March of Dimes as well as setting up his own charity to honor his daughter who died as an infant. For the past 13 years, the Rebecca Chusid fund brings toys to under privileged children during the holidays. My Dad's family has set up a children's charity in Florida to benefit kids with AIDS, in the memory of my late cousin David.

Following in my family's footsteps, my dog Louie is now a certified therapy dog visiting people and children in hospitals and treatment centers. I share the pleasure I have with my little dog with other people that really need to share in the love I get every day.

Last but certainly not least on my main values list, the value of creativity, *y'tzir-ah-tee-oot*. It comes through in many different forms. Art is a way of self-expression. Art is embroidered into every day life. Art touches everything; containers are art, Doritos are art, chairs are art, toilets are even art! What I'm really saying is that everything in this world is designed somehow or thought about creatively, and that makes it art. Art is not just an object, it is also beauty; a pleasure to look at, a display of emotions and thoughts, someone's mind on paper or canvas, in music or a photograph.

My mom is an art director for an ad agency. She has always worked doing what she loves. In the past she has worked in graphic design, she even went to SVA. She knows how to paint and draw well too. So that has had a big influence on me. Actually right now I am thinking about being in the arts when I grow up.

My dad on the other hand has a different type of artistic influence on me. My dad is a very accomplished guitarist. He's been playing since he was ten years old. Right now he's actually in a band called the Wicked Messengers, and he's really good! He has a lot of other musical knowledge too, which influences me to want to learn to play different instruments. He also always helps me on writing problems that I have. I can always rely on him since he is good writer and has been a publisher of music magazines and still works in the music industry in marketing. Both my parents do what they love. I hope I will be able to do the same.

It goes further than just this. I have ancestors that were involved in all different types of arts. On my mom's side I have Jeshzua Perle who is a famous playwright and documented his experience in the Warsaw ghetto during WW2. On my dad's side I'm related to Stan Getz the famous Jazz Musician.

I have used many examples of family members and their accomplishments to illustrate the passion of their beliefs which in turn helped to get me started on understanding what is important in life to me. All of these values will be my guide lines on the bumpy road of life. These values all interlock with each other and help me figure my life out every single day. Thinking about them has made me realize what I'm made of, where I've come from and where I might end up too.