How to Determine One's Value as a Human Being

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Editors Note: People involved with RET often advocate and use humor in therapeutic contacts with clients. Ellis's rational songs are an excellent example of this. The following article continues this tradition and is intended for homework reading by clients—especially those who take seriously the task of self-rating.

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These instructions are for those people who have been concerned with self-rating and judging their worth as human beings. If we are going to rate ourselves as good or bad, worthwhile or worthless, then we absolutely must do the job thoroughly and correctly. No half-baked, half-hearted, sloppy, or incomplete methods can be allowed!

To really arrive at a valid decision regarding our self-worth we must, therefore, have a complete record of all of our actions, deeds, and thoughts since infancy. That is, we must have the kind of thoroughly total record that will be available at the Day of Judgment.

Now since you haven't been keeping a thorough record throughout your life as you SHOULD have been doing in order to establish your worth as a human, we'll have to do the next best thing we can and rely on your memory.

Hence, you must now start the job of listing all the things you have ever done, all of the actions you have ever taken along with all of the thoughts you have ever had. It's a big task but very important! Do not shirk at it because it is going to arrive at the most important assessment you have ever made—your net value as a person.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE STARTED READING THIS IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU NOT STOP. FOLLOW IT RIGHT THROUGH TO THE END.

First of all you will have to make two lists: The first will be your "Cluster of Attributes Deserving Damnation" (CADD), and the second will be "Various Illustrations Requiring Total Unqualified Esteem" (VIRTUE). Then after the many millions of entries have been made on each list, you will have to go back over them and rate the relative goodness and badness of each entry using positive numbers for the good ones on your VIRTUE list, and negative numbers for the bad ones on your CADD list. That is, we will have to recognize that some bad things are worse than others and some good things are better than others, e.g., merely thinking about hitting your kid brother would not be rated as negatively as actually hitting him, and donating five dollars to a good cause would not be rated as good as donating one hundred dollars. But we'll worry about relative goodness and badness later.

Your first task, preparing your CADD list, which is going to occupy a considerable portion of your life for some time to come, must be done before determining the relative rating. But don't fret because this task itself will merit some positive value, and might be the first entry on your VIRTUE list. Remember, it's the most important thing you have ever done—it is going to establish your relative worth as a human and, therefore, determine whether it is appropriate for you to continue to exist.

We begin with the Cluster of Attributes Deserving
Damnation (CADD) because most people who are feeling badly about themselves are more eager to document these. This list is going to be very lengthy, and you will need to buy a number of very large notebooks to start with and I would suggest at least one gross of lead pencils. (Using lead pencils will allow you to more neatly correct any mistakes, but remember to add any mistakes you make to your CADD list because all mistakes merit damnation.)

You must be absolutely thorough with this job—even the slightest negative item in thought or deed MUST be included, otherwise your relative value as a human being will not be correctly arrived at. So don't forget or gloss over as unimportant items such as the following:

- The times you felt sleepy in church
- The times you awoke wishing you didn't have to get up and go to school
- The times you got mad at your mother
- Those instances when you became impatient with someone who was too slow
- Your vote for a candidate who then won the election and performed badly on the job
- The times you lied and said you liked something when you really didn't
- The incident when you laughed at someone who slipped on the ice
- All those times you made slurping noises while eating soup

And don't forget:

- Passing gas in church
- Claiming a larger deduction on your income tax than was warranted
- Not returning incorrect change given in your favor
- Leaving a smaller than accustomed tip
- Cursing
- Being too lazy to cut the grass
- Laughing at a dirty joke
- Sneaking around about anything
- Taking the largest piece of cake
- Failing to promptly return something you borrowed

You also must not omit so-called "accidents" because good people would not make the mistakes leading to accidents. So don't forget:

- When you stepped on someone's toes
- When you broke a dish
- When you dropped things
- Any car accidents
- All spelling mistakes
- Tests on which you made careless errors
- Missing someone's birthday
- Tripping and falling
- Bumping into someone
- Dialing a wrong number

IF YOU ARE BEGINNING TO RESIST THIS JOB, THEN RECORD YOUR LACK OF ENTHUSIASM AS ANOTHER ENTRY ON YOUR

"CLUSTER OF ATTRIBUTES DESERVING DAMNATION" (CADD) IMMEDIATELY, BECAUSE YOU SHOULD BE EAGER AND WILLING TO WORK ON SUCH AN IMPORTANT TASK AS THAT OF DETERMINING YOUR SELF-WORTH.

And good people would certainly not do any of the following, so be sure not to omit them from your CADD list:

- Arguing
- Getting angry
- Feeling depressed
- Ignoring someone
- Giving less than 10 percent of your income to the church
- Feeling impatient with your children
- Feeling lustful toward someone you are not married to
- Crossing the street to avoid meeting someone
- Turning down an invitation by saying you were busy when you were not
- Gossiping
- Feeling disappointed that your spouse didn't buy you as large a present as you bought him/her

As pointed out before, you must not gloss over or omit items from your past such as those illustrated above. Don't weasel out by telling yourself such things as, "It doesn't matter;" "That's nothing, everyone has done it;" or "That's nothing compared with the really bad things I've done." Such ideas won't be tolerated, and if you've had them enter that fact as another fault on your CADD list. They do matter because there are so many of them and they will add up.

So continue to search your memory carefully, and don't miss errors, faults, weaknesses, and mistakes like the following:

- Burping at a dinner party
- Thinking unkind thoughts
- Wishing you never had any children
- Thinking, even briefly, that you should have married your first love
- Smoking
- Eating an extra dessert after telling yourself you shouldn't
- Playing a wide-eyed innocent when you were stopped for speeding
- Lying to your mother about what time you got home from a date
- Wondering if there really is a God
- Not believing in Santa Claus when your parents still wanted you to
- Hoping a distant relative would die and leave you some money

ON THE OTHER HAND...

You may, hopefully, by this time realize the futility and absurdity of even beginning such an enter-