

## Values Activity

Mrs. Shoemaker feels relieved the school year is coming to an end. Her tank is nearing empty and can see the effects in how she managed her class. Some days she feels relaxed knowing the end is close but others days her impatience means being standoffish with the students. Yesterday, she refused to allow a student to go to the bathroom, strongly believing they simply wanted to get out of class and wander the hallways. She offered the student a 'deal' that if they agreed to be honest about why they wanted a pass, they would be permitted a break. The student remained insistent they had to use the bathroom and would not accept the compromise.

A key to understanding how values influence our choices/ actions is to determine other motivating factors such as needs. What basic need could be driving Mrs. Shoemaker to refuse her student's request to go to the bathroom? In this instance, her need for power/control may be playing a role. She has been challenged to get her students to take work seriously, wanting them to extend effort to the end of the year. Her values of hard work, honesty, and integrity are all clear, but how much of her decision to deny the bathroom pass was based on the value versus her need? What Mrs. Shoemaker have likely made the same decision three months ago when she was less frustrated by the students?

Here are some ideas around values: They tend to be examined during big life changes; They tend to function in the background without us paying attention to them; They tend to be more enduring compared with needs which are based on how well they are met. If we were to make the same decision each time, it's likely a value is at the core. If our decision may change depending upon how we are feeling, it's more likely a need. This is important because if we compromise on our values, our resilience will likely be adversely impacted. Values also tend to result in conflicts between us and others or ourselves and our environment. How we come to terms with these differences in large part determines our stress levels.

Allowing students to wander the hallways without good cause can undermine the importance we place on learning and our integrity as an educator. Yet, we don't want parent complaints or administration being unhappy with us, so how do we reconcile these challenges without diminishing our integrity?

Here is the question for you to consider. Is it a value or a need that's driving the student's insistence they have to use the bathroom? Make a case for both of these driving forces and consider how this might influence your own choices with that student.