



VALUES and CHOICES

Start by reviewing and discussing the following stories:

Steve – Steve is still in school. Sometimes he shows up, sometimes he doesn't. If there's a party the night before he may or may not get up for class depending upon how his head feels the next morning. Steve says he only gets high when there is weed around, but it seems like weed is always around. Sometimes other stuff is around too and sometimes he uses other stuff. If you ask Steve what he wants to do his life he'll tell you that he wants to be rich one day but other than that he doesn't really have much of a clue how to get there and when he does come up with an idea it comes across more like a scheme or a dream rather than a realistic plan. Otherwise when it comes to deep questions, one of Steve's most common answers is "I don't know". Steve's carefree attitude can be a lot of fun to be around but some of his more motivated friends have decided to hang out with him less so they can focus more on their own goals

In life right now, Steve is **wandering**

- **Wandering** – Doing things day to day with no real specific direction. (*Unsure, unfocused*)

Question for the group – *Is anyone familiar with someone like Steve?*

Mary – Mary is no dummy, in fact she can be really interesting to talk too. When it comes to conversations about various life topics, Mary can come up with an educated answer about where she stands. Even when it comes to discussing substance use, Mary can tell you all the reasons why she needs to quit. She has interesting ideas and she even has some worthwhile sounding goals for the future. The only problem is that Mary is much better about talking about what she needs to do, rather than actually doing it. Mary clearly is thinking about making progress in her life but people around her who care about her wish that they could see more of the progress she talks about in action

Right now, Mary is **pondering**

- **Pondering** – Have an idea about where you need to be but not there yet (*Thinking about it*)

Question for the group – *Is anyone familiar with someone like Mary?*

Phil – Phil is making some moves in life. Phil was high all the time in the past but that is the past. Phil has some pretty clear goals about his career and his plans for the future. Phil knows where he stands when it comes to making decisions most of the time as he seems to make more and more good choices these days than bad ones. Phil still has a lot to learn though as he has occasional setbacks and he still isn't where he needs to be yet in life, but overall when you look at where Phil was not too long ago compared to where he is now, people who know him can see the improvement.

In life, Phil is **striving**

- **Striving** – Getting a better idea of where you want to be and making some solid moves (*Making progress*)

Question for the group – *Is anyone familiar with someone like Phil?*



Stella – Stella can tell you all about her past struggles and where she used to be. Stella had her issues with substances but those issues are fading into the past as she moves forward. Stella still has her own struggles from time to time but she has consistently displayed the ability to move forward even when things get tough. When you go through the checklist of important things in life Stella is making moves across the board as she knows what she wants and she is determined to get there, no matter what may come up along the way.

Stella is **thriving**

- **Thriving** – Knowing where you stand and making good progress toward where you need to be (*Doing well*)

Questions for the group –

Is anyone familiar with someone like Stella?

What is Stella doing probably doing right?

Wandering – Doing things day to day with no real specific direction. (*Unsure*)

Pondering – Have an idea about where you need to be but not there yet (*Thinking about it*)

Striving – You are getting a better idea of where you want to be and making some solid moves (*Making progress*)

Thriving – You know where you stand and you are making good progress getting where you need to be (*Doing well*)

GROUP DISCUSSION

Wandering:

What is the allure of wandering? (Why may someone choose to live this way?)

- Consider some factors
 - It's easy
 - It can be “fun” not to care about the future
 - CHOICES – the only choices that need to be made are day to day choices – Bigger, more important choices often avoided

What is the downside of wandering? (Especially for the long term)

- Some factors to consider
 - Unless you stumble into something through pure chance, you likely won't get anywhere
 - Spending your early life putting fun first can mean you are setting yourself up to struggle later in life
 - People can spend an entire lifetime wandering, taking things day by day with few goals
 - It is a very difficult lifestyle to sustain
 - Consequences eventually pile up

If you find yourself in a state of wandering, what can you do to move forward?

- Goals – Find out what you want
- Guidance – Get help, support, look outside yourself for help
- Grit – Courage, resolve, strength of character – *FEAR holds people back – “If I don't try I can't fail”*



Pondering:

How does one move from thinking to action?

- Vision- You need to be able to see where you want to be
- Motivation – Stir the fire up to make a move, get off the couch, get in the game
- Take positive risks – Go outside your comfort zone
- Do your research – Knowledge is power
- Baby steps – Incremental change –
- Internal Push – Learn to push yourself
- External Push- Surround yourself with others who push you in a positive manner
- Detach and disconnect from “dead weight” (Negative associations that drag you down)

Striving

Striving is great but how do you keep from spinning your wheels?

- Adjust when needed
- Be realistic
- Become a problem solver not a problem causer – Learn to get out of your own way
- THINK (before you act, before you speak)
- Stop blaming – Take personal responsibility for your own success
- Open minded – Stubbornness can perpetuate staying stuck – Pride can do the same – Consider alternatives
- CHOICE- Choosing to keep moving forward

Thriving:

What does it take to thrive?

- Faith
- Hope
- Love
- Wisdom
- Passion
- Purpose
- Determination
- Resilience
- CHOICE is focused on attaining goals and then not stopping- Defining and Setting new goals (Doing this in a continuous cycle)

Discuss the above aspects of Thriving and try to identify how you can make improvements.