9.4: Value Systems

Value systems are an organized collection of individual values, such as honesty, kindness, and equality. These values are prioritized with the most important values on top, and the least important on the bottom. Values are usually embodied in a set of moral and/or religious systems found in all cultures and societies. We may feel that all of our values are important, but when two or more values clash, we have to decide which value is most important to us. This becomes a value system, which guides our decision-making.

To give you an idea how a value system works, I present to you the Gene Autry's Cowboy Code. Gene Autry was a famous Hollywood “singing cowboy” of the 30’s, 40’s and 50’s. He was also the owner of the Angels professional baseball team, when he passed away. He was a hero to many, many children who wanted to be a cowboy just like him. Over the years Gene Autry had developed a philosophy of life that he decided to share with these young admirers. This system of values, like any value system, would guide the actions of his young cowboy fans.
Gene Autry's Cowboy Code

- The Cowboy must never shoot first, hit a smaller man, or take unfair advantage.
- He must never go back on his word, or a trust confided in him.
- He must always tell the truth.
- He must be gentle with children, the elderly, and animals.
- He must not advocate or possess racially or religiously intolerant ideas.
- He must help people in distress.
- He must be a good worker.
- He must keep himself clean in thought, speech, action, and personal habits.
- He must respect women, parents, and his nation's laws.
- The Cowboy is a patriot.¹

You can find other cowboy codes from Roy Rogers to the Lone Ranger at a website called "Cowboy Codes of the West."² You can also find online “life codes” from “Chivalry” to the Japanese warriors “Bushido Code.” All these codes list values that guide decision-making.
Reference
