

# Personal Creed

# Project



Envisioning a Life

I think this project made it clear for many students that they had a past, they have a present, and that they will have a future . . . it has gotten rid of that part of me that was unsure and skeptical about my future.

*Shabnam Baigzad, class of 2010*

Educating the mind without educating the soul  
is no education at all.

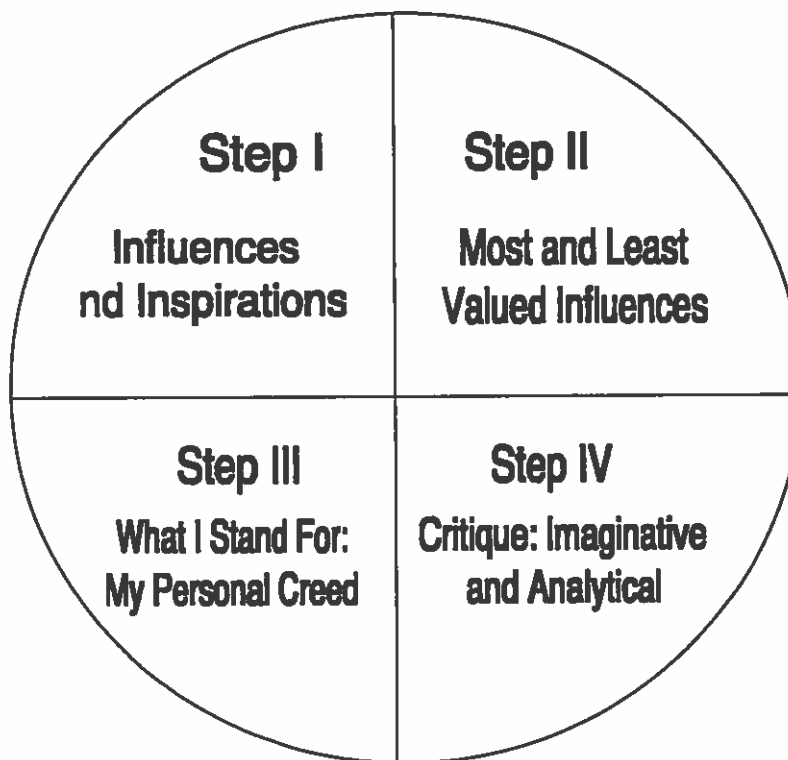
*Aristotle*



*This project is recognized by  
the James Moffett Memorial Award for Teacher Research,  
National Council of Teachers of English and the National Writing Project*

## Project Overview and Approximate Schedule

### Overview of Creed Reflections Steps I-IV



### Approximate Schedule

**Steps I-IV: Discovering Your Creed -- Reflections**

**P o i n t s**

- Step I (A-H) (8 Creed Inquiries + *Life Chart*) Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 90
- Step II (A-C) (3 Creed Inquiries) Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 30
- Step III (A-C) (3 Creed Inquiries + *Personal Iceberg*) Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 40
- Step IV (A-C) (3 Creed Inquiries) Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 30
- My Writing: Quality/Correctness . . . 20

- **Steps I-IV Packet** (w/cover sheet and rubric) Due: \_\_\_\_\_

I-IV subtotal: /210

**Step V: Sharing Your Creed -- Presentation**

- My Presentation: Option **VA** (w/Visual or other) or **VB** (w/Reflective Essay) Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 50
- V subtotal:**

/50

**Step VI: Living Your Creed -- Researching, Goalsetting, Volunteering**

- Living My Creed Goalsetting Chart Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 10
- Query Letter on Creed-related Volunteering Due: \_\_\_\_\_ 10

VI subtotal: /20

**Project Total . . . . .**

**/280**

***The Personal Creed Project***

*Values are the real windows to our souls. As we choose them and actually learn to live by them, the windows become clearer, even transparent. With our active participation, discovering values opens us up to a journey into our inner life. If you would become wise, accumulate values. Your wisdom depends on the values you choose and the courageous loyalty you bring to owning and developing them throughout your life.*

Tom Choquette, Truthseekers

Dear Junior,

With this quote, we kick off the major project on the Personal Leg of our course: your Personal Creed Project.

I hope this course helps you see the surprising way your experiences flow from a vision of life that you yourself initiate. This vision is like the headwaters of your life. A little downstream from this beginning--from how you choose to view your life--your values and your sense of purpose can form. As we discover what we value, or stand for, we can also gain a clearer sense of purpose in life. Further on, our attitudes, viewpoints and opinions appear. Only then come our actions. The attitudes and ideas that seem inborn in you don't just come out of nowhere. They have a source upstream—in a vision of your life and set of values *you* have the power to choose and shape. This may be the most empowering knowledge you will ever come across.

And yet in 2008, researcher William Damon found, "only about one in five young people in the 12-22 year age range express a clear vision of where they want to go . . . what they want to accomplish in life, and why." In the six years since, your generation has shown signs that it is preparing to enter the theater of history with a unique mission. You yourself have a special role to find in this drama! But you will not find it by accident. The Personal Creed project will help you begin, or continue, discovering what you value and learning to live those values. This will prepare you to succeed in life as you help your generation rise to fulfill its mission. Life rarely gives you time or guidance to consider such things. Some even find the journey exciting. So . . . enjoy!

**The Creed Project comes in two sections, containing a total of six steps.**

**1. Discovering Your Creed.** This section takes the form of seventeen weekly Creed reflections. You weave these reflections in with the rest of your learning activities in English. The reflections come in four steps:

- **Step I:** Here you think and write about the people, situations, experiences and other influences in your **PAST** that have made you who and what you are. *8 weekly reflections.*
- **Step II:** In this step you reflect on which of these influences have been positive, which less than positive or even negative, and what you can learn from this assessment. *3 weekly reflections*
- **In Step III** you think and write about what you value, what is important to you **NOW**. *3 weekly reflections*

- In **Step IV** you test what you say you value in Step III. You begin with some creative writing exercises and end by thinking and writing about how your values can shape your **FUTURE**.  
*3 weekly reflections*

**NOTES:** 1) *These reflections are private until you choose to select some to share with others. You are not asked to share anything you prefer to keep private.* 2) *During the weeks of reflection (Steps I-IV), many feel that the steps are repetitive. This is normal. By the presentations (Step V), most feel the reflections have prepared them for a worthwhile outcome.*

## 2. **Bringing Your Creed to Life.** This section comes in two steps:

- **Step V: Sharing Your Creed.** With a creative visual presentation (Option VA) or a reflective essay (Option VB), you stand before your classmates and teacher and present your best understanding of 1) who and what have shaped you, 2) the values you now stand for (your creed), 3) the qualities you want to develop in yourself to live your creed, and 4) the difference you want to make in the world.
- **Step VI: Living Your Creed.** In this step you conduct research, set goals, and make plans to conduct your life and contribute in the community in a way that pays your personal creed forward.

### Creed Step IA

## Background Circumstances: *The Desktop of My Life*

- a list and 3-5 paragraphs

### 1) List

Make a list of 5-10 **background circumstances** that have influenced, shaped, or inspired you. Include both circumstances that have been **POSITIVE** in your life and ones that have been **NEGATIVE**. (NOTE: save specific experiences and people for your Creed Steps IB and IC, coming up the next two weeks.)

#### Some (just some) ideas:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place(s) I have lived</li> <li>• Nature: how connected I feel to it</li> <li>• My neighborhood(s)</li> <li>• Moving often</li> <li>• Family living situation</li> <li>• The state of my local, national, or world environment</li> <li>• The personality I am born with</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My gender</li> <li>• My health</li> <li>• The color of my skin, my race, or ethnicity</li> <li>• The heritage, culture, or religion passed down to me by my family</li> <li>• My parents' values</li> <li>• The generation I am part of</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

- Popular culture, or any other culture that influences me

## 2) Circle

After you write your list, circle the three to five MOST SIGNIFICANT circumstances on your list, the influences that have done most to make you who you are today.

## 3) Reflect

a) Write a paragraph about the first circumstance you circled. Explain how this influence has affected, shaped, inspired, or changed you. Use the sentence starters if they help you get ideas.

### Sample Sentence Starters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ is important in my life because \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has affected me because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I would not be the person I am today without \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ inspires me to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I have changed as a person because of \_\_\_\_\_. I used to be \_\_\_\_\_, but this circumstance has made me \_\_\_\_\_.

b) Write a paragraph about each of the other circumstances you have circled, again using sentence starters if and as needed.

## 4) Re-read

Read back over your list and paragraphs about the *background circumstances* of your life.

## 5) Add more reflections

Add to your list and/or paragraphs anything else that comes to mind.

## Creed Step IB

# *My Influential Experiences, Events, Activities*

- a list, 3-5 paragraphs, and a Life Chart

## 1) List

Make a list of 5-10 **specific events, experiences, or activities** that have affected you **POSITIVELY** or **NEGATIVELY**--be sure to include some of both. (NOTE: Save influential people for next week.)

### Some ideas:

- Important events
- Good decisions I (or others) have made
- Bad decisions I (or others) have made
- Turning points in my life
- Sickness or accidents ~
- Loss I've dealt with ~
- Things I enjoy learning - in school and out of school
- The way(s) that help(s) me learn best
- Things I like to think or learn about
- Kinds of books I like to read
- My feelings about reading

- Films, art, or music I enjoy
- My own creativity in art, music, dance, or something else
- Physical or athletic activities

- Spiritual experiences
- Hobbies: cooking, skateboarding, gaming ...
- Traveling I've done

## 2) Circle

Circle the three to five MOST SIGNIFICANT items on your list, the experiences or activities that, more than the others, make you who you are today.

## 3) Reflect

Write a separate paragraph about each experience or activity you circled. In each paragraph explain how one of your circled influences has affected, shaped, inspired, or changed you.

### Sample Sentence Starters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ is important in my life because \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has affected me because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I would not be the person I am today without \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ inspires me to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I have changed as a person because of \_\_\_\_\_. I used to be \_\_\_\_\_, but it has made me \_\_\_\_\_.

## 4) Re-read

Now read back over your list and paragraphs about the *specific experiences* of your life.

## 5) Add more reflections to your list and/or paragraphs.

## 6) Create your Life Chart, following the model you will receive.

### Creed Step IC

# *My Influential or Inspirational People*

*"Who you spend your time with is who you become."*

~ Anthony Robbins

- a list, and 3-5 paragraphs

## 1) List

Make a list of 5-10 people (individuals or groups) who have influenced, shaped, or inspired you. Be sure to include some who may have had a NEGATIVE impact on you as well as those whose impact is POSITIVE. Also be sure to focus in this step on at least a few **specific people**, along with any groups who have influenced you.

### Some ideas:

- The family I'm born into
- Specific family members
- Friends (groups or individuals)
- Neighbors
- Teachers (human or otherwise)
- Coaches I've had or been inspired by
- Characters in books

- Authors of books
- Characters in films, shows, or cartoons
- Strangers I have met and talked with
- Celebrities -- actors, athletes, leaders, singers, dancers -- who have inspired or influenced me

### 2) Circle

Circle the three to five MOST SIGNIFICANT items on your list, the influences that have done more than the others to make you who you are today.

### 3) Reflect

Write a separate paragraph about each item you circled. In each paragraph explain how one of your circled influences has affected, shaped, inspired, or changed you.

#### Sample Sentence Starters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ is important in my life because \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ has affected me because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I would not be the person I am today without \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ inspires me to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I have changed as a person because of \_\_\_\_\_. I used to be \_\_\_\_\_, but it has made me \_\_\_\_\_.

### 4) Re-read

Read back over your list and paragraphs about the Influential people of your life.

### 5) Add more reflections

Add to your list and/or paragraphs anything else that comes to mind.

## Creed Step ID

# *Qualities or Traits that Shape Me*

- a list and 3-5 paragraphs

### 1) List

Create a list of **your own qualities** that may have helped you become the person you are today and might help you--or might make it difficult for you to--become the person you wish to be. Be sure to acknowledge your GOOD QUALITIES. If you're not sure what they might be, ask others who know you. Also, be brave and include at least two of your LESS-THAN-PERFECT QUALITIES. Everybody has them, and must face them at some point! Note: some qualities can be both positive and not-so-positive.

#### Some Ideas for Good Qualities:

- Abilities I have shown
- Gifts or talents I have shown
- Strengths I possess
- My capacity to forgive
- The source of my energy

#### Examples of my:

- **courage**
- **creativity**
- **compassion**
- **determination**
- **other qualities**



### Some Ideas for Less-than-Perfect Qualities:

- *Limitations I must accept*
- *Fears I must deal with*
- *Selfishness I sometimes show*
- *Indecisiveness that sometimes plagues me*
- *My failure to believe in myself*
- *My unwillingness to forgive others*
- *My lack of confidence*
- *My lack of ambition*
- *My confusion about who I really am*

### 2) Circle

After you write your list, circle your three to five most significant qualities.

### 3) Reflect

Write a paragraph about each of the qualities or traits you circled. Describe a situation when this quality came out in you. Explain how this quality is significant in your life.

#### Possible Sentence Starters:

- A time I demonstrated the quality of \_\_\_\_\_ was when...
- This event showed the quality of \_\_\_\_\_ because...
- The quality of \_\_\_\_\_ has been significant in my life because...
- If I showed the quality of \_\_\_\_\_ regularly, my life would...
- If I stopped showing the quality of \_\_\_\_\_, my life would...
- The quality of \_\_\_\_\_ has affected my life and the life of others around me by...

### 4) Re-read and reflect some more

Read back over your Qualities list and paragraphs. Also go back to your People, Experiences, and Background lists and paragraphs. Give them a good re-reading too.

### 5) Add anything else that comes to mind to any of your lists or paragraphs.

## Creed Step IE

# Questions I Wonder About

- a list and 1-3 paragraphs

### 1) List

Make a list of 5-10 **Big Questions** you sometimes wonder about and that are important to you.

Or, if you have one, revisit your list(s) of **Big Questions** in the Personal Exploration section of your binder. Review your list(s), making checkmarks by BQs that still matter to you, and adding new ones that may occur to you. Optional: retype your updated list of Big Questions.

#### Examples of Big Questions:

- Why do bad things happen to people?
- Why are we here on earth?
- Is there a God? What evidence supports my answer?
- Why do people judge others without knowing them?

- Are people basically good? Or are they basically bad? What

evidence supports my answer?

## 2) Circle

After you write your list, circle the one to three questions you wonder about the most.

## 3) Reflect

Write a paragraph about each question you circled. Explain how it is significant in your life, why it affects you, or what it is that makes this question important in YOUR life. Optional: You may also try interviewing several people to see how they would answer this question. If you choose this option, include your interview notes—and your reflections on them—in your Step IE Reflections.

### Possible Sentence Starters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ is an important question for me.
- I wonder about this question because \_\_\_\_\_.
- The answer to this question matters because \_\_\_\_\_.
- If this question isn't answered, then \_\_\_\_\_.
- Some people believe \_\_\_\_\_, while others believe \_\_\_\_\_.
- If the answer is \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_.
- What about me drives me to ask this question?

## 4) Re-Read

Now read back over your Questions list and paragraphs. Also go back to **ALL** your previous lists and paragraphs: **Background, Experiences, People, and Qualities**. Re-read them, too.

## 5) Add to any list or paragraph anything else that comes to mind.

# Creed Step IF

## *Wise Sayings*

- a list of 3-5 sayings, and 1-3 paragraphs

### 1) List

Make a list of three to five **Wise Sayings** you have heard, preferably more than once, from your family, friends, films, or other sources. Choose sayings that influence--or you'd like to influence--your life.

#### Sample Wise Sayings:

- It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop. -- Confucius
- Honor the sacred. Honor the Earth, our Mother. Honor the Elders. Honor all with whom we share the Earth: Four-leggeds, two-leggeds, winged ones, swimmers, crawlers, plant and rock people. Walk in balance and beauty. -- Native American Elder
- No one dies unless Allah permits. The term of every life is fixed. He that desires the reward of this world shall have it; and he that desires the reward of the life to come shall have it also. We will surely reward the thankful. -- Qur'an 3:142
- Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful.

-- Buddha

- Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

--1 Corinthians 13:4-8 (The Bible)

- All the evidence shows that God was actually quite a gambler, and the universe is a great casino, where dice are thrown, and roulette wheels spin on every occasion.

-- Stephen Hawking

## 2) Circle

After you write your list, circle the one to three sayings that influence you the most.

## 3) Reflect

Write a paragraph about each saying you circled. Explain how this is significant in your life, why it affects you, or what makes this important in YOUR life.

### Possible Sentence Starters:

- I [agree / disagree] with this saying because \_\_\_\_\_.
- This saying connects with the part of my life that \_\_\_\_\_.
- I think the author's purpose in this saying was \_\_\_\_\_.
- I think this saying means \_\_\_\_\_.
- If this saying is true, then \_\_\_\_\_.
- This saying inspires me to \_\_\_\_\_.

- 4) **Re-read and add reflections:** read back over your Wise Sayings list and paragraphs. Re-read ALL your previous lists and paragraphs.

- 5) **Add anything that comes to mind.**

## Creed Step 1G

### Most Significant Influences:

## *My Short List*

- a list of 3-5 most significant influences,
- reflections added in italics in various places through project,
- 3-5 paragraphs

### 1) List

After you have read back over all your thoughts and writing so far, create a **SHORT LIST** of **YOUR three to five MOST IMPORTANT INFLUENCES**. Be sure to include one or two negative influences (this will be important in future steps).

### 2) Consider

Do you see any patterns or categories? Could some influences on your Short List be combined?

### 3) Re-read and add more reflections.

Read back through the first reflections you wrote about each of your Short List influences in the earlier steps of this project. Reflect some more and add new thoughts. **NOTE: Type your new thoughts in italics (or use a different color pen) so you can easily see the added material.**

Take your time. Let your mind roam without interruptions.

#### Some ideas:

What else comes to mind about how this person, event, circumstance, question, or quality has ...

- affected me?
- influenced me?
- changed me?
- inspired me?

### 4) Short List Reflections

a) For each item on your Short List, write a paragraph explaining why this influence deserves a place on your Short List.

#### Sample Sentence Starters:

- I choose this influence for my Short List because...
- This influence is more significant in my life than other influences on my lists because...

b) For each of your other Short List influences, write a paragraph explaining how this influence is especially significant, and why it deserves its place on this list.

## Creed Step IH

# *Going Deeper with My Short List:*

- 3-5 paragraphs,
- 3-5 metaphorical representations,
- more italicized material added in places throughout your reflections in Steps IA through IG

### 1) Reflect

a) For each **PERSON** on your short list, write a paragraph in which you consider as many of the following questions as seem to help you think more deeply about this person. Read each question a few times before responding and moving to the next one. If you have **NO** people on your list, skip this step, and go to step b. If you have more than one person on your list, repeat this step for each person.

Person: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions to Think About

- What ideas, principles, beliefs, questions, people or things does this person **most care about**?
- What appears to bring **meaning** to this person's life?
- To what or to whom does this person seem to **devote** him or herself?
- How does this person **serve** or **help others**?
- What **vision of life** does this person represent in my mind?
- What **values** does this person represent in my mind?
- **What in life is most important** to him or her? (Family? Career? Hobbies? Lifestyle development? Relationships? Race or ethnicity? Religious or spiritual things? Other things?)
- What is his or her **greatest fear**?
- Looking through this person's eyes, **what kind of place does the universe appear to be**?

### Interview Option

If possible, you may actually ask the person some of these questions. You could also ask them what people, experiences, influences, etc. might be on THEIR short list.

### Possible Sentence Starters:

- The most important thing(s) in \_\_\_\_\_'s life is/are....
- The values, principles, beliefs or questions this person seems to stand for most are ...
- To \_\_\_\_\_, the universe appears to be...
- Life, to this person, is about ...
- This person appears to devote himself or herself to ...
- This person makes the world seem to be [what kind of place?] ...

b) *see over for circumstances, experiences, qualities, questions, sayings >>>>>>>>>*

b) For each **NON- PERSON** (circumstance, experience, quality, question, wise saying) on your Short List, consider the following questions and write a paragraph in which you answer as many as help you go deeper in understanding the influence. (If you have **ONLY** people on your list, skip this step).

**Influence:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions to Think About

- What ideas, **principles, beliefs, ideas** or **questions** does this influence seem to represent, or stand for, in my mind?
- What **vision of life** might this influence represent in my mind?
- What **values** does this influence stand for in my mind?
- Looking through the window of this influence, **what kind of place does the universe appear to be**?

### Possible Sentence Starters:

- The most important **principle, belief, idea** or **question** this influence represents to me is....
- The **vision of life** this influence most seems to stand for most is ...
- The **values** this influence most seems to stand for most are ...

- Looking through the window of this influence, the universe appears to be...

## 2) Represent Metaphorically

Re-read each of the paragraphs you have written in a) and/or b) above. Think of a way to represent the effect this influence has on your life.

### Some metaphorical representations:

- A visual symbol or picture
- A question, quotation, or saying
- A book
- A poem or song
- A film
- A melody

Describe, draw, or note down a metaphorical representation for each of your Short List influences.

## 3) Reflect and Add

Read back through the reflections for this step. Reflect some more and add new thoughts. **Type in italics (or use a different color pen) so you can easily see the added material.**

Take your time. Let your mind roam without interruptions.

## Creed Step IIA

# *The Influences I Value Most*

- 3 paragraphs

### 1) Reflect

a) Up to this point, for the most part, you have been reflecting on how significant, or HOW MUCH IMPACT your influences have had on your life. Here the project takes a turn. In Step II you begin looking at how you VALUE an influence, how and why it MATTERS to you. Look over your Short List of most significant influences from Steps IG and IH. Which of these three to five influences do you MOST value or appreciate for its impact on your life?

b) Write a paragraph stating which ONE you value the most and explaining why you appreciate this influence above the others on your Short List.

### Some Sentence Starters:

- The person on my Short List whose influence I value MOST OF ALL is ...
- The circumstance, experience, question, quality, or wise saying on my Short List I value most is ...
- I value this influence more than the others because ...
- I admire this influence because ...
- I appreciate this influence because ...

#### Other Admired Influences

Which one other of your influences do you also appreciate? Write a briefer paragraph explaining why this too is a positive influence.

#### 2) Reflect on Role Modeling

If one of your most valued influences is a PERSON, would you consider this person a role model? How so? If not, why not? Whether or not your most valued influence is a person, what qualities would you need in a role model?

#### Some Sentence Starters

- \_\_\_\_\_ is a role model for me because ...
- \_\_\_\_\_ is not a role model for me because ...
- A role model should be ...
- I want to look up to my role model in these ways ...
- I want to be like \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- I do not want to be like \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- I welcome having \_\_\_\_\_ in my life because ...

### Creed Step IIB

## *My Least Valued Influence*

- 2 paragraphs

#### 1) Reflect

a) Look over your Short List of most significant influences from Steps IG and IH. Which of these three to five influences do you LEAST value or appreciate for its impact on your life?

b) Write a paragraph stating which ONE you value the LEAST and explaining why you LEAST appreciate this influence on your Short List.

#### Some Sentence Starters:

- The person on my Short List whose influence I value LEAST is ...
- The circumstance, experience, question, quality, or wise saying on my Short List I value LEAST is ...

- I value this influence less than the others because ...
- I do not admire this influence because ...
- I do not appreciate this influence because ...

## 2) Reflect on Role Modeling

If your least valued influence is a PERSON, why would you NOT consider this person a role model? If you did not answer this question in the previous step (Step IIA), what qualities would you need in a role model?

### Some Sentence Starters

- \_\_\_\_\_ is not a role model for me because ...
- A role model should be ...
- I want to look up to my role model in these ways ...
- I do not want to be like \_\_\_\_\_ because ...
- I do not welcome having \_\_\_\_\_ in my life because ...

## Creed Step IIC

# *What My Choices Say*

- 1 paragraph,

- material added in italics in places around the project

### 1) Consider

You have just made two choices. You have chosen one of your influences--a person, circumstance; experience, quality, question or saying--as the influence you MOST admire or value. You have chosen another influence you value LEAST. These are choices YOU have made.

### 2) Reflect

Write a paragraph explaining what these choices say about YOUR values--what is important to you?

### Some Sentence Starters



- If I most admire \_\_\_\_\_, this suggests that \_\_\_\_\_ is very important to me.
- If I least admire \_\_\_\_\_, this suggests that \_\_\_\_\_ is very important to me.
- An example of how \_\_\_\_\_ is important to me is [time, situation, event] ...

### **3) Re-read and Reflect**

Go back to your Step 2 reflections. Reflect some more and add new thoughts. *Type in italics or use a different color pen so you can easily see the added material.*

**Take your time. Let your mind roam without interruptions.**

## Creed Step IIIA

# The Big Picture

- full page minimum

### 1) Prepare

Now is the time to think BIG. What kind of universe is this? What is life really about? What do you wonder about? What's most important to you?

### 2) Questions to Ask Yourself

- **What kind of place does the universe appear to me to be?**
  - *Is the universe a competitive place where the strongest win, the smartest succeed, and everyone else falls aside?*
  - *Do things happen randomly? Are humans alone here?*
  - *Is someone or something in charge? If so, or if not, what difference does this make in my life?*
  - *How important is it to stand for something beyond ourselves? Why try to live a good life?*
  - *Which Wise Saying or text best represents the universe as I picture it?*
- **What is my view of life?**
  - *Is life essentially a struggle to "get mine" before someone else does?*
  - *Is life most of all an opportunity to help others? Where I get what I need by serving others?*
  - *Is life a marriage of selfishness and selflessness? What does it mean to live a good life?*
  - *Do I believe that "life is hell and then we die"? Is life mainly to enjoy while we're alive?*
  - *Is this life the first taste of an endless life in a loving universe? Is my life more of a mission?*
- **What makes me unique among all the people I know?**
- **What question do I have to give to the world that comes uniquely from me? What would a person who gives this question to the world stand for?**
- **What things in life are most important to me?**
  - *Family? Career? Hobbies? Lifestyle? Personal development? Relationships? Race or ethnicity? Religious or spiritual things? Why do I care about these things?*
  - *Do I have any long-term goals? Why are these goals important to me?*
- **What legacy of influences do I want to pass on to my children?**
  - *What values would I like them to be living when they become teens or adults?*
  - *What kind of people do I want them to be? What do I want them to stand for?*
  - *What do my hopes for my children suggest that I stand for?*

### 3) Reflect

Revisit your Short List (Step IG-H) and your Most/Least Valued Influences (Step II). With these reflections in mind, choose *any three* of the bolded or italicized questions in the groups above. Write a paragraph responding to each of the questions you choose. *Minimum: half page typed, single-spaced.*

#### Some Sentence Starters:

- *I believe the universe is a place where ...*
- *I believe in living in the here and now because ...*
- *To be a good person means ...*
- *To live a good life means ...*
- *What I care about most is ...*
- *Most of all, I want my life to be about ...*
- *The central thing in my life is ...*

## Creed Step IIIB

# *A Place for Me?*

- two paragraphs and Personal Iceberg

### 1) Prepare

Now consider how you may fit into the Big Picture you have just described. What might be your role in life and the universe? What values, ideas, questions, or principles could you choose to guide your life?

### 2) Some Questions to Ask Yourself:

- **If I am not entirely satisfied with my parents' influence on me, what legacy of influences might I have preferred from them?**
- **Do I see myself as having a purpose or mission here on earth?**
  - *Is there something I am here to learn? To contribute? If so, why is this important?*
  - *How will I know when I am successful? How important to me is being materially comfortable?*
  - *How do I define "family"? How important to me is creating comfort or security for my family?*
  - *How do I define "community"? How important is it to me to benefit or improve my community?*
  - *How important is it to me to learn about others, even people I don't know?*
  - *How connected do I want to be to others beyond my family? How important is it to me to be connected with ordinary people?, To help or serve people less fortunate?*
  - *How important is it to me to leave the world a better place? In what way(s)?*
  - *If I were at the end of my life, what would I want to be remembered for?*
  - *Is learning to love others important to me? Whom? To what extent? In what ways?*
  - *Is it possible to serve myself, my family, my community, and my world? By whom am I most needed?*
- **When I ask other people what they think I stand for, how do they respond?**
  - *How do their answers compare with my own?*
  - *Are there differences between my perception and theirs?*
- **What values do I most want to stand for? Peruse List of Values (handout).**
  - *To what or whom do I devote myself-- or wish to devote myself at some point?*
  - *What ideas, principles, beliefs, questions, people, or things do I care most about?*
  - *What brings meaning to my life? What do I want to be remembered for?*
  - *How important is helping or serving others to me? Why do I feel or believe this?*

### 3) Reflect

Choose two or three questions that "speak" to you from the first three groups above. Write a paragraph in response to each question you choose. Now choose a question from the fourth group. Look over the List of Values on the next page. Choose three to five values that connect most to your reflections so far in this project. Write another paragraph discussing briefly why you choose these values. Add more ideas as they come to you.

### 4) Represent Visually

Create your **Personal Iceberg** according to instructions given in class.

## List of Values (draft, may need revising)

Values are best discovered and owned by reflecting over time on our life experience. Here is a list you can scan through to identify values you may choose to own. The list is not exhaustive. Let me know as you find others I could add. As you read through the values, notice which ones you intuitively respond to, and/or seem to connect to your reflections so far in this project.

|                      |                               |                      |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Acceptance           | Gentleness                    | Piousness            |
| Accessibility        | Genuineness                   | Poise                |
| Adventurousness      | Godlikeness                   | Patience             |
| Affection            | Goodness                      | Peace                |
| Authenticity         | Good cheer                    | Perfection           |
| Authoritativeness    | Graciousness                  | Practicality         |
| Availability         | Gratefulness                  | Prudence             |
| Balance              | Honesty                       | Reason               |
| Beauty               | Honor                         | Reasonableness       |
| Commitment           | Hope                          | Resilience           |
| Communicativeness    | Imagination                   | Resoluteness         |
| Compassion           | Immunity to disappointment    | Respect              |
| Confidence in myself | Imperviousness to persecution | Reverence            |
| Confidence in people | Inclusiveness                 | Righteousness        |
| Courage              | Inquisitiveness               | Service              |
| Creativity           | Integrity                     | Sincerity            |
| Dependability        | Joy                           | Spiritual power      |
| Devotedness          | Justice                       | Stamina              |
| Discernment          | Kindness                      | Steadfastness        |
| Earnestness          | Light                         | Strength             |
| Empathy              | Listening                     | Sympathy             |
| Encouragement        | Love                          | Tenderness           |
| Enthusiasm           | Loyalty (to others)           | Tirelessness         |
| Fairness             | Loyalty (to values)           | Tolerance            |
| Faith                | Mercy                         | Trust                |
| Forbearance          | Nobility                      | Truth                |
| Forgiveness          | Openness                      | Understanding        |
| Freedom              | Optimism                      | Unity                |
| Friendship           | Originality                   | Uniqueness           |
| Generosity           |                               | Untouched by failure |
|                      |                               | Wisdom               |

## Creed Step IIIC

# *My Draft Creed Statement*

- notes, draft statement, paragraph, saying/question (full page minimum)

### 1) Re-read

Re-read Steps II and III.

### 2) Make Notes

Note down things that seem to stand out most to you from these steps.

### 3) Draft Creed Statement

Now bring everything together in a ROUGH DRAFT statement of your personal creed. What specific values do you stand for at this point in your life? You may wish to write a paragraph, a list, a map, or anything else that helps you bring your ideas together. Aim for a half page minimum.

#### Possible Sentence Starters:

- At this point in my life, the values I stand for are...
- At this point in my life, what I value is...
- The most important thing(s) in my life are...
- The people or purposes I devote myself to are...
- The values, principles, or beliefs I stand for most are...
- Life, to me, is about...
- The way I would like to influence the world is...
- At this point in my life, some ideals are beginning to take shape in me...

### 4) Values and Change

Which of your values you feel are probably constant (unchanging)? Which might change over time? Write a paragraph explaining your thoughts on these questions about values and change.

#### Some Sentence Starters:

- \_\_\_\_\_ will always be important to me because ...
- \_\_\_\_\_ is important to me now, but later...
- As I grow older, I believe that [one of my values] will change because ...
- As I grow older, I believe that [one of my values] will stay the same because ...

### 5) Saying or Big Question

Find or create a saying or Big Question that reflects your personal creed. For examples, see the sayings on the front of this packet. You may also wish to look at collections of quotations, or texts that are personally significant to you (books, films, songs, scriptures). You'll be writing this saying or question on the cover sheet of your final typed reflections that you'll turn in to me.

### 6) Re-read your Step III reflections, adding anything else you think belongs.

## Creed Step IVA

# A Critic Reacts

- brainstorm, description, dialogue, letter  
Steps IVA, IVB and IVC should total two pages minimum

Now you stand back and critique your thoughts. You begin here with two pieces of creative writing.

### 1) Scene with Dialogue

- a) Imagine a person whose values are OPPOSITE of yours. This is someone who would have a hard time listening to what you wrote in your creed statement. This person would disagree with your Wise Saying and have very different Big Questions. Introduce yourself to your Arch Critic.
- b) In a brainstorm (list, web, chart, bulleted list, freeflow paragraph), imagine your Arch Critic's specific complaints about what you stand for. Whatever you value or believe in, this person objects to.
- c) Imagine your first encounter with your Arch Critic. What is the setting? What clothes is she or he wearing? What facial expression? What signals are you getting from the body language? What first words does he or she say? How does his or her voice sound? Write a detailed physical description of how you imagine this Arch Critic, your nemesis. Now, write the opening sentences of a description of what you imagine unfolds as you meet and begin your conversation with your Arch Critic. Be sure to provide sensory details, showing rather than explaining the interaction.
- d) You are about to have a meeting of the minds with this person. In this dialogue your Arch Critic delivers the complaints you brainstormed in b) above loud and clear--issues to which **you must respond**. Do not let either character resort to mere namecalling. Instead, stick to the issues themselves and how each thinks and feels about them. Write in correct dialogue form, indenting for each change of speaker, and using quotation marks correctly. After the last line of dialogue, narrate a few sentences about what you wanted the dialogue to show about what you stand for.

### 2) Your Arch-Critic's Letter

Imagine that this opposite, your *nemesis*, is about to write a letter to a friend you share in common. In this letter, behind your back, she or he will complain about you and what you stand for, attack your principles or beliefs, and criticize the values or questions you care about. Or, imagine your Arch Critic as part of yourself—that nagging, critical voice that often pops up—and write what it says about you.

AS THIS PERSON, write a letter criticizing your own personal creed statement.

#### Some Sentence Starters:

- I completely disagree because ...
- \_\_\_\_\_ thinks \_\_\_\_\_ is important, but it clearly is not because...
- I hate the way ...
- How can anyone believe \_\_\_\_? It's obvious that ...
- People who think this are \_\_\_\_\_.

## Creed Step IVB

# *Hard Evidence*

- 3 paragraphs, revised Creed statement

Write a short paragraph answering each question. (#4 is just a statement)

- 1) What **evidence** can I point to that suggests I *do* actually stand for the things I wrote in my draft Creed Statement? What have I done or thought about that shows my life heading in this direction? What specific examples can I offer?
- 2) What **changes** have I experienced that challenged the vision of life I stated? How did I respond to the challenge? Did I stand up for my vision? Let it go? Permanently? Temporarily?

Re-read all your Creed reflections.

- 3) From going through Steps IVA and IVB, what have I learned about myself and what I stand for? From Steps I through IV as a whole? Respond in a third paragraph.
- 4) With all I've just re-read clearly in mind, I revise—see again, only more clearly—my draft Personal Creed statement:

*As honestly and accurately as I can understand at this point, what I stand for is ...*

## Creed Step IVC

# *My Creed and My Future*

1 paragraph

Reflect on your Creed and how your life will look if you live according to it. Write a reflective paragraph explaining what you will do.

**Sentence Starters:**

- If my creed truly is \_\_\_\_\_, then today I must ...
- In ten years, I hope to ...
- My creed can guide my decisions in situations like ...
- If I live according to my creed, I will ...
- I can help others through my creed by ...

## Creed Step V

# Sharing My Creed

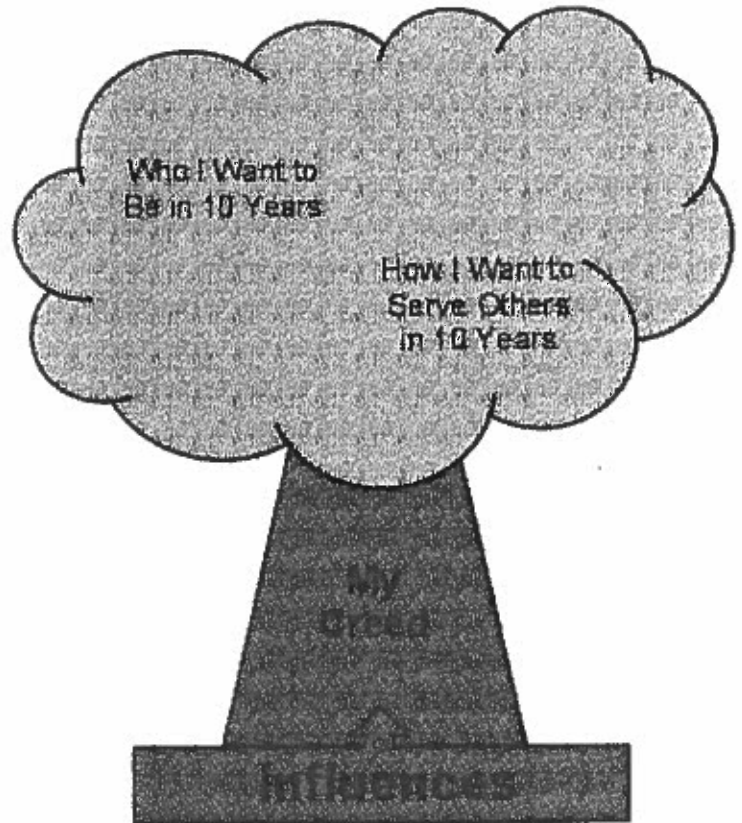
Prepare a presentation to share your creed with the rest of the class. This could be ANYTHING you can imagine and do.

### Some ideas:

- poster
- collage
- painting
- drawing
- powerpoint
- video
- music
- sculpture
- poem
- rap
- story
- essay

Your presentation should include ALL of the following:

1. Three to Five Major Influences
2. My Creed and (optionally) Mission or Purpose
3. The kind of person I want to become to honor my creed in the next ten years
4. How I want to be helping others or making a difference in the world in ten years



More coming on Creed Presentations.



## Creed Step VI

# *Living My Creed*

Goalsetting, Researching, Volunteering

In Steps I through IV of this project, you discovered, re-discovered or clarified your creed. Steps V and VI are about bringing your creed to life. Your presentation, Step V, sharing your creed, was the first step in bringing it to life. Step VI is not so much the last step in your Personal Creed Project, as it is the second step in bringing your creed into your life and the lives of others. In this step you make a plan to live the values you presented over the next five or ten years .

### 1) Goals:

For each of at least three of your main values, create a goal you could achieve sometime in the coming year. For at least one of these values, set a goal that involves summer volunteering. Create a chart like the one below (or cut and paste this one).

Value-Goal-Action Chart

| <b>Stated Creed Values</b><br><i>List at least three.</i> | <b>What do I want to see happen (goals)?</b>  | <b>What am I going to do about it (actions)?</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Value #1</b>   | <i>Research volunteer opportunities to help me explore one or more of my stated Creed values.</i> | <i>Send an email inquiring about a specific volunteer position this summer to explore one of my stated values</i> |
| <b>Value #2</b>   |   |   |
| <b>Value #3</b>   |   |   |

### 2) Plan Actions:

For each goal, add an action step to your chart in the third column. For the goal about researching volunteering possibilities, make your action step to send an email about a specific volunteer position for the summer.

next page >>>>>>>>>>>>>

**3) Request Information about Volunteering Opportunities:**

Actually find a volunteering possibility and send the email requesting information. You may follow up on the opportunity as time and interest allow.

**4) Bring to class on the day of the final:**

- Print out this email.
- Print out your Value-Goal-Action Chart.
- Staple your chart on top of your email.