



'What's the Way?' Trainings for Students (Grades 5-12) and Educators*

*Highly recommended as an inclusive way to set standards for values and behavior at the beginning of a school-year or term for both educators and students; useful at any time of the year to lift participants to a higher level.

The "American Way" has captivated the American imagination since the time of revolution against British rule and the nation's founding. In 1933, two American teens at Cleveland's Glenville High School, gave this phrase new meaning with a character who espoused "Truth, Justice and the American Way"– Superman. And along the way, both in civic and popular culture, Americans have tried to define their own version of "The Way."

'*What's the Way?*' is a key element of Project Love's **Purple America** campaign to empower educators with tools and lesson plans to generate a meaningful dialogue about an appreciation of our shared American values.

We know that core values are essential in defining behavior. Just as computers have software, the human mind uses values as the barometer on how to translate thoughts into behavior. Educators can now be the superheroes in using the concept of "What's the Way?" to define core values.

Here's how the exercise works. Educators may conduct a '*What's the Way?*' training with their students; principals can conduct this exercise with their staff.

STEP 1: Show the classroom one of the **Purple America** videos (that can be accessed from this website). (10 minutes)

STEP 2: Open-ended discussion: What are the values that you saw on the streets of America in this video? What were the key principles people mentioned as being the "values that connect us as Americans – what we stand for?" (5-10 minutes)

TEACHER or STUDENT BOARDS THE VALUES ON A POST-IT EASEL OR SMART BOARD.

Does anyone have anything to add or are there any personal experiences in your own lives that highlight these values?

Values-in-Action Foundation ♥ 5244 Mayfield Road ♥ Lyndhurst, OH 44124
440-442-LOVE (5693) ♥ Fax 440-684-1934 ♥ www.projectlove.org ♥ www.purpleamerica.us

STEP 3: Open-ended discussion: Now what are your own values or aspirations that guide your lives? The reason I say “aspirations” as well is that sometimes we believe in something but we don’t exactly *act* like we believe. Basically, what do *you* stand for? (5-10 minutes)

TAKE THE *prior* BOARDED VALUES OFF THE EASEL AND POST IT IN FRONT OF THE ROOM.

TEACHER or STUDENT BOARDS THE STUDENTS’ VALUES ON A POST-IT EASEL OR SMART BOARD.

CIRCLE THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO BOARDED VALUES LISTS.

STEP 4: Open-ended discussion: Now we’re going to use these lists as our guidelines for determining “The Way” in our classroom and school. So what do you think all of us should stand for in terms of our values and conduct right here?

TEACHER or STUDENT BOARDS “THE (name of school) WAY” ON A NEW POST-IT EASEL OR SMART BOARD SECTION. (5-10 minutes)

STEP 5: I’d like all of us to think about how “The Way” applies to what we do here each day. How would you like it to translate into our everyday behavior or into service projects that we do in the school or community?

Step 5 can be done in the classroom as an open-ended discussion or can be assigned as homework.

- Thereafter, service projects can be undertaken by committees of students and/or by the student council and/or implemented through a student or teacher/administrator leadership team.
- Values lists generated by the exercise can be printed and put up on fliers or posters throughout the classroom or school.
- Students can be recognized by teachers for acting on values from their lists and rewarded in various ways (free cookies from the cafeteria, noted in school newsletter or morning announcements, or other small privileges or recognitions).

And that’s “*What’s The Way.*”

