

CHAPTER 2

Values

TOGETHER CHOOSE THE HIGHEST PRINCIPLES & CORE VALUES
FOR YOUR EQUAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY...

YOUR COMPASS

Principles and core values are what anchor and guide an Equal Justice Community, and help to bind it to the common equal justice vision.



IF YOU KNEW JUSTICE (to the tune of "If you knew Susie")

If you knew Justice
Like I know Justice
Oh, oh, oh, what a thrill
There's just no prudence
Like jurisprudence
Oh, oh, she's the teacher, we're the students
If you're wondrin' what Justice is for
It means access for all the poor
If you knew Justice,
Like I do Justice,
Oh, oh, what a thrill!

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*From "The AX-Ess Files: Justice Is Out There,"
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PRINCIPLES and CORE VALUES are what anchor and guide an Equal Justice Community, and help to bind it to the common equal justice vision.

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PRINCIPLES

A PRINCIPLE is a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumption that governs the conduct of a community. An agreed-upon statement of principles will provide concrete direction for an Equal Justice Community when it encounters the usual rhetorical obstacles, such as:

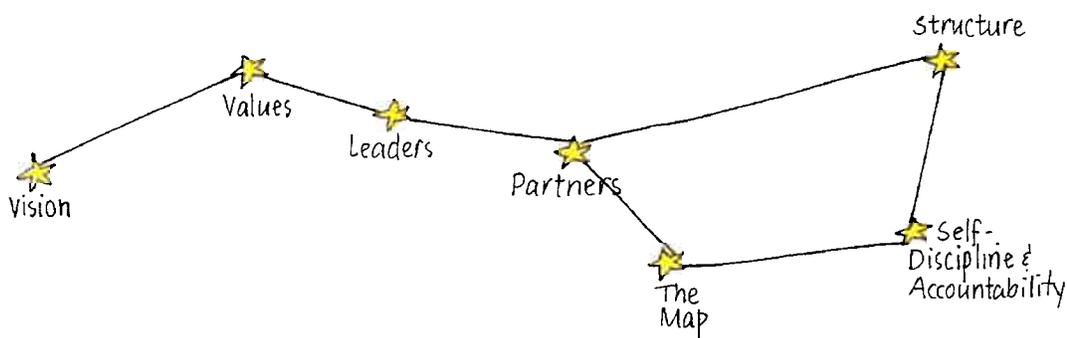
- "Only criminal defendants have a constitutional right to legal assistance"

- “Legal services is a welfare program”
- “The responsibility for solving the access to justice crisis rests with the bar and pro bono lawyers, not with the taxpayers”
- “I might lose my title, my program, my job”
- “My community or organization might have to sacrifice some of our desperately needed resources to help a partner organization be able to play its role within the civil Equal Justice Community

Principles grow out of your vision and are an express way of implementing your vision. Through your statement of principles you will lay the foundation for your Equal Justice Community. Conduct of all partners can and must be tested against these foundational concepts as a matter of routine and regularity. Some **examples** of guiding equal justice principles are:

- Access to justice is a fundamental right.
- Justice demands timely access to effective legal assistance and, where necessary, representation.
- Justice must be real and accessible for all, not just for the socially or politically favored.
- A functional justice system must ensure that all members have the opportunity to share in the benefits of a civil society.
- Equal justice embodies both procedural and substantive components; one without the other is inherently unequal.
- The job of providing equal justice belongs to all of us individually, and as a society.

Remember, your principles will be the guiding stars for your Community’s journey. Take care to ensure that if followed, they will lead you, like Dorothy, the Tin Man, Scarecrow and the Lion, over the rainbow to the land of justice.



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CORE VALUES

Your next challenge is to adopt a statement of CORE VALUES that will allow you to translate the principles into operational expectations. Core Values help define the frame-

“Access to Justice is a Fundamental Right.”

Statement of Principles and Goals of the Washington State Access to Justice Board

“The judiciary should make access to justice a high priority.”

Statement of Principles and Goals of the Access to Justice Board

"Access to Justice means all forums in which legal rights are determined."

Statement of Principles and Goals of the Access to Justice Board

"Access to Justice is dependent on the availability of affordable legal representation."

Statement of Principles and Goals of the Access to Justice Board

work and characteristics of the equal justice delivery system as well as the code of conduct that the Equal Justice Community partners will abide by along their journey. In addition to providing additional substance to the design and architecture of the delivery system you are constructing, the core values create common expectations that ease the difficult debates over "turf" and "institutional skins," i.e., who does what, how territory gets "carved up," who should pay for what, who should do what, who should get the money for what, and who should get the credit.

The core values clarify the roles and functions needed to best fulfill the principles you have established to serve the overall justice needs of poor and vulnerable people in your community. They apply universally to all members of the Equal Justice Community, allowing for the evolution of principled, objective decision-making, *instead of* decision-making on the basis of the needs, wishes or "dibsies" mind-set of any individual, organization or institution. Securing buy-in to a set of core values is the best insurance policy against the temptation to allow "cults of personality" to prevail.

In laying out the operational expectations of the delivery system, through the core values you affirm, you will provide practical substance to the principles that have been previously identified. **Examples** of core values or operational expectations that have stood the test of time include:

- √ The equal justice delivery system is client-centered, easily accessible, has as few points of entry as necessary, provides the appropriate level of help in the shortest time period possible.
- √ The equal justice delivery system promotes full and meaningful justice for all low income people, with special focus on those who suffer disparate treatment or experience extra or unfair obstacles to access (e.g, immigrants, refugees, reservation-based Native Americans, farm workers, people who are institutionalized or disabled or battered, etc.) and for whom special training and outreach is necessary to ensure that the justice system is meaningfully available and responsive.
- √ The Equal Justice Community must make the most strategic and effective use of all present and potential resources available to meet the full spectrum of client legal needs.
- √ The equal justice delivery system must be accountable to clients, funders and other stakeholders.
- √ The Equal Justice Community must develop growing financial support for underwriting delivery system operations and other resources for expanded investment in the

justice system.

- √ The Equal Justice Community is broad and inclusive. It is inextricably linked to the larger justice system as well as the human and social services community and the communities of clients that it is charged to serve.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Not only do the core values establish your operational expectations, they define a CODE OF CONDUCT for members of your Equal Justice Community. In their simplest and most didactic form, these core values can be reduced to equal justice “mantras” or adages which serve as useful short-hand reminders when members come up against the inevitable struggle between individual, organizational or institutional needs and those of the clients. The code of conduct may be hummed as ditties, cross-stitched on pillows, silk-screened on T-shirts, printed on pins, or tattooed on your arm...whatever it takes to remind each other of what your work is all about.

EQUAL JUSTICE “MANTRAS”

IT’S THE CLIENTS, STUPIDI

NO TURF

(use the word TURF with the universal prohibition sign)

NO ONE CARES WHO GETS THE CREDIT

NOT THE USUAL SUSPECTS

HIGHEST AND BEST USE

CHANGE IS GOOD!

NO ONE GETS WRITTEN OFF

WE ARE ONE BIG LAW FIRM

EQUAL JUSTICE IS EVERYONE’S BUSINESS

ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?

Optimally, by sharing and securing broad-based buy-in to the vision, principles and core values, you have laid a solid foundation for your future endeavors. But this assumes

***It's the Clients,
Stupid!***



***No One Cares
Who Gets the
Credit***

"Having a process to develop our values that was widely communicated and subscribed to, and then pretty vigorously used, is what's useful. If you say what you believe, and find the strength to act based on what you believe, then you can get a whole lot more done."

**John Purbaugh, Staff
Attorney, Northwest
Justice Project, Tacoma,
Washington**

that we all operate 100% from the head. We also respond from the heart, from the gut and from the primordial ooze of guilt, envy, the desire to have or to retain "power" as it has been traditionally defined, fear, and other base emotions. While these may help us at appropriate times, they will be the "kiss of death" to the formation of an effective Equal Justice Community. When these dark temptations seduce you or other members of the community, take the time to revisit and reacquaint yourself with the "moral authority" of the values that you have all agreed to. These will release you from the ooze, and will be the keys to your ultimate success.

In this chapter you have thought about the principles that bind you together and the core values that are required to follow these principles. While there are no guarantees in life, we can promise that if you pull together all of the people who care about equal justice and reach agreement on the principles that will guide you and the core values that undergird your efforts, you will succeed in your work in ways you never dreamed and you will be part of a larger, and far more powerful, team.

EXERCISES

- √ Develop a draft set of principles and core values for your Equal Justice Community.
- √ Develop your own list of equal justice mantras that you would like to hear/see in your Equal Justice Community

REFERENCES TO PART II

Hallmarks of an Effective Statewide Civil Legal Services Delivery System	page 95
Statement of Principles and Goals of the Access to Justice Board	page 114

"The goal [of the Hallmarks] is not to define the outcome [of the state planning process] in terms of specific organizational identities, relative responsibilities, and resource allocations, but instead to define a philosophical and values-driven superstructure around which the operational decisions must be made."

**From Washington State's
Hallmarks of an Effective
Civil Legal Services
Delivery System, 1995**