Who Am I? (What Do I Value?) #1
Jennifer Murphy, Ph.D., NCC
Arizona State University

LOs:
1. Students will have a greater insight into their decision-making process
2. Students will have a greater insight into the factors that influence their decision-making
3. Students will be able to determine limitations in identifying personal strengths
4. Students will be able to acknowledge why they have limitations in identifying personal strengths
5. Students will be able to make connections between decision-making and goal-setting

Target Audience:
Use this activity with high school students, grades 9-12, or postsecondary students.

Preparation:
You will need five different colored paper cut into pieces. Color doesn’t really matter as long as you match them to the categories below. Have enough for each student to get three of each color, for a total of fifteen pieces. I usually separate them prior to class so that all I have to do is hand each student their fifteen pieces otherwise it can be time-consuming passing each color out and making sure everyone has fifteen pieces.

I also create a PowerPoint slide with the color/description and do not let them see it until after I have explained the rules.

Introduction:
“Everyone should have fifteen pieces of paper - three of each color. I have a PowerPoint slide that will show you what to write on each piece. You will have four-six (use your discretion, as this takes high school students longer to complete) minutes to complete all fifteen pieces. Please do not talk during this time. Do not offer help to anyone. You can only put one “thing” on each piece and you cannot group items. So, if it says to put a person, you cannot put “my family” or “my friends.” It has to be individual names or activities, etc. Do not over analyze, just write. You only have four to six minutes. Be sure to complete all fifteen pieces because it only works if you do!”

Red: people who are important to you

Blue: activities that you enjoy doing

Yellow: personal strengths or positive perceptions of yourself (ex: I am good at...)

Green: ways in which you are a benefit to others

Orange: hopes, beliefs, or dreams that you have for your life

(Observe what colors students work on first, put off completing, whether they turn over their things after writing them, how long it takes, etc.)
You decide that you want to travel to California for spring break to meet a group of friends who are meeting at Disneyland. You have your “things” packed nicely in your travel bag along with your clothes and toiletries for your trip. Rather than booking a flight, you decide that you want to take a Greyhound bus from Arizona to California to save money. Your bus ticket costs you one blue thing and one thing of another color.

Take one blue thing and one other of any color, crumple them up and toss them in front of you.

You continue your journey. You arrive in San Diego and you realize you are starving! You see a small diner right outside of the bus station and decide to grab a quick bite before your bus to Anaheim takes off. Your server brings your bill and the bill reads, two more things. At this point, you have to choose two more things. Crumple them up and toss them in front of you.

You return to the bus station to catch your next bus and all passengers are told that the bus is having mechanical issues and the trip has been rescheduled to the next morning. You realize that you need a place to sleep for the night. The Greyhound station has graciously offered to give all affected passengers a voucher to the Holiday Inn down the street for a free room. The next day, you return to the bus station and continue your journey to Anaheim…Disneyland here I come!

Three hours later, you arrive at the bus station just outside Anaheim…about 9 miles outside Anaheim and 11 miles away from where you agreed to meet your friends. You realize that this is too far to walk so you will need to order an Uber. The cost of the Uber…two more things. Take two more things, crumple them up and toss them in front of you.

At last, you have reached the hotel that you and your friends have agreed upon as the meet up location. You decide to call home to let your mom know that you have safely arrived. You get her voice mail. The recorded message on her voice mail has changed and you hear…two things please. Once again, take two more things, crumple them up and toss them in front of you.

You finally see your friends in the distance but they do not look very happy. They tell you that the reservations you each made at the inexpensive hotel have been lost and there are no rooms available at that price so you are all forced to stay in the penthouse suite. Your portion of the cost…three things!

At this point, take three more things, crumple them up and toss them in front of you.

(Walk around and pair the students up, ask them to remain silent)

Now, take the remaining four things, and hold them in your hand like playing cards with the words facing you. Turn to your partner and, without talking, take one thing out of each other’s hands, crumple it up and toss it in front of you.

This should leave you with three remaining “things”.

This is the end of the activity. I use the next 15-20 minutes to debrief and process:

1. Which color was easiest/most difficult to complete at the beginning? Why?
2. If applicable, why did some of you turn your “things” over after you finished writing on them?
3. Which color was easiest/most difficult to toss? Why?
4. Did anyone have difficulty crumpling and tossing? Why?
5. What was the point of the last part of the exercise?
6. How have your decisions been affected by the three “things” you had left at the end of the activity?
7. Are there other “things” that have affected your decision making?