as guides, and, following them, you reach your destination. Navigational skill is especially important at times when your future — for one reason or another — resembles more an uncharted sea than the next stretch of a familiar river.

Values play this critical part in directing your course whether you are conscious of them or not. The first step towards better navigational skill is to become more aware of the values which are presently influencing your life choices now.

Peter Larking at first enjoyed his work as marketing director of a large cosmetic company. He liked the social life and the high salary he earned; he travelled all over the world staying in expensive hotels. But it was a burning ambition to head the multinational parent company which drove him to work all hours of the day and night. The weekends he spent thinking solely about business or on the telephone to colleagues or customers. At 56 years, the year he gained a seat on the main Board, his wife divorced him and he had his second ulcer. Next year he had a coronary, and he had to give up on doctor’s advice his sole remaining pleasure of mountain climbing. Just before he was 58 he was so busy managing a takeover bid which — if successful — would almost certainly secure him the coveted job of Chief Executive, that he did not have time to visit his eighteen year old son in hospital who had contracted a serious illness. The day after Peter got the top job his son died. “Although I never had much time to spend with the boy,” he said to his secretary, “he was the most important thing in the world to me.” Was he?

This cautionary tale is a reminder to know your values and to keep them in sight. Let other people question them if it serves to make you think more about them.

Know your values and adhere to them. But don’t make the mistake of imposing them on others. Remember what William James wrote: ‘The first thing to learn in intercourse with others is non-interference with their own particular ways of being happy, provided that those ways are not assumed to interfere by violence with ours.’

Values can be expressed in the language of purpose, and statements of purpose can in turn be understood in terms of values. For example, if you make self-fulfilment your number one priority in life, that may reveal that for you the value of the individual comes first. If the self-fulfilment of other individuals is what matters, well and good. If it is your self-fulfilment that counts, at the expense of others, then you may end up like Dr. Samuel Johnson’s acquaintance — ‘a lover of himself, without a rival.’

THE NATURE OF POLICY

Sometimes it is impossible to identify clearly a strategic goal. Then purposeful activity may be a matter of seeking to better your competitive position, like a general securing the commanding heights. You can improve your strategic capability. Even when you do not know precisely where you are going some sort of forward movement is usually possible and may produce unexpected results. Columbus set out to find India but discovered America instead.

Alongside strategies and tactics of various kinds — the means you employ to achieve ends — must be placed policies and routines. What is their relation to time management? Routines will be discussed in the next chapter, so let us focus here upon policy.

A policy is essentially a decision of principle. It can help you